



## Shane Ray Parker (The Bear)

January 16, 1957 - May 30, 2025

IN MEMORY OF:

Shane Ray Parker (The Bear)

Serving Location:

CRAIN FUNERAL HOME – ULLIN

420 Ullin Avenue, Ullin, Illinois

Shane Ray Parker (The Bear), 68, of Metropolis, formerly of Grand Chain, Illinois, passed away on Friday, May 30, 2025 at the Southgate Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Metropolis, Illinois.

He was born on January 16, 1957 to Warren Ray (Hoot) and Lynda Parker in Cairo, Illinois.

Survivors include sons, Dakota Parker and Hunter Parker and Brother Kerry (Chrystal) Parker; grandson Sage Parker (Dakota); nieces Karly Parker Burk, Katie Parker Barfield and their children and many other cousins, nieces, nephews. He is also survived by many close friends and their families.

Shane was preceded in death by his parents Hoot and Lynda Parker. He was also preceded in death by his paternal grandparents Alvin Ray “AR” and Leona Parker and his maternal grandparents Arthur and Dillie (Hawkins) Dick. He was also preceded in death by his Aunt Jeanette (Parker) Choate and Uncle Jean Dick and many great-uncles, great aunts and cousins.

When he was a small child, Shane’s family moved to Arizona for a few years where his brother Kerry was born. The family moved back to “Tick Ridge” in Grand Chain where Shane attended grade school.

For a couple decades Shane’s parents Lynda and Hoot ran “Hoots” drive-in located at the Karnak spur. The family lived in the back of the drive-in for several years before moving “up the hill” and converting the living quarters to a dine-in restaurant. They were famous for pizza, catfish, Italian Beef sandwiches, plus the best burgers and fries. Hoot was beloved for his jokes and wry comments. Little Shane followed in his dad’s comedic footsteps but also shared the work ethic and big heart that his momma Lynda had.

As a Child, Shane attended Ohio Chapel Church, on Tick Ridge Road, with his parents, grandparents and other relatives. He remained affiliated with the church for his entire life. In his youth he was part of the Karnak-Ohio Chapel Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF), going on several campouts at Little Grassy Lake and Beulah Church Camp. The MYF did a free work-day that led to the creation of J.I.P. Enterprise (Jarrett-Inman-Parker) to make money hauling trash, hauling hay and doing odd jobs, even comedy.

Shane was active in sports at Century High School, playing Catcher in Baseball and Power-Forward in Basketball. He was known for mashing long home runs. He received trophies in the Century Beta Club Talent show several times, foreshadowing his later career in Comedy and the Entertainment Industry.

Bear graduated from Century High School in 1975 and attended Shawnee Community College. At Shawnee, he was known for being in plays and being the Jester in several Madrigals. He also competed nationally in speech competitions, going to San Francisco and Chicago. He was the USA Champion of After Dinner Speaking, winning gold in the National Junior College Association of Forensics. Shane was the Shawnee College "Distinguished Alumnus of the Year" in 2007. A detailed tribute is viewable at Shawnee Colleges' Facebook Page.

After Graduating from Shawnee, Shane attended Millikin University in Decatur. Shane left Millikin and headed to Chicago where he became director of promotions and entertainment at "Faces" nightclub. At Faces he became acquainted with local celebrities like Harry Caray and Oprah Winters (she was a local TV personality at that time). He also worked with national celebrities such as Rich Little, Cher, Mr. T. and Bill Cosby. Bill flew Bear out to Pennsylvania where Bear was included in some of the "Picture Pages" shows. Bear also was involved with some of the major radio and TV stations in Chicago and even appeared in some movies.

In 1985 Bear returned to his Southern Illinois and Tri-State Roots. Shane is well known throughout the Tri-State Area as the "Bear on the Air" having been a DJ on WKYQ. He worked closely with Dr. Jeff and others at WKYQ. He was famous for outlandish TV commercials, Bad Dad Jokes, and his Deep Mellow Bass Voice. He was Master of Ceremonies for many events at the Carson Center, connecting with Celebrities like Charlie Daniels. Some of Bear's work is viewable at Bear on the Air Facebook.

As part of his community relations, he started catering Bar-B-Que for charities and other events. In later years, Bear teamed up with his younger son, Hunter

Parker. They did many Bar-B-Que catering events and provided DJ services at weddings. Hunter became known as the “Bear Cub.”

The following tribute was Posted by the WestKentuckyStar.com:

“Parker was a fixture on the radio in the area after launching his career in Chicago. Even during that time in the Windy City, he never forgot where he came from. Eventually, the pull of Southern Illinois proved too strong. Bear came home and found a home on the airwaves of WDDJ 97 FM with an extremely popular evening show.

Bear took some time away from radio fueled by another passion. He opened a restaurant, following in the footsteps of his parents who owned and ran restaurants.

A return to the airwaves was inevitable as Bear found a new radio home at 93.3 WKYQ, before moving to sister station WLLE FM, WiLLiE 102.

Health concerns slowed but did not stop him. Bear continued contributing to the station and he also continued his charity work. His annual toy drive set a new record, last year. Bear wanted to make sure every child had a Merry Christmas.

The Bear on the Air will be missed by generations of listeners across the area.”

Bear loved his Family. He loved his Friends. He loved his Fans. They will all miss him and his humor dearly.

There are no plans, at this time, for a formal service. However, Bear pre-recorded parts of his eulogy, some of which is shared on this site. More videos

will be released on YouTube or shared with Friends.

Crain Funeral Home in Ullin is in charge of arrangements.

# Tribute Wall



“ Crain Funeral Home shared Part 2 of the Tribute Video in memory of Shane Ray Parker (The Bear)



Crain Funeral Home - June 05, 2025 at 12:55 PM



“ Crain Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Shane Ray Parker (The Bear)



Crain Funeral Home - June 02, 2025 at 12:36 PM

CW

Prayers for the family. He was great person

Crystal I west - June 02, 2025 at 08:14 PM

KH

I hate that Shane has passed and my prayers go out to his family. Is there more videos to see?

karla Hale - June 02, 2025 at 10:16 PM

AS

*My heart and prayers go out the bear on air family and friends I grow up see him and hear him and yes he from Cairo il my mother Andery seals and my grandma Peggy McBride know him very will come in town. So I grow up know him very well give him big hugs ever time we see him out do he shows or just out and about thin we moved too metropolis fine out he was in paducah working see him again super man show or paducah. Not going been same anymore not see his smile face .send prayers*

April Seals - June 20, 2025 at 02:18 PM

DM

*“ I remember reading his story about surviving the huge tornado in 2005 he said "I'm a fat guy & this thing picked me up & dropped me in a field" even during a crisis he found humor*

Daniel E Mowery - September 13, 2025 at 04:27 PM

KS

*“ I got to know Bear while cooking with Big Daddy's BBQ team and also thru Big Daddy's Restaurant where they served Ms. Lynda's famous fried catfish! The Parker family sure knew how to cook!! t was a blessing to call Bear a friend. Bear did so much for our area. I will miss hearing "Bear On The Air" He will be remembered with love, honor, respect, faithfulness, definitely some stories and lots of laughs. RIP Bear!! Keeping all in my thoughts and prayers.*



Karla Scott - June 07, 2025 at 05:14 AM

LM

“ *Larry and Carolyn McGill lit a candle in memory of Shane Parker (The Bear)*



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**Larry and Carolyn McGill** - June 03, 2025 at 11:30 AM

PM

“ *Bear remembered everyone and was a friend to all. A truly great American in every way.*  
*Pat McCann*

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**Pat McCann** - June 03, 2025 at 11:05 AM

MF

“ *Michael Franklin lit a candle in memory of Shane Parker (The Bear)*



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**Michael Franklin** - June 03, 2025 at 02:51 AM

SR

“ *Steve Rose lit a candle in memory of Shane Parker (The Bear)*



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**Steve Rose** - June 02, 2025 at 09:03 PM

BL

“ My husband met Bear in 1975 at Shawnee College where they both played on the baseball team. He was so much fun to be around and so full of life! RIP Bear

Brent and Kim Lillie - June 02, 2025 at 08:06 PM

DS

“ Bear will be so missed. Prayers to his brother, his sons, their families and that precious grandson of his. My grandsons live in California and we often talked about them living so far from us. He made a couple Santa Claus videos for me to send them. I've known him since college. We had a speech class together and he used to make the best impromptu speeches. Very impressive to a shy college girl who hated making speeches. 😊. This video is so Bear. He's going to be so missed. I'm very thankful we were friends.

Diana Swinford - June 02, 2025 at 04:29 PM

MT

“ Mike Turner lit a candle in memory of Shane Parker (The Bear)



Mike Turner - June 02, 2025 at 03:44 PM

JP

“ I listened to Shane "The Bear on the air" for years. When I went to Shawnee Community College I would eat at Hoot's on Ullin, Illinois. Shane will be missed such a good man a child of God's. RIP

Jodi A Price - June 02, 2025 at 01:43 PM