



## Leslie E. "Gene" Chrestman

June 2, 1933 - March 20, 2021

Leslie E. "Gene" Chrestman, age 87, of Cairo, Illinois, passed away on Saturday, March 20, 2021 at 3:01 p.m. in Southeast Hospital in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

Gene was born on June 2, 1933 in Cairo, a son to Leslie V. and Naomi (Wildharber) Chrestman. He married Carolyn R. McCarty on June 2, 1953 and she preceded him in death.

Gene was owner of the Dairy Queen in Cairo for many years. He entered the United States Air Force in March of 1953 and served until March of 1957, where he was an aircraft maintenance tech. He attained the rank of sergeant. Upon returning, he continue to own and run the Dairy Queen, which was later renamed Gene's Place. After selling Gene's Place, he worked at Horseshoe Lake Conservation Area as a park ranger for twenty-two years before retiring. Gene served as Alexander County Coroner for eight years, and joined the Cairo Auxiliary Fire Department in 1962. He served on the fire department for fifty-eight years, and was chief for the last eight of those years. Gene loved fishing, woodworking and mowing.

He is survived by his companion, Sharon Williams; daughters, Deborah "Debbie" (David) Willis and Linda Kay Fink; granddaughters, Leslie Thompson, Samantha Terry and Betty R. Chrestman; grandson, Matthew

Chrestman; seven great-grandchildren; and several nieces, nephews and other family members.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Leslie V. and Naomi Chrestman; his wife, Carolyn Chrestman; son, Charles V. "Scooter" Chrestman; grandson, Christopher Chrestman; sister, Mary Ellen Applegate; and brother, Charles F. Chrestman.

Funeral services will be held at Crain Funeral Home in Cairo on Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. with the Reverend Dr. Larry Potts officiating. Interment will follow at Rose Hill Cemetery in Thebes, Illinois. A time of visitation will be held at Crain Funeral Home from 10:00 a.m. until the time of service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Cairo Auxiliary Fire Department, c/o Joe Ruiz, and will be accepted at the funeral home.

Crain Funeral Home in Cairo has been entrusted with the arrangements.

# Cemetery Details

## Rose Hill Cemetery

Thebes, IL

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 24. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Crain Funeral Home - Cairo  
4815 Sycamore  
Cairo, IL 62914  
(618) 734-4291  
crain@crainsonline.com

## Funeral Service

MAR 24. 12:00 PM (CT)

Crain Funeral Home - Cairo  
4815 Sycamore  
Cairo, IL 62914  
(618) 734-4291  
crain@crainsonline.com

## Interment

MAR 24 (CT)

Rose Hill Cemetery  
Thebes, IL



# Tribute Wall



“ *Leslie E. "Gene" Chrestman*

October 23, 2023 at 06:26 AM

PS

*Gene, Buddy I was just checking up on you 8/10/2024 and discovered you left me, last standing, for those that don't know we were teenage friends, did everything together fishing on the Ohio, parking with our girls friends on the levy, you and Carolyn were our best couple when we ran off to Mississippi and I married Barbara Hack then later you married Carolyn, God its been so long ago.  
Rest in Peace Friend*

**Phil Stewart** - August 10, 2024 at 02:11 PM

DW

“ *My first Job was working for him and Debbie making ice cream cones. He was a wonderful man.*

**Dawn Walston** - March 24, 2021 at 11:04 AM

SG

“ *Mr.Chrestman I met you in the early 90's was a waitress at Mac BBQ and you was always very kind to me my Prayers go out to Ms.Sharon and your Family RIP Gene!*

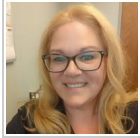


**Suzanne Gaskins** - March 22, 2021 at 02:26 PM

JM

“ *Rest easy chief, you earned it. Fly high until we meet again. We love and miss you. Prayers for the family and friends. Love the McWilliams family.*

**Jamie McWilliams** - March 22, 2021 at 08:48 AM



“ Sarah Froman lit a candle in memory of Leslie E. "Gene" Chrestman



Sarah Froman - March 21, 2021 at 09:51 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Leslie E. "Gene" Chrestman.



March 21, 2021 at 09:06 PM



“ Gene will be missed greatly. Cairo and Alexander County was honored to have such a devoted person as Gene. We served together on the Cairo Auxiliary Fire Dept. for 18 years. Thoughts and prayers are with Sharon, Debbie and family.

*Butch & Pat Clutts*

Butch Clutts - March 21, 2021 at 08:40 PM



“ Karen Masterson lit a candle in memory of Leslie E. "Gene" Chrestman



Karen Masterson - March 21, 2021 at 08:25 PM

KM

*RIP Gene.*

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**Karen Masterson** - March 21, 2021 at 08:27 PM

RK

“ Gene was a very loyal friend, I worked for him many years ago as the Dilly Boy at the Dairy Queen, also served with him on the Cairo Auxiliary Fire Department. We remained Friends for over 60 years. Gene will be missed but never forgotten. We remember Sharon and Debbie in our prayers, along with the remaining family 🙏🙏🙏

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**Richard Kearney** - March 21, 2021 at 07:59 PM

RG

“ Alexander County and surrounding area lost a great man with Gene's death. A man that I call a friend and he will be missed. Out thoughts and prayers go out to Sharon, Debbie and families.

*Randy and Carol George*

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**Randy George** - March 21, 2021 at 07:44 PM

JC

“ Sorry to hear of Mr. Chrestman’s death. Mr. Chrestman introduced my twin sister and I to Dairy Queen. We still like the smooth ice cream and remember how good the dilly bars and orange Mr. Misty were. We stopped regularly in the 1960s and 1970s.

Cairo holds a lot of memories for our family dealing with food. 😊. Always appreciated food places like Dairy Queen, Shemwells, Mack’s, the Pit, and Whataburger.

Even though my sister and I do not live in the area anymore, Cairo will always hold cherished memories for us.

May God give your family peace during this difficult time. 🙏

🙏🙏 Joni & Julie

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**joni copeland** - March 21, 2021 at 06:10 PM

BB

I'm a little late in writing this. Just saw Gene and Carolyn's obits. ! worked for Gene and his mother, Naomi, for 6 years partially in high school and college. Also talked to Carolyn a lot. Never had a disagreement with any of them. Both Gene and Naomi were easy to work for and were humorous. Wish I could go back and do it again. Gene and Carolyn used to take me and my future wife skying on the old Ohio.

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**Birney Brown** - May 14, 2025 at 04:02 PM