



Michael Ray Crews

September 8, 1946 - November 13, 2023

IN MEMORY OF:

Michael Ray Crews

Serving Location:

CRAIN FUNERAL HOME – ANNA

135 West Vienna Street, Anna, Illinois

Michael Ray Crews, 77, of Anna, passed away on Monday, November 13, 2023 at Union County Hospital in Anna.

Michael was born on September 8, 1946 in DuQuoin to Frank and Ruth (Keller) Crews.

Michael had a head coaching career over 40 years including at Carlyle, Elverado, Anna-Jonesboro and DuQuoin. He was a teacher and coach at Anna-Jonesboro Community High School from 1983-2002. He coached football, golf-boys and girls, basketball, and track-boys and girls.

One of his highlight moments as a coach was leading the Anna-Jonesboro basketball team to the Elite 8 tournament in 1985. Michael was also inducted into the Illinois Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 2004.

Survivors include his daughters, Susan (Shelly) Michelle Norris and husband, Kurt of Wake Forest, North Carolina, and Laura Alaine Crews of Maysville, Kentucky ; grandchildren, Kaylin Norris, Madison Norris, Layla Crews-Taylor, Lawsyn Crews-Taylor, and Liviana Crews-Captain; brother, Alan Crews, Sister-in-law, Gail Crews of Westfield, Indiana.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and son, Douglas Neil Crews.

Funeral services will be held on Wednesday, November 22, 2023 at 12:00 PM at Crain Funeral Home in Anna. Burial will follow at Sunset Memorial Park in DuQuoin.

Visitation will be on Wednesday, November 22, 2023 from 10:00 AM until the time of service at the funeral home.

Crain Funeral Home in Anna is handling the arrangements.

In lieu of flowers the family requests with gratitude that memorial contributions be made to the Anna-Jonesboro Elks Lodge where Mike was a member for many years.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **22**. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Crain Funeral Home - Anna
135 W. Vienna St.
Anna, IL 62906
(618) 833-2176
crain@crainsonline.com

Funeral Service

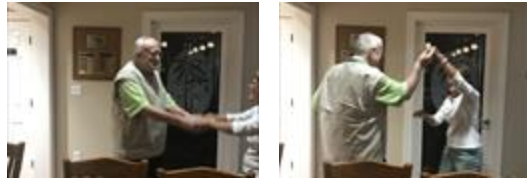
NOV **22**. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Crain Funeral Home - Anna
135 W. Vienna St.
Anna, IL 62906
(618) 833-2176
crain@crainsonline.com

Tribute Wall



“ I have many memories of Coach as we called him here at Deep Creek. He love people and being the center of attention! Lol. He love a drink I called “Jack and Diane “ aka Jack Daniel’s and Diet Coke.. He also loved to get off his chair and dance when he had the opportunity. I have thought often about him, and he will always be remembered by me and all the friends @ Deepcreekgolf



Gail Dacko - November 22, 2023 at 10:42 PM

TB

Coach denied he ever danced there. LOL!

Terry L Beggs - November 24, 2023 at 10:52 AM

RP

“ I met Coach a little over 4 years ago. I always enjoyed talking to him, hearing his stories, his compassion, his humor....he always had time to listen to others. At one point in one of our conversations he said something that really changed my life. I will forever remember that. He will be missed by many

Renie Presutti - November 22, 2023 at 11:27 AM

SF

“ So sorry for the loss of Mike. I taught/coached at AJ during his tenure. Mike had a special way of telling jokes or stories. I never tired of hearing his fun stories. He had a very honorable coaching history and he coached many students who respected him. He'll be missed by many. RIP Mike.



Sheree L Fahlberg - November 20, 2023 at 03:53 PM

MA

“ I am very sorry I am unable to attend services for Mike as I will be dog sitting in central Illinois. He called me 3 weeks ago and as always was upbeat in spite of his deteriorating health issues. He would call occasionally and I especially remember his call last year on Christmas Day. I was in Florida by myself and it was my only call that day. I will miss his calls and especially his jokes!! My sincere condolences to Shelly, Laura and Alan.

Marcia Abell - November 19, 2023 at 08:20 PM

“Joyce and a few other of the teachers, asked I share this memory that I had shared elsewhere. Apologies if you've read it before.

Coach Crews had many traits that certainly made lasting impressions on the young men he coached.

Coach was a giant, towering over most of his players. For most young boys, like myself, the first time I met Coach was in middle school at a basketball camp, and he was the biggest person I'd ever seen. Even my dad, who is 6'4", seemed a little smaller in Coach Crews' presence.

He had a deep, mono-tone voice that only got louder or quieter depending on his mood. But no matter if he was yelling or speaking softly, it cut through the din of a noisy classroom or the roar of a raucous gym.

Then there were his piercing, deep-set eyes. Eyes that seemed like they were set about 4-inches from the front of his face. And when he stared at you with them, you felt like he was measuring your heart in a glance.

But for me, what always stood out was his compassion. Yes, like many other boys, I had been on the receiving end of more than one of his infamous and blistering, dress downs. Yet his toughness, at its core, came from a place of deep compassion for his players.

And I had been on the receiving end of that compassion as well.

When I was a freshman, my Grandmother Stella passed away. I resolved to go to basketball practice that evening, because by my 15-year-old teenage boy logic, that was what made me tough and valuable to my team. Coach, however, had other plans.

He showed up to Freshman practice that evening, and came out onto the floor. He called me over softly, that deep, monotone voice

seemed more empathetic than normal. He reached out with one of those big, giant arms and wrapped it, with a surprising gentleness, around my scrawny shoulders. He stared at me with those deep-set piercing eyes, with look that seemed to know exactly what I was feeling.

“Perry,” and I remember he called me Perry. It was probably the only time in my life he didn’t call me Littrell. “Go home. Be with your mom, she needs you. There will be plenty more basketball practices in life.”

I started to protest that I didn’t have a ride home, when I looked up and saw my dad standing in the entrance to the gym. Coach had called him, when he heard my Grandmother had passed and asked him to come get me at the start of practice.

Coach squeezed my shoulder firmly, then gave me a prodding shove toward my father. Before I got out of the gym, he was already yelling at Jason Vincent for doing something he didn’t like. But when I turned back, he was looking at me and he waved.

I remember that story, every year as the anniversary of my Grandmother’s passing draws close.

He made an impact on my life in so many ways. He made an impact on so many of us.

I am so glad that I got the chance to know him.

God Bless you Coach, and to Lauran and all the others who will no doubt miss him as well, my love and my prayers.

Perry

Perry Littrell - November 16, 2023 at 05:01 PM

TB

What a nice tribute

Terry L Beggs - November 18, 2023 at 12:58 PM

TB

“ *I was sorry to hear of Michael's passing and my condolences to Shelly, Laura, and Alan. He had contacted me years ago to look for a place he could migrate for the first 3 months of the year and play golf. I located seasonal apartment less than a mile from the golf course, and about 2.5 miles from both a great sports bar and an Elks Club. He soon had Alan coming to share (the bulk) of the expenses plus fill-in as his straight man. Everyone knew and vividly remembers "Coach" and "Coach's brother" and those years were filled with laughter and stories. In the early 60's, there was an empty lot between our homes and their mom and our mom were first cousins, but they are more than that to me. They are great friends that so happened to be related. They are legendary at the golf course and I truly wish he would have let me bring him back to my house in Florida when I was there in June. I went to Marion and saw him twice plus called him after I got back home, but he could be a little bull-headed at times. I'll miss him. Favorite punchline: "Kemosabe"*

Terry L Beggs - November 15, 2023 at 02:03 PM

TS

“ *The Voyage Senior Living of Marion South purchased the Sweet Tenderness for the family of Michael Ray Crews.*



The Voyage Senior Living of Marion South - November 15, 2023 at 01:45 PM

TS

“ The Voyage Senior Living of Marion South planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Michael Ray Crews.

The Voyage Senior Living of Marion South - November 15, 2023 at 01:45 PM

SS

“ Mike was one of my first good friends when I started teaching at AJ in 1989. Neither of us were coffee drinkers so during our shared plan period we'd also share my Stanley thermos of hot tea. Mike was one of THE funniest people I've ever known, with a mind like a steel trap when it came to jokes, limmericks, stories, and songs. Absolutely no one could tell a joke or story like him, as he added hilarious embellishments at every turn. He gave me my nickname "Quick" or "Quickster" for my quick wit (according to him). All I know is I spent nearly 20 years playing his "straight man" in the teachers lounge, setting up his jokes on unsuspecting new hires! I'm grateful for all those memories. Rest easy, "Michael Francis Alouysius," my friend 💔

Sherry Stephenson - November 14, 2023 at 07:10 PM

MK

“ On Wednesdays there were IEA meetings and Mary and Stan always attended. They brought Mike jokes. I wrote the punch line in my check register. Thursday mornings the teachers at Carterville High School would ask what my check book had in it so Mike's jokes made it to Carterville. My children always asked also. I can't remember when he sent a joke that was not clean enough for my kids. What a gift, making people laugh. even these last few years when Chuck would see him or talk on the phone I always asked for a joke.

Marlene Koerner - November 14, 2023 at 10:47 AM