



# Steven R Hurst

MAR 13, 1947 - OCT 3, 2024



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# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
<b>Events</b> .....	Page 5
<b>Tribute Wall</b> .....	Page 6



## Steven R Hurst

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**D**ECATUR - Steven R. Hurst, 77, died at his home on Thursday, October 3, in Decatur. The family will be hosting an informal memorial at Rock Springs Conservation Area at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, October 13. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Humane Society. Online condolences can be sent to the family at [www.gracelandfairlawn.com](http://www.gracelandfairlawn.com).

. Hurst was born in Macomb, Illinois, on March 13, 1947, to Charles and Mary Hurst. The family moved to Decatur in 1951 and lived in The Elms neighborhood throughout his childhood. He took his first job when he was 10 years old delivering the Decatur Review newspaper, foreshadowing his remarkable career as a journalist. He was a graduate of Stephen Decatur High School, where he met Kathy Beaman, who he married on December 16, 1967. He graduated from Millikin University where he first became interested in journalism and determined to cover the fascinating events unfolding across the world. He began his career (you can read more about that here: <https://apnews.com/article/ap-journalist-steven-hurst-dead-15823ce31312286d9dd95bdce8df7ff6> ) working with the Herald & Review and went on to earn a master's degree in journalism at the University of Missouri. He quickly rose through the ranks of the Associated Press (AP) and in 1979 was posted in Soviet Moscow, where he covered breaking news for the AP, NBC, and CNN, earning many prestigious awards, including a Peabody and an Emmy. He lived and worked abroad, mostly in Moscow, through 1993 and developed a deep love and fascination for Russia. But it was away from the intrigue, fast pace, and intense coverage of Cold War Moscow that he discovered one of the joys of his life: tending to his garden sheltered among the birch and pine trees at his Russian cottage near the Moscow River, where he spent his free time. Mr. Hurst and his wife had three children: Sally Hurst of Amman, Jordan, married to Ghazi Balkiz; Anne Alavi of Oslo, Norway, married to Samad Alavi; and Ellen Hurst of Seattle, Washington, married to Kevin O'Rourke. His grandchildren are Gabriel O'Rourke, Mina Alavi, Zain Alavi, and Caroline O'Rourke. He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife. He leaves a sister, Patricia Smith of Decatur, Illinois, many nieces and nephews, and his dear friend Betsy Barker. In addition to his remarkable career in journalism, Mr. Hurst was known for his love of the natural world. Some of his fondest memories were fishing in the Sangamon River as a



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young man. Later in life he enjoyed gardening and keeping bees, and he loved visiting the vast wildernesses of state and national parks around the country. He was also an animal lover—ever a champion of the underdog, he was a staunch defender of our world’s most vulnerable citizens. Endlessly curious and always learning about the world, he was eager to share his enthusiasm and wisdom with those around him. His family will miss his brilliant guiding light.




## Events

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### Celebration of Life

 **Sunday**, October 13, 2024

 11:00 AM CT

 **Rock Springs Consevation Area**  
IL



## Tribute Wall

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CS

**Charles Shrader** posted:

I met Steve and Kathy in Columbia MO in the fall of 1971. We sat next to each other in News 101. His first feature assignment was to interview women pumping their own gas in the early days of self service pumps. He wasn't thrilled. I spent many wonderful evenings with Steve and Kathy. We were all looking forward to getting back to Europe. They had spent their junior year in Vienna and I was in Aix-en-Provence. Kathy didn't make it as Sally was on the way. We last spoke when he was in Columbus and I was a Freshman medical student. Years later I looked up one morning and he was on CNN reporting on Cherenko's death. Wow, was I impressed. As every one knows he was a kind, engaged and fascinating friend. I feel so privileged to have known him. Rick Shrader

January 27 at 2:29 PM

BM

**Bill Mattson** posted:

Dear family and friends of Steve I just learned of Steve passing; our prayers to y'all from Galveston Texas. 🙏 Steve and I were paper boys in Decatur; he lived down the street from me. Steve had the morning paper and I had the afternoon; our routes mainly overlapping. So , we learned how to collaborate, not compete. 😊 Later, as a Global businessman, I visited Moscow and we spent several evenings together when our day jobs were over; I believe Kathy and girls were on home leave. He showed me things about the Soviet Union, which visitors never saw or understood. I told him stories of my family's escape from Iran. Tall tales from lifelong friends. We solved most of the World problems then 😊 God bless all yall and all you love 🙏🙏 Bill Mattson

January 11 at 9:06 AM

SP

**Susan Parker** posted:

John and I are sending our heartfelt thoughts to Sally, Anne, and Ellen. We shared momentous times with Steve and Kathy and will always treasure our memories of them. Susan and John Parker

October 14 at 3:43 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Stu Ellis** posted:

Steve and I became close friends in 1973 when he was covering county government for the Herald & Review and I was running my morning news beat for WSOY radio. Even though we were supposed to be competitors, we conspire daily to ensure the other had any big news that we had uncovered. That teamwork lasted until Steve went off to learn how to speak Russian. When I had an opportunity to go to Russia in 1986 to cover agriculture for the WSOY farm audience. One of my first moves was to contact Steve and tell him I was headed his way. I let him know that I had made an effort to request an interview with Mikhail Gorbachev but Steve said he was probably quite busy dealing with the nuclear catastrophe at Chernobyl. Nevertheless, Steve was quite helpful while I was in Russia, and will always be indebted to his friendship. I was totally unaware that he was living in Decatur and full of sorrow that I did not get to share memories of our days past before his passing.

October 10 at 3:33 AM



**Nicholas Wadhams** posted:

Steve was a great friend and mentor to me when we both worked on AP's weekend international desk in New York in 2002-2004. He was a veteran who knew precisely what to do, I was a young and inexperienced editor looking to make my mark. We shared so many laughs and I always looked forward to serving as Steve's deputy on those weekend days when the world was often breaking around us. My most ridiculous memory of that time occurred when I decided one day to buy a pack of pork rinds from a convenience store nearby. I shared my bounty with Steve. He promptly cracked a tooth and had to go in a few days later to get a new crown. I've often thought over the years how grateful I was that Steve laughed it all off -- or at least made me think it was no big deal. I'm sure the dental bills were sky-high but he never held it against me.

October 8 at 10:01 AM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

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



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