



Bruce Gebhart Owen

OCT 26, 1945 - MAY 13, 2024



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COMPLETE FUNERAL SERVICES

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Bruce Gebhart Owen

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Bruce Gebhart Owen, age 78, died peacefully on Monday, May 13, 2024, at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, surrounded by his loving family.

Bruce was born on October 26, 1945, in Detroit, Michigan, to Ralph Owen and Julia Owen (née Tuttle). Bruce grew up in Decatur, Illinois. He went to Northwestern University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for his undergraduate degree in History; the University of Michigan for a Master's degree in East Asian Language & Culture; and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for his Juris Doctor.

Bruce was sent to Vietnam from 1970-1971, after the Army denied his application for conscientious objector status. Bruce met his wife, Cheryl, while he was in law school in November 1974. From the beginning of their time together, they knew they wanted many children. God blessed them with six children and eleven grandchildren during their forty-eight years together. Bruce maintained his law license while working 22 years as manager and co-owner of Franklin Travel, and then was elected to two terms as Decatur Township Assessor before his retirement in 2009.

After moving from Decatur to Chicago eight years ago, Bruce and Cheryl became members of first St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Hyde Park and later St. Aloysius Church in Wicker Park. They often returned to Decatur to fellowship with their lifelong friends at St. James and Patrick Church.

Bruce loved studying and discussing world events, history, language, politics, and religion. He loved to travel, swim and be near the ocean. He was calm and kind and loved to laugh. He loved God and his "dynasty" of children and grandchildren. He loved to sing and dance and hear live music. He loved genealogy and visiting places where his ancestors had lived. He built love in his family through "little shared experiences." He always reminded his children of his mother's words that life was



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about your “presence,” not your “presents.”

Bruce is survived by his wife, Cheryl, and his children Carrie Kouadio (Yao), John Owen (Britt), Michelle Owen (Eli), Julie Herrera (Daniel), Mary Owen, and Josh Owen. He is survived by his 11 grandchildren: Vieyiti, Alomah, Akoumae, Essileyeh, and Elasseh Kouadio; Lucien and Caspian Owen; Naomi and Saba Elias; and Veronica and Nicholas Herrera. Other surviving relatives include his siblings Martha Eller (Dennis) and Bill Owen (Patricia); and his brother-in-law Gary Puckett. He is also survived by multiple nieces, nephews, and cousins; and his devoted friends Patrick McLoughlin and Larry Grunert.

He was preceded in death by his sister, Lucie Thesz (née Owen), and his parents, Ralph Owen and Julia Owen.

A funeral Mass will be held Saturday, May 18, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church at 407 E. Eldorado St. in Decatur, Illinois. He will be laid to rest at Fairlawn cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) organization: <https://www.ihelpveterans.org/>. Bruce spent his life hoping war could end.






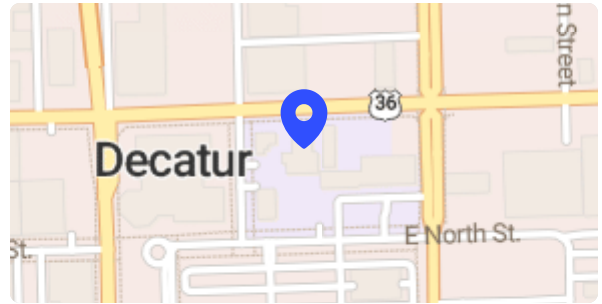
Events

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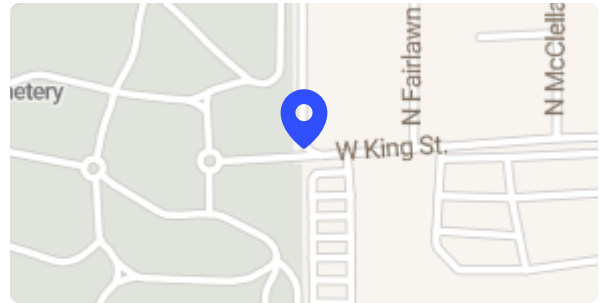
Funeral Mass

-  **Saturday**, May 18, 2024
-  12:00 PM CT
-  **St. Patrick Catholic Church**
407 E. Eldorado Ave., Decatur IL 62523





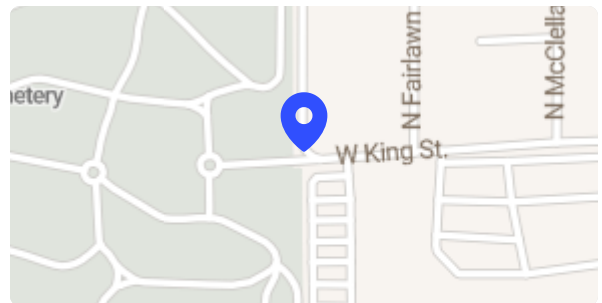
Burial

-  **Saturday**, May 18, 2024
-  **Fairlawn Cemetery**
1600 W. King St., Decatur IL 62522



Cemetery Details

-  **Fairlawn Cemetery**
1600 W. King St., Decatur IL 62522
-  **(217) 615-0724**





Tribute Wall

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CW

Cathy (Gebhart) Walston posted:

Our family used to have big family reunions. As one of the younger set, I didn't grow up knowing everyone...or even knowing of them. BUT I did know who Ralph & Julie Owen were; Ralph was my dad's cousin. After a chance meeting in a doctor's office, Julie - or Julia- invited me to a family lunch. It was fantastic to get to know so many relatives and hear so many stories! I have brothers named Bill Gebhart (oldest) and Bruce Gebhart. In Bruce Owen's family, Bruce is older and Bill is younger. I truly adore this family and pass my condolences on to Cheryl, their kids/grandkids, Bill, Martha, and the entire family!

May 19 at 6:44 PM

TC

Todd Crews posted:

To Cheryl and the Owen family our deepest sympathy. I greatly enjoyed when I had a chance to have a conversation with Bruce and get a bit of wit and wisdom. I only wish we had the opportunity for more such visits, my condolences, Todd Crews

May 16 at 3:59 PM

CM

Carolyn Monahan posted:

Bruce and I were born 3 months apart and had many wonderful preschool moments. He was always a great person. Carolyn Owen Monahan

May 16 at 11:31 AM

BP

Beth Pyle posted:

Cheryl — so sorry to hear of Bruce's death. May your memories and your family support you now and in the weeks to come. Do you think Bruce and Steve are discussing current events over chicken and noodles at Pop's place or perhaps a Del Carmen's pizza? Steve valued his many years of friendship with Bruce.

May 16 at 10:12 AM



Cheryl Owen May 24 at 1:59 AM

I had a similar comforting thought about the two of them.



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Cinda K Armstrong-Williams lit a candle in honor of Bruce.

Cheryl, I am thankful I got to catch up with you both a few weeks ago at Pops Place. Bruce was a great boss and a friend for many years after. Your husband left a lasting impact on those who were fortunate enough to know him. In this time of grief, let us not mourn his loss but instead celebrate the incredible life he lived. My heartfelt condolences to you and your family during this difficult time. Let the love and support of those around you lift you in your time of need. It was an honor to know Bruce. May he rest peacefully.



May 16 at 6:57 AM



Cheryl Owen May 24 at 2:01 AM

The last time we talked with you was the last time we heard a live band. Thanks for the memories you shared.



Matt Mcmillan posted:

Bruce was an amazing man and treated me like family. He will be greatly missed. You are all in our thoughts. - The McMillan family

May 15 at 2:07 PM



Cheryl Owen May 24 at 2:01 AM

You know how much we both cared about you. I hope life is treating you well!



Sue Johnson lit a candle in honor of Bruce.

I worked with Bruce for several years at Franklin Travel. He was always helpful and kind everyday. I thank him for his mentorship when I was brand new. May he RIP.



May 15 at 12:35 PM



The Perrin Family sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Owen family.



May 15 at 9:53 AM



Tribute Wall

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The Perrin Family planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Bruce.



May 15 at 9:53 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Bruce by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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