



David McDowell

January 25, 1947 - February 19, 2025

IN MEMORY OF:

David McDowell

Serving Location:

CRAIN FUNERAL HOME – MURPHYSBORO

1421 Walnut Street, Murphysboro, Illinois

Remembering David McDowell: Husband. Father. Brother. Teacher. Mayor. Wine and Beer Lover. Horse Handicapper. Beach Nut. Music Lover. Papa. Friend.

David McDowell (born January 25th, 1947 in Murphysboro, IL) passed away peacefully in the early morning of February 19, 2025 in Saint Louis, MO at the age of 78. He was surrounded by his wife of over 55 years, his loving children and grandchildren, and the music of the Rolling Stones. He leaves behind a family that adored him, a fridge that will never again be stocked with his favorite wine and beer, his dog Riplee who rarely left his side, and a world slightly less fun without his quick wit and legendary Papa skills.

David and his wife Denise (Reynolds) McDowell were married on June 15, 1969 and she survives. He also passed on his penchant for terrible dad jokes to his two surviving sons, Deryk (and Melissa Homan) McDowell of Webster Groves, MO and Daymon McDowell of Geneseo, IL, and he leaves behind a beloved daughter Dawn Olson (and David McNeill) of Murphysboro, IL. Together they have seven grandchildren: Dylan McDowell of Webster Groves, MO, Emarie McDowell of Geneseo, IL, Brayden McDowell of Webster Groves, MO, Jace Olson of Murphysboro, IL, Khyler McDowell of Geneseo, IL, Reid Olson of Murphysboro, IL, and Bentley McNeill of Murphysboro, IL.

Being 'Papa Dave' to Dylan, Emarie, Brayden, Jace, Khyler, Reid, and Bentley was absolutely his favorite job in the world. One that he took way more pride in than his previous 9-to-5 gig as a lifelong middle school educator, first in Bernie, MO and then in his hometown of Murphysboro, IL. It also did not compare to the grief, headaches, and innumerable phone calls he received as a long-time public servant; initially as an Alderman and then for 12 years as the Mayor of the City of Murphysboro. He was the master of sneaking extra treats, cookies, and candy. He loved to watch the horror on their faces as he fed them one of his beloved black licorice jelly beans. He was the king of slightly exaggerated stories about his youth track exploits among other things, the undefeated champion of embarrassing dad jokes, and the unabashed master of the fine art of napping. His grandkids were his pride and joy, and he spoiled them endlessly (much to the joy of their parents).

A lifelong dog lover, David never met a furry creature that he didn't befriend or try to smuggle home. From Patches to Boots to Buttons to Duchess to CoCo and GiGi to Sammee to Dustee and now Riplee, his house was always a sanctuary to four legged friends, where barking was the soundtrack and dog hair was as ever present as the endless supply of treats and belly rubs. His unshakeable belief that dogs are better than people will certainly live on.

In addition, he had a lifelong love affair with thoroughbred racing, and an unshakable belief that this was finally the year that he would hit it big. Just don't ask Denise who actually came out ahead between the two of them. He studied the odds, analyzed the data, squinted at the numbers, held the Daily Racing Form farther and farther away from his face, and ultimately picked the horses that just couldn't quite get it done. Although he was an absolute expert at telling anyone who would listen how he almost picked the winning horses--after the fact.

Then there was his love for wine. A true enthusiast, he believed that every meal, conversation, and minor inconvenience in life could be improved with a good glass of red. He was an enthusiast but not a connoisseur as his tastes tended to be more Trader Joe's and less Napa Valley or French Bordeaux. He never turned down an opportunity to enjoy a bottle or two and was happy to share time drinking wine with family and friends so long as they brought their own bottles.

Finally, there was the beach which was Papa's happy place. Whether watching the waves, soaking up the sun, or simply pretending he couldn't hear a word anyone said to him as he sipped on his beer, the ocean always called to him. In fact, the only time he would leave the beach was when it got too crowded with his family invading his solitude whereby he would escape to the quietness of a nearby pool. As long as he had a cold beer in his hand and a body of water of some sort nearby, he was happy.

He is also survived by a sister, Suellyn (and Gary) Rowden of Murphysboro, IL, a sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Debi (Reynolds) Naegele and Chris Naegele of Murphysboro, IL, and several nieces, nephews, and cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents Arthur Roscoe and Robbie (Casey) McDowell of Murphysboro, IL and his brother and sister-in-law, James and

Judy (Garver) McDowell of Terre Haute, IN.

David lived his life with laughter, love, and just the right amount of mischief. He wouldn't want us to be sad, but would want us to raise a glass, pet a dog, almost hit a trifecta, spend time on a beach, and remind his grandkids that he was, in fact, the best Papa who ever lived.

Funeral services will be held at Crain Funeral Home at 1421 Walnut St in Murphysboro, IL on Friday, February 28 at 1pm. This will be preceded by a visitation from 10am-1pm.

In addition, a celebration of his life will be held on Saturday, March 15, 2025 at the Elks Lodge at 1809 Shoemaker Dr. in Murphysboro, IL from 1-5pm.

In lieu of flowers, please pour yourself a nice glass of Two-Buck Chuck, head to the beach, and toast to a life well-lived and well-loved. Donations may also be made to St Francis Animal Rescue Shelter in Murphysboro, IL or to the animal rescue shelter of your choice.

Cheers, Papa—you were one of a kind.

Crain Funeral Home in Murphysboro is in charge of arrangements.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 28. 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Crain Funeral Home - Downtown Murphysboro
1421 Walnut St
Murphysboro, IL 62966
(618) 684-2131

Funeral Service

FEB 28. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Crain Funeral Home - Downtown Murphysboro
1421 Walnut St
Murphysboro, IL 62966
(618) 684-2131

Celebration of Life

MAR 15. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Murphysboro Elks Lodge #572
1809 Shomaker Dr.
Murphysboro, IL 62966

Tribute Wall



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of David McDowell.*



February 27, 2025 at 09:53 AM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of David McDowell.*



February 26, 2025 at 12:29 PM



“ *Denise - my thoughts are with you in the passing of your husband.*

Barb Hampton - February 23, 2025 at 07:02 PM

TT

“ David McDowell you'll be missed. School teacher I had in seventh and 8th grade. And I used to run into you over the years in the public here in Murphysboro Illinois. We always talked about good old days when you were a teacher and the mayor of our little community. You'll be forever missed and not running into you in a public. Will be odd!! But knowing that you have went home to our Lord and savior and your time here on Earth is done. You're in God's house now. Enjoy the heavens above us you've earned your gold wings spread your wings and fly high above us all until we meet you again in heaven we would be saddened here on Earth that you went home and left us all behind. You were a great educated person you taught us a lot about life throughout the years of your teaching in our community. And you also taught us how to have fun and never let life get the best of you. R.I.P IN HEAVEN BROTHER!!

timmy tolbert - February 22, 2025 at 08:40 AM

DS

Amazing teacher. loved the obituary wish I would've had the pleasure to know him as an adult

debbie saylor - February 23, 2025 at 11:08 PM

DH

So sorry for your loss. I will keep you in my prayers .

Diana Harris - March 04, 2025 at 12:01 AM