



# Stephen John Oehmen

DEC 17, 1945 - JUL 29, 2021



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# Stephen John Oehmen

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Steve Oehmen, 75, of Germantown, TN passed away at his home on Thursday evening, July 29, 2021 with his wife and sons at his bedside. Dr. Stephen Oehmen leaves behind his loving wife, Susan, of fifty-two years; son Christopher (Ann) and grandsons Luke and Ryan; son Jeremy (Stacey) and granddaughter Harper; sister Suzanne Wilson; brother Greg Oehmen; numerous nephews and nieces, dear friends, and his rescue dog Millie of 15 years who steadfastly stayed by his side. Steve was born in Chicago in 1945 to parents Gregory Joseph Oehmen and Helen Ritzinger Oehmen. His family moved to Saint Louis where he attended Bishop DuBourg High School, and after three attempts at a freshman year in college was finally successful and graduated from University of Missouri-St. Louis in 1969. While in college, he met Sue and they married shortly after they both graduated. They moved to Athens, Ohio to continue their studies and then to Chattanooga, TN and finally to Memphis where Stephen received his Doctor of Education Degree in Counseling and Personnel Services in 1981.

Dr. Oehmen had, in his own words, an extraordinary life, and enjoyed a number of wonderful adventures and experiences along the way. He spent most of his professional life working with young people, either in the classroom or through the Guidance Office. He was the first Director of Counseling Services at Memphis University School, and taught special needs young people in Ohio, Chattanooga, Memphis and Arkansas. He also worked at First TN Bank and FedEx in Human Resource and Staff Development. After retiring from FedEx he returned to Guidance Counseling at Houston High School.

While at FedEx, he was able to travel and see some wonderful places in the world, usually at first light having jump seated to most of his travel destinations aboard FedEx freighters. Also while at FedEx, Dr. Oehmen began (and just as quickly ended) a brief film career, virtually “starring” in a scene from “The Castaway” which



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nonetheless wound up on the cutting room floor.

Dr. Oehmen was a published poet and writer of short stories and outdoor pieces, most often having to do with fly fishing. As was his tendency, when he got into fly fishing he went all the way “in” and took no shortcuts along the way, learning not only how to tie his own flies, but also building fly rods for his sons for their respective sixteenth birthdays and for other close friends.

He earned his Private Soaring Pilot license while living in Chattanooga and eventually developed a fair amount of skill keeping a sailplane in the air when he wanted it to be. He kayaked the rivers of eastern Tennessee and northern Georgia, only after building his own kayak. Eventually he turned his spare time attention to shooting trap and, of course, could only do that competitively. Along the way in the fifteen years or so he shot, he earned local, State, and Regional championships, and one National trophy. He did not build any trap guns but of course, insisted on reloading competition trap shells to his own specifications. He always felt very lucky to have the success he did in competitive shooting.

He had a darkish sense of humor. Reading the Obituaries in the local paper for example, he burst into laughter upon reading someone had died unexpectedly” because he thought to himself “too late for me to die unexpectedly. In fact, I have friends who have been wondering what’s the hold-up!”

Steve did his level best to leave the world and particularly its people in better condition than he found them. This value was often represented in his volunteer work. He volunteered with the Memphis/Shelby County Juvenile Court, working first as an Auxiliary Probation Officer, supervising the probation of juvenile offenders where he rose to the rank of Deputy Chief being responsible for the development of Volunteers’ ongoing growth of leadership capabilities, ensuring that a ready pool of prepared leaders would always be available to lead the organization. Also during this time, Dr. Oehmen was a member of the Shelby County Foster Care Review Board, serving for three years as the Board’s Chairman. In retirement, Steve also volunteered at the Memphis Suicide Crisis Center for six years amassing over 700 hours of work.

He loved deeply and persistently. He believed that any given situation had to be



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either comic or tragic, and so as often as possible, he opted for the comical view of the world. His family and friends will miss his humor, his laughter and generous heart.

A Memorial Service for Steve will be held in the future. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that people honor Dr. Oehmen's life and legacy by helping those in need with donations or volunteer service with Project Outreach of Fayette County, TN or your local food bank, animal rescue services, or other charity or service of your choice.



## Tribute Wall

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HO

**Harper Oehmen** posted:

As his granddaughter I remember that he was a chocolate lover. He would get up in the middle of the night looking for some chocolate milk. He would also steal my cupcakes when I wasn't looking.

May 8 at 12:26 PM

MB

**Mike Babineaux** posted:

Gonna miss ya buddy. RIP

December 15 at 12:03 PM

JE

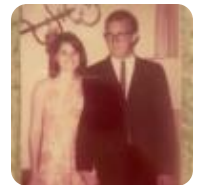
**Jeremy** shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.



September 10 at 7:42 PM

JE

**Jeremy** shared an album called **Memories Album**.



September 10 at 7:41 PM

JE

**Jeremy** posted:

Dad always told me "It's not what matters that happens, it's what you become because of it." It's a foundational concept upon which I've relied during the most difficult of times. There are far too many memories to share on this forum, but one stands out I'd like to remember him by. He read me "The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein the night before my First Communion. The closing lines will always remind me of Dad and perfectly capture his selfless giving to others: "I don't need very much now," said the boy, "just a quiet place to sit and rest. I am very tired." "Well," said the tree, straightening herself up as much as she could, "well, an old stump is good for sitting and resting. Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest." And the boy did. And the tree was happy. Rest in peace Dad; we miss you every day.

September 10 at 7:40 PM



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GO

**Greg Oehmen** posted:

As I write this the memories of Steve are heavy on my heart. He was a good, caring person with a wonderful sense of humor and perhaps a story or two involving Steve and I would be good to share. His choice of autos early on was interesting. Yesterday as if on cue, I found myself behind a very old car that looked familiar. I sped up and yes it was an old Volvo sedan which brought to memory Steve's ancient Volvo sedan which was snappily styled after a 1946 Plymouth. Back then most people thought a Volvo was a Russian washing machine or something. Well, Steve was ahead of the crowd in the luxury car department. Later (or maybe before) he bought a powder blue, very used Triumph TR3. He enlisted me in the maiden voyage. Down the road we went (a road not far from the home of his future wife). As we sped along, for no apparent reason, the hood (bonnet) loosened, opened blocking our view and blew completely off rising like a kite in the wind. We looked at each other in dismay and then began to laugh. After a short discussion with the seller it was repaired and enjoyed by Steve until the next chapter in his automotive history. Well brother, tight lines and favorable winds. Adios, Greg.

August 22 at 11:24 AM



**James Ruggiero** posted:

Cheryl and I met Sue and Steve (and their cats) when they moved into the apartment upstairs, on Palmer Street in Athens, OH, in 1969. They were beginning graduate school at Ohio University, as were Cheryl and me. Little did they know that the previous tenants were Stan and Joyce Plumly. Stan Plumly was just beginning a career as an English teacher at U. Maryland. He was also becoming a well-known poet. He was honored officially as the Poet Laureate of Maryland. Sue and Steve were fun neighbors, and so were their cats. Jim Ruggiero

August 14 at 7:48 AM

PD

**Patti Denegri** posted:

Steve was our neighbor for many years. We always talked on the cove and he always greeted us with a smile. My favorite memory of Steve is when he knocked on our door because he needed our help. His hair had just gotten long enough for a ponytail. Sue was out of town so he wanted us to see if he had done the ponytail correctly!!!! It was such a fun moment! We will certainly miss Steve on the cove. Love and prayers to Sue and the entire Oehmen family

August 10 at 3:59 PM



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JS

**John And Maureen Scott** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

We are so grateful to have known Steve over the last couple of years. Reconnecting with cousin Candy ( as known by her closest and favorite cousins) brought a wealth of special memories of events with Steve. Connections that involved visits in Texas for family and in Florida for spring training games, and a very special trip to Alaska round out our favorite memories of Steve. The pandemic brought us to weekly FaceTime get togethers when Steve and John dominated the conversations with old, new and mostly humorous stories. We cherish all those times with him and will miss his love and kindness. He always could point out where he was going, even if he made it up! Love to Candy, Chris and Jeremy. Mo and John



August 10 at 7:41 AM

JC

**Josephine Chrestman** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Truly the best neighbors anyone could have. Steve will be missed for my life time. I am so thankful to know him. Love and prayers to Sue, Jeremy and Chris.



August 8 at 2:08 PM

CO

**Chris Oehmen** posted:

It is overwhelming to try to come up with a small number of stories that capture our time with dad. Here is an attempt at picking some highlights that I remember. (I bet Jeremy has a great list also.) Here goes...Dad once drove me home from our neighborhood school completely in reverse (following all traffic laws and road signs, coming to a complete stop at the 4 way stop sign, and using his directional indicator) to prove that the world would still continue turning even if someone did something so against the rules. At one point around 2nd grade, I would come home from school every day and turn on all the lights in the house, walk into the bathroom, and punch the shower curtain (to make sure there was no one behind it). One day, he waited in the tub and after I punched the shower curtain, it "punched back". I don't remember much after that but I never punched another shower curtain to see if there was someone there. In high school, dad was worried that I was too serious, so he offered me \$20 in cash to get an intentional Saturday school. And in his exact words "it can't be anything lame like not turning in homework. It has to be for something like throwing a sandwich at someone in English class". Jeremy offered to collect on the \$20, and dad said 'no'. We camped in so many severe weather situations (including flash floods and tornadoes), I actually thought dad's super power was conjuring rain clouds whenever we planted a tent stake in the ground. There is so much more, but these show a bit of the ridiculous, funny, loving side of dad.

August 5 at 6:21 PM



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LG

**Lane G** posted:

What a great man and even better husband and father. He was always quick to "check in" and see how you were doing whenever he saw you. It's a testament to his character and heart that he cared more about what was going on with you then about telling you what was going on with him. His kindness was only matched by his sense of humor which was a beacon and radiated throughout the room wherever he was. I can't think of a time I was around the man where I didn't double over in laughter and those are memories I will always cherish. I consider myself a better person for having known you and you will be greatly missed until we meet again. My love and prayers for Sue and the entire Oehmen family.

August 4 at 6:48 AM

JD

**Joanne David** posted:

I am so grateful to have been able to reconnect with Steve over the past almost year and a half on Zoom with our high school classmates. Sue tells us he calls us "The Kids".Loved his sense of humor, his stories and his inspiration to give and do for others.He will certainly be missed. Prayers, thoughts, and love to Sue and his family.Joanne David

August 3 at 8:56 PM

RO

**Ryan O.** posted:

As his first Grandson, I recall early childhood years of mine in his home, dressed as a pumpkin for halloween, trying to steal the Recces peanut butter cups on his coffee table. He is dearly missed. Many a book has he recommended me to guide me in my life experience; the most important book he recommended was the complete series of 'Calvin and Hobbes' from the newspaper. Any advice I still need from him can be found there.

August 3 at 6:10 PM

JM

**Jane McNassar** posted:

Loved getting reacquainted with Steve after 50 years passed since high school. Lots of fun and thought-provoking emails. He was amazingly brave during his health battle and it was always so good to see him on Zoom. Such a generous person. My thoughts, prayers and heart are with Sue, Chris and Jeremy.Jane McNassar

August 2 at 5:40 PM



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LW

**Loretta Walz** posted:

Candy and family...our sincere sympathy on the passing of Steve...such an incredible man. You and all who know and loved Steve have been blessed. Loretta and Stan Walz

August 2 at 6:05 AM

NG

**Nathan G.** posted:

I am blessed and honored to have known Dr. Oehmen. His sense of humor and intelligence (both passed on to his sons) was infectious. His love for his bride, Sue, was proof one does find their True Love. One of my greatest memories was when we re-connected after many years. I came by to say hello and knocked on the door. I presumed he was asleep and as I was walking back to my car to leave he came outside and asked me if he could help me. As we both stood there with masks covering our faces I asked him if he remembered me...all of a sudden I could see this smile from behind that mask and as we approached to shake hands he opened his arms and said, "we hug around here son". What a legacy he has left for us to cherish! Heaven now has a new angel and he is doing his best to make sure all of the others are Cardinals fans for sure! God Bless You sir! Respectfully, Nathan S. Gregory

August 2 at 5:10 AM

MK

**Mary Ann Kauffman** posted:

I am so very appreciative that Steve always took the time to share his smile, stories and life with his DuBourg friends on zoom. He was a gift to us even when he struggled with his pain. Blessings and prayers for Steve, his wife and his entire family that he was so very proud and loved so much.

 Mary Ann Kauffman (Knesie)

August 1 at 3:37 PM

SD

**Sarah Daddabbo** posted:

Sue, Chris, Jeremy and family: we are so sorry for your loss. Steve was such a part of our years at OLPH; we have many fond memories of times spent with the choir and seeing him in church. He was a special person and there was much about him that we never knew. May you all find peace in the coming days in your memories and in the prayers and special messages from family and friends. Mike and Sarah D'Addabbo

August 1 at 3:17 PM



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BO

**Barbara Ogles** posted:

Sue, I am heart broken! We got home last night after a ten-day trip with family to celebrate my birthday. I had no idea the end was so near, and I will cherish forever my last lunch with Steve. I'm so grateful that you and both the boys were with Steve at home when he passed. I know you've heard this before, but Steve shared with me, many years ago, that the one thing in this world that he didn't think he could handle was life without you. I remember when he first told me about his illness, I said, "Well, the silver lining is that you won't outlive Sue." (Sometimes we shared very dark humor; it was that or cry!) I will write you a longer letter, but I wanted to let you know that I am so saddened by the death of my wonderful friend. My sincerest sympathies to you, Chris, Jeremy and their families. I pray that faith, family, and friends will help sustain you during this very, very difficult time. Love, Barbara (O.)

August 1 at 1:27 PM

JW

**Joanne, Kelly And Walker** posted:

Steve said, "I've had a great life!" In celebration of that life well-lived, and in comfort to all who loved him, a cluster of trees will be planted in loving memory of Steve. In Peace.,-Joanne, Kelly, and Walker.

August 1 at 1:14 PM

JW

**Joanne, Kelly And Walker** shared an album called **Memories Album**.



August 1 at 1:12 PM

BB

**Becky Babineaux** posted:

Steve - you were a wonderful friend and we will miss you forever. Love, Mike and Becky

July 31 at 7:16 PM



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**Jane Spavale** posted:

My Uncle Steve was the best man I have ever known. His sense of humor was contagious . His stories filled me with joy. We threw pickles from the upper level of the mall down to unexpected folks below & just laughed for hours...I love & will miss you forever...be with the angels & say Hi to Beth

July 31 at 3:56 PM



**Donna O'riordan** August 1 at 12:49 PM

The Uncle I never had. I love the picture on here. That is how I remember him. So sorry for your loss.



## Media

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September 10 at 7:42 PM





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**Josephine Chrestman** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

August 8 at 2:08 PM





**Joanne, Kelly And Walker** shared 2 photos to the **Memories Album** album.

August 1 at 1:12 PM



We loved seeing Steve and Sue with beloved dog, Millie, in October 2020



...and Steve showed off his Paint by Number portrait of Millie.



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

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



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