



Robert William Arnold

March 28, 1946 - January 29, 2026

IN MEMORY OF:

Robert William Arnold

Serving Location:

CRAIN FUNERAL HOME – MURPHYSBORO

1421 Walnut Street, Murphysboro, Illinois

Robert William Arnold, age 79, of Murphysboro, passed away on January 29, 2026. He was born on March 28, 1946 to Lee and Elaine (Roach) Arnold from Johnston City. He is leaving behind a life defined by hard work, kindness, and leading by example. A devoted husband, loving father, trusted friend, and dedicated teacher, he spent his life building not only things with his hands, but also strong minds, while modeling values in those around him.

For 57 years, Robert was the beloved husband of Barbara (Williford) Arnold, a partnership rooted in love, loyalty, and shared purpose. He was a proud father to Kent Arnold and Heather Sunny, and grandfather to Kayla, Ethan, Gabriel, Olivia, Lauren, Zephyr, and Ryman. He was a “silly Papa” to his grand kids, with his quick wit and easy demeanor. He always appreciated a good laugh and a quality dad joke. He was a steady presence to both family and friends who knew they could always count on him.

Never deterred from hard work he worked many jobs throughout his younger years including gas station attendant, highway maintenance worker, ice cream shop worker, retail clothing salesman, factory worker, roofer, bowling alley attendant, coffee shop worker, and drove a hearse.

He worked hard to pay for his education to build a better life for his family; a commitment that never wavered. As a math and science teacher for over 30 years, Robert helped countless students—not only through lessons in the classroom, but through the way he lived his life. He believed in leading by example, showing others the value of integrity, perseverance, and compassion.

He was “My Favorite Teacher” to many and a first male role model to many young students in his classroom. In addition to his work in the Murphysboro school district, he believed in everyone’s ability to always keep learning and improve regardless of their aptitude. He treated everyone equally. He taught math to GED students as well as teaching math at John A Logan college.

Outside of work, Robert was a true handyman at heart. He especially loved restoring and building old trucks, fixing what was broken, and creating something lasting with his hands. He found joy on the water fishing and boating, and peace in simple, honest work. A true renaissance man he taught himself many skills, and passed that knowledge to others, including plumbing, electric, home building, and computer repair. He was a wood worker, card player, coin collector, and clock builder. He was a musician, playing clarinet, as a member of the Marching Salukis. In fact, he and Barbara met at one of the band parties. This inspired his love for all things Saluki, especially basketball. He and Barbara have been SIU season ticket holders since 1969. His commitment to his community was evident as a leader for teacher negotiations and as a board member of the Sallie Logan library.

Above all, Robert will be remembered as a kind and loving man, a wonderful husband, father, and grandfather. He was someone who helped others without seeking recognition, who showed up when needed, and who left the world better than he found it.

Survivors include his wife; Barbara two children Kent (Britney) Arnold and Heather (Praveen) Sunny; his grandchildren; a sister and brother Joyce Bonifield and Dennis Arnold; along with many other loving family members.

He is preceded in death by his parents.

A service to celebrate his life will be held on Saturday February 7th. A visitation will be held from 11:00-1:00 at United Methodist Church in Murphysboro (1500 Pine St. Murphysboro). Service will follow immediately with Burial at Oakland Cemetery (1100 North Oakland Ave Carbondale). A reception and food will be held from 230-530 at Sunflower Farms Event Center (4423 Country Club Rd. Murphysboro)

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made to the Murphysboro 186 Education Foundation c/o "Robert Arnold Memorial Scholarship Fund". Memorials can be mailed to: Murphysboro Community Unit School District 186, 593 Ava Road, Murphysboro, IL 62966. Memorials may also be made to the scholarship through PayPal (Search Murphysboro CUSD 186 Education Foundation.)

Crain Funeral Home in Murphysboro is in charge of arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Oakland Cemetery

Carbondale, IL

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 7. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (cst)

United Methodist Church
1500 Pine St
Murphysboro, IL 62966
(618) 687-2317

Funeral Service

FEB 7. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (cst)

United Methodist Church
Murphysboro, IL

Interment

FEB 7. 2:15 PM - 2:45 PM (cst)

Oakland Cemetery
Carbondale, IL

Tribute Wall

LP

“ Our deepest condolences to Barbara, his children, Joyce and Dennis while dealing with this wonderful husband, father, brother and teacher to so many others. He was a great person know in high school as a friend and he became an even bigger man as he grew into a great educator, car restorer, and loving man. We will keep all of you in our hearts and prayers during this time of distress. May our loving Heavenly Father keep you all wrapped in His Loving Healing Arms.

Larry and Sandy (McPheron) Phipps - February 07 at 11:43 AM

DE

“ As a junior high school student I remember seeing chalk eraser prints from he erasers he threw at students who didn't know the answers to the math questions in the classroom

debbie - February 07 at 12:01 AM

MB

“ Bob was my sixth grade teacher. He was one of my favorite teachers. RIH

Mary Barringer - February 04 at 02:50 PM



“ Lily and Rose Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Robert William Arnold.



February 04 at 11:32 AM

CE

“ Catherine and Labib ElKahwaji purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Robert William Arnold.



Catherine and Labib ElKahwaji - February 03 at 10:50 PM

PS

“ Bob and I attended SIU in the 60's. He was mgr of Lentz hall snack bar. He saved all of my friends and I from acute malnutrition. What a burger!!! We both became teachers-He at Murphy and I at C'dale. What a well liked guy. I was fortunate to have met his son at Memorial Hospital Emergency and treated professionally -a chip off the block! We send our condolences to the family and have Bob in our prayers. Patrick Schmalenberger

Patrick Schmalenberger - February 03 at 12:42 PM

CH

“ Chris and Meshia Hughes purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Robert William Arnold.



Chris and Meshia Hughes - February 03 at 10:58 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Robert William Arnold.



February 03 at 10:39 AM

VF

“ Valerie and Tom Kupferer and family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Robert William Arnold.



Valerie and Tom Kupferer and family - February 03 at 08:29 AM

AF

“ Anoka Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Robert William Arnold.



Anoka Family - February 03 at 08:21 AM

CC

“ Clay, Darcey, Margot, & Malcolm Crawford purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Robert William Arnold.



Clay, Darcey, Margot, & Malcolm Crawford - February 03 at 06:08 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Robert William Arnold.



February 02 at 04:55 PM

OA

“ *Osama & Hala Aflaq purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Robert William Arnold.*



Osama & Hala Aflaq - February 02 at 04:21 PM