



## Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard

December 8, 1964 - March 28, 2023

Dateline: Alton

Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard died at 7:29 a.m. Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at his home in Alton. Sig grew up in the southern Illinois town of Carbondale, where many lifelong friends still reside. He always spoke about the town as a magical place where cultures, family, and academic purists melded together.

Carbondale was also the home to the famed Rosetta News book store, owned and operated by our Sig who eagerly recommend books and brewed espresso. Every summer growing up his family followed his father to Red Lodge Montana at the YBRA geological field station where John Utgaard taught a field geology class. Sigurd spent his time there learning the landscapes and landforms from his father and getting into trouble with his brothers. This would be a place he continued to visit throughout life sharing its treasure and beauty with his family.

Sigurd was a true renaissance man and one of his life's passions was a purist of knowledge. Sig earned a B.A. in German and Philosophy from SIUC and a Master's in Education from Greenville University. One way he shared this with the world was through becoming a science teacher at Alton middle school.

This is where he started and headed the garden club. In following years, he expanded the project through a grant to reclaim Rock Springs Park. His vision was to create an edible food forest at the park. Sig volunteered his time weekly after school, working with students to share his love of nature and sustainability. Sig loved learning and teaching. He was devoted to fostering

curiosity in students and supporting his fellow teachers. His coworkers will never forget the dishes he brought to the potluck.

His gift of hospitality reached beyond family to his friends to the community, spending time preparing meals for Pere Marquette Restoration Project, the Madison County Democratic Fish Fry and other opportunities to hone his culinary skills.

True to his Renaissance man nature he had the largest number of skills and interests from collecting Johnny West figurines, large rocks found on hikes, plants that have followed him from home to home, and small dishes for his elaborate dinner parties. He loved playing board games that never ended. Sig loved to explore culture and the world through food - hosting Master and Commander themed dinner adventures, murder mystery parties, and weekly pool parties making him the true "Host with the Most".

Sig's true treasure was his family and his favorite role was being a father. Sig expressed his love through his teaching, culinary skills, with affectionate nicknames; with hard fought games; with celebratory feasts; with heart felt talks; with sharing his tales of travels; unforgettable road trips; the gift of literature and film alike; pool parties and bon fires; and a patience beyond measure.

Siggy had a best friend in his wife Sue. They shared an amazing adventure and delighted in the simple treats of life. Children and friends, nature walks, and traveling (with and without their tribe). They knew it was an instant match when both of their bookshelves were adorned with Tarzan books and Johnny West figures.

Visitation will be from 11:00 a.m. until time of memorial service at 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 1, 2023 at Gent Funeral Home in Alton. Pastor Steven Helfrich will officiate. Online guestbook and information may be found at [www.gentfuneralhome.com](http://www.gentfuneralhome.com)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 1. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Gent Funeral Home & Cremation Services  
2409 State Street  
Alton, IL 62002  
(618) 466-5544  
<https://www.gentfuneralhome.com/>

## Memorial Service

APR 1. 1:00 PM (CT)

Gent Funeral Home & Cremation Services  
2409 State Street  
Alton, IL 62002  
(618) 466-5544  
<https://www.gentfuneralhome.com/>

# Tribute Wall

AN

“ He was my 7th grade science teacher and I remember hating him but it was just because he was strict. He always had a smile on his face when teaching us and was the most fun class i ever had. Thank you Mr.Utgaard may you rest in peace.

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**Anon** - December 30, 2023 at 03:50 AM

KJ

“ CCHS classmates, I just learned of Sigurd's passing after finding his name in the "In Memoriam" page of SIU Alumni Magazine. My heart is broken. Bright, funny, cool, and forever supportive of others, Sig is and was among the best of us. Sincerest, belated condolences to family/friends/students all touched by him.

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**Kelly Dixon Jackson** - May 30, 2023 at 06:30 PM



“ So sorry to hear about this loss. He was a kind and sweet neighbor. We shall miss his smiling face.

*Reggie & Teresa Pearson*

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**Teresa Kirkwood Pearson** - April 11, 2023 at 05:08 PM

AB

“ I remember a long very thin guy, always with a smile in his face and philosophical words on his lips - Baden, Austria in 1982 or 1983 - So sad to learn this!

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**Andrea Brunner** - April 05, 2023 at 04:38 PM

SM

“ Grew up with Sig in C'dale....our claim to fame in the day, my dad took us to the drive-In for a screening of all 5 Planet of the Apes films.... Long night/early morning and made for some fun memories over years. You will be missed my friend.  
Stuart Medlin

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**Stuart Medlin** - April 04, 2023 at 12:14 PM

KM

“ Sending my condolences to the Utgaard family. Never knew Sig that well thru school days but I knew He was in a league of His very own wise and bright world. Saw Him recently at a teacher's funeral and He was alert, content, and was smiling as though He was at a reunion like no other. I hold that happiness with me for I see that smile still bright as He arrived in heaven on His abrupt departure from one paradise to another. Those who love to travel also love to eventually get to the stars up above. He loved life and will be missed here. May He enjoy God's paradise up north and may the rest of us keep His legacy alive in our hearts, souls, and minds and carry on His glow the rest of our days. Karen McNeely McMinn CCHS Class of 83 Carbondale IL



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**Karen McNeely McMinn** - April 04, 2023 at 10:36 AM

PU

“ Thank you all for sharing your memories of my big brother Sig. It really means a lot. I especially want to his students to know that he really loved teaching and working with his students. It was so nice to see examples of that posted here.

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**Peter Utgaard** - April 03, 2023 at 12:17 AM

RF

“ Although I have not seen Sig in years I remember his smile and his voice. I remember him when he was either a teen or early 20's. He was an "old soul", so full of knowledge. He and his parents would come to the Farmer's Market to buy and visit us. I did not know he married and had children. How wonderful for him and them. So sorry for your loss

*Rosalia Fulia*

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rosalia fulia - April 01, 2023 at 11:54 PM

JE

“ 2007 ❤️



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Jenna - April 01, 2023 at 07:56 PM

SS

“ I'm so thankful to Sig for giving me the best job a college girl could have ever had. I have no doubt that helped shape the person I am today. Sig's playful wit and unending knowledge was inspiring to be around. While my heart breaks that I won't ever get the chance to see him again, I'm assured that his spirit lives on in the rest of us. How could it not? Wishing peace & love to all grieving. I hope to continue to try to live a life that would make Sig proud.

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**Sarah (Barton) Strait** - April 01, 2023 at 02:30 PM

SZ

“*Sig was such a unique, vital presence--kind, curious, fiercely intelligent, funny, irreverent. He will be so missed in this world, and I send my deepest sympathy to his wife, children, and brothers. I knew Sig as a classmate and family friend, and will always remember him so clearly for the way he brought energy and fun to any gathering. He was keenly interested in everything and everyone around him, and he actively made his world a better place. I feel so lucky to have known him. Godspeed dear friend.*

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**Sarah Zimmerman** - April 01, 2023 at 11:39 AM

LM

*So beautifully said. Thank you, Sarah.*

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**Laura C. Musgraves** - April 02, 2023 at 10:48 AM

SZ

*Thank you Laura, and for your memories of Sig too.*

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**Sarah Zimmerman** - April 02, 2023 at 12:53 PM

TB

“*Condolences to Sig's family. Such an amazing guy and true friend.*



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**Tami Boaz** - March 31, 2023 at 06:53 PM

MM

“*Sig was a great guy and my sympathies go out to his family. He was a year older and a whole lot cooler than me. He always came across as the guy who was incredibly smart but never seemed too anxious about any of it. What I recall most of all, though, is that he was very kind and thoughtful of others. I'm sure he was a great teacher simply because he so easily cared for others.*

*Mike Miller*

*A fellow former Terrier*

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**Mike Miller** - March 31, 2023 at 06:40 PM

HP

“ Hello all,

*I don't know many of you but we all share in our love and respect for an individual we were lucky enough to meet, Sigurd Utgaard.*

*Hossein of Cat Ranch days called with news of his passing. I felt a wave of sadness and disbelief come over me. I'd always hoped that Sig and family would make it to Europe before old age crept in. Or that I with family would road trip across the States again.*

*Sigurd and I had some intense, formative years from 1981-1988 during our "Sturm und Drang" period as young fellahs in high school and college settings. We shared a lot of living spaces: The Cat Ranch, Bock House, Log Cabin, etc. and I even stayed at his folks' place the summer before I left back to Europe. We loved literature, music, film, people, marvelous pancake breakfasts and cultural events. I have memories galore of spending long hours talking about the wonders of life and reveling in each other's company and thought. We'd even had dreams of converting the derelict Carbondale Glove Factory into a huge culture space. That didn't happen, but Sigurd's bookstore and culture space did.*

*Sig introduced Pachelbel, Ravel, Satie and other composers into our soundscapes of Rock and Roll, New Wave, Punk and Ambient music. German, Farsi and other world languages echoed within our walls. Cribbage, Dirty Cricket and Nick at Nite too! We loved a good party, and creating college speak-easys. Through the years our various college houses experienced eclectic discussions and musings on life, humor, memorable keggers and culinary gatherings at all of them. Life was glorious! It felt like all were welcome, and the world decided to come.*

*I was lucky to have known Sigurd Utgaard, a brother, and our world, my world is a poorer one with his departure. So, in death, let's celebrate his life. And so it goes.*

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**Howard Suhr Perez** - March 31, 2023 at 03:33 PM

LM

*Thank you for sharing these memories, Howard.*

**Laura C. Musgraves** - April 02, 2023 at 10:49 AM

MD

*Well written! Best lived! Truly loved! Howard, you and all who knew Sig are in my thoughts 🙏*

**Mary DuPont** - April 02, 2023 at 11:03 AM

ES

*Beautiful words and I too remember him talking about the Cat Ranch when we spent time together in Austria. As traveling companions there was once the time of sipping a bottle of red wine on the outside ramparts of the citadel in Dubrovnik. As soon as the bottle at emptied itself, almost mysteriously, I had Syd give it a tossup in the air. And somehow the image I captured with my Pentex camera, had that bottle, just hovering perfectly level of the horizon. If I find that image when I get home, I'll try to share it with y'all. It's one of the favorite most favorite ones I've ever taken,*

**Ed Schmid** - April 08, 2023 at 03:27 AM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.*



March 31, 2023 at 01:42 PM

AN

“ *1 file added to the album Sig With His Students*



**Anonymouse** - March 31, 2023 at 01:17 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.



March 31, 2023 at 10:38 AM



“ Bruce and Janet purchased the Simply Elegant S pathiphyllum for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.



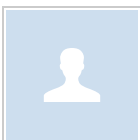
**Bruce and Janet** - March 31, 2023 at 10:11 AM



“ Praying for his family during this difficult time. May you find comfort in the memories imprinted in your hearts.



**MELODY DAVIS-WILSON** - March 31, 2023 at 09:50 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.



March 30, 2023 at 10:21 PM



“ *Delightful Dieffenbachia was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.*



March 30, 2023 at 07:56 PM



“ *Sig - thank you for staying my friend thru all the years & places we've lived. There isn't another even close to the kind of man you were. My sympathies to your lovely wife Sue, your amazing daughter Maggie, your son & all the other kids you've loved & cared for over the years. From your Mundor.*

**Cathie H Paull** - March 30, 2023 at 07:12 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.*



March 30, 2023 at 06:12 PM



“ *Sig was one of my students when I first came to SIU. I remember he was crazy about a book, Hamlet's Mill, on the role of myth in the birth of modern science. I remember his enthusiasm. Later we would intersect when he ran the Rosetta. He was enthusiastic about the difference a small bookstore which carried the NYT could make. I wish his spirit joy*

**Tom Alexander** - March 30, 2023 at 05:48 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.*



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March 30, 2023 at 03:15 PM



“ *Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.*



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March 30, 2023 at 01:20 PM

LM

“ I've known Sig and his family since we met in 6th grade at Lewis School in Carbondale, IL. My brother, Tim, and Sig's brother, Erik, were three years ahead of us, CCHS Class of 1980. I am heartbroken to hear about our dear friend's passing. Sig was funny, smart and kind. One of my favorite photos of Sig is a yearbook photo of he and Dan Snyder running in the CCHS Homecoming parade in their Japanese suits and straw hats. If anyone from CCHS has this photo, please post it. I envied Sig's stories about summers in Red Lodge, MT. He loved music, books, and coffee and it is so fitting that he opened a bookstore in his hometown. Perhaps his first job was working at Waldenbooks in Carbondale, a bookstore that was managed by my mom, Marsha Musgraves. The lovely obituary captured Sig in all his charms and talents, thank you to the author. I met Sue and Sig's family at our last high school reunion, and I was hoping to connect with him again at our 40th CCHS reunion again this summer. Sadly, we will not have that chance. My sincerest condolences to Sue, Sig's family, and to Erik, Peter, and John. From Laura Musgraves, CCHS Class of 1983.

Laura C Musgraves - March 30, 2023 at 01:06 PM

LA

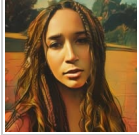
Dear Laura--Shelly Dolan-Ash shared that photo on FB recently, and I do have it (I remember that day, and remembered the photo when Shelly shared it!). Can't figure out how to post it here without taking up a large space, but please contact me if you like! Laurie Johnson (2 years behind you at CCHS, and you were a Theatre Role Model for me!): [ruthlaurie16@gmail.com](mailto:ruthlaurie16@gmail.com)

Laurie - April 01, 2023 at 01:42 PM

LM

Thank you, Laurie. I'm not on FB but I'm so glad others are sharing their photos and memories of Sig.

Laura C. Musgraves - April 02, 2023 at 10:52 AM



“ 1 file added to the album *Sig With His Students*



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**Candi Johnson** - March 30, 2023 at 11:54 AM

JZ

*I grew up spending time with Sig and his brothers in Montana as our fathers taught together, and his mother and mine were best friends for years. He was such a cool and unique person and touched everyone's lives who knew him. We will miss you Sig.*

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**Jay Zimmerman** - March 30, 2023 at 12:01 PM



“ *I met Sig years ago at a teacher PD and instantly liked him. His passion for science and his students was obvious. Fast-forward to now and I have had the pleasure of working with him through our Environmental Health Investigators program at SIUE. He was such a great teacher and colleague and I am blessed to have known him. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.*

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**Candi Johnson** - March 30, 2023 at 11:51 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.*



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March 30, 2023 at 11:49 AM

AA

“ Sigurd and his family grew up across the street from my family on Glenview. My favorite memory of Sigurd is when he joined my ballet calls taught by the indomitable Mrs. Intravia. Sigurd was tall and I was the tallest female so we danced together. This was in the 80s in southern Illinois when not many men took ballet. It was so much fun. Honestly, neither of us were great but it was always fun with Sigurd in class. My deepest sympathy to his family and his brothers.

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**Abby Arthur** - March 30, 2023 at 11:47 AM



“ Sig impacted so many peers, students, and those encountering his kind, gentle spirit. His soul has been blessed in a peaceful, loving manner. I feel grateful for my interaction with him at Alton Middle School! My prayers and thoughts are extended to family and friends.

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**Theresa O'Connor** - March 30, 2023 at 10:40 AM

IZ

“ I have many memories of Sig as his mother Susan was a very close friend of mine for many years in Carbondale and I was able to watch Sig grow up. My daughter Sarah Zimmerman was a good friend and classmate of Sig and we are grieved to learn of his death. My husband Jay Zimmerman and I send our deepest sympathy to his family. He will be greatly missed by so many of us who loved and admired him.

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**Isabel Zimmerman** - March 30, 2023 at 10:08 AM

VE

*Sig will be missed. I started working in the school district in the Annex as a security guard. Sig met me with a smile every day. We joked about my name - Violet. He loved flowers and I had a collection of "African" Violets. We talked about gardens and I enjoyed his "joyous" outlook on the beautiful things of life. I didn't talk with him often but it was always a good time. I took a position in the Main and didn't see he much after that time. He was a great person. To know him was to like him. Rest In Heavenly Peace Sig! Violet*

**Violet Evans** - March 30, 2023 at 10:23 AM

CE

“ *My sincerest condolences go out to the family and my fellow coworkers at Alton Middle School. My prayers are with everyone at this difficult time!*

**Christin Edwards** - March 30, 2023 at 09:50 AM

BS

“ *One thing is missing from the above tribute, Sig the Movie Star. I met Sigurd in the early 80's ('83?) when he starred in a friend's thesis film @ SIU. As a prop, somewhere out there, there's a photo of him in full Marine dress, imagine that? I graduated soon after, but as Carbondale is the Black Hole of America, I returned not long afterwards & my friendship w/Sigurd took up where we left off. Sadly, the last time we saw each other, actually, the last time we partied, I ended up with his hat. I was sure I'd see him again in C'dale, when the weather warmed, and I'd be able to return it & see him smile. Life plays cruel tricks. Truly one of a kind, the world is lessen by his passing.*

**Ben Stuparit** - March 30, 2023 at 12:54 AM

SU

*aaah yes, the hat we bought in Grand Caymen. Wear it well Ben.*

**sue utgaard** - April 04, 2023 at 12:47 AM

AZ

“ Sig was my ballet dance partner in high school (he had graduated a couple years earlier). He was the only male who showed up to take ballet at our little Carbondale dance studio, so that says something about who he was: an adventurer, intellectually curious, and a student of the arts. I remember his gentle soul and kind voice, eager to get his steps right. Sounds like he had a wonderful life and I am grateful to have known him. Condolences to his wife and family.

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**Andrea McBride Zeddies** - March 30, 2023 at 12:20 AM

AK

“ Some are driven to inspire young minds and others are meant to lead by example....Sig did both

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**Al Kuczynski** - March 29, 2023 at 11:39 PM

MD

“ So sorry to hear of Sig's passing. The description of Sig in the obituary is spot on but as his teammate in junior high and high school basketball I can attest that Sig was also a fierce competitor. His desire to succeed so fervently in competition seems a bit antagonistic to his soft demeanor off the court and desire to just make things better for the people(which is true Sig) but it seems he harnessed that energy he displayed as an excellent(though lefty) basketball player, into the pursuits that brought him his greatest pleasure—just making the world a better place, one Sig step at a time.

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**Marty Daesch** - March 29, 2023 at 10:30 PM

LM

Thank you, Marty. Our collective CHS hearts are breaking. From Laura Musgraves, Class of 1983

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**Laura C Musgraves** - March 30, 2023 at 12:33 PM



“ I didn't know Sig very long or very well, but even so his passing speaks volumes. I worked with him as part of the environmental health investigators at Alton Middle School and it was so inspiring to see the way he interacted with his students; the passion he shared for nature and our environment was truly one of a kind. And with his students - he had such a way with students. Sig was so inclusive, and always made sure each student felt seen. I've seen some of the shyest students open up around him and come out of their shell. He made content interactive and enjoyable, whether it be from his humor or genuine curiosity towards the material. Going to work will never be as enjoyable, and even now I am in disbelief that he is really gone.  
Rest easy 🕊️

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**Emma Griebenow** - March 29, 2023 at 09:12 PM

NP

“ We send our deepest sympathies for you and your family's loss Sue. 🙏

*Blaine Elliott and Nancy Pulizos*

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**Nancy Pulizos** - March 29, 2023 at 08:57 PM

VW

“ So many fond memories working in the AMS Gardens and Outdoor Classroom with Sig and his students, they adored him. And of course the gourmet feasts he would whip up for the Cabin Restoration Crew up in Marquette Park. How we all loved Sig and and all the wonderful gifts he brought to any table he graced. Sig was so loved and will be sorely missed. Much love and deepest condolences to Sue and all his children 💚

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**Virginia Woulfe-Beile** - March 29, 2023 at 08:38 PM



“ *Sig was the best of the teaching profession. Loved working with him and have so many memories of the garden. Helped with painting the fence years ago when he first started it. He shared the vegetables grown with students in the cafeteria and offered plant swaps. Mostly, I remember the service projects, grants, and other opportunities he brought to AMS. Our trip to Philadelphia for Youth Service America conference with Mrs. Hughes is a priceless memory. In my heart this April I will dedicate Earth Day to our friend and colleague. My deepest sympathy to his family. RIP Sig.*

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**Theresa O'Connor** - March 29, 2023 at 08:23 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.*



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March 29, 2023 at 08:17 PM



“ *So sorry I can't be there. Sig had a passion for teaching that is impossible to duplicate.*

*Nancy Coalson*

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**nancy coalson** - March 29, 2023 at 08:05 PM



“ Sig was so dedicated to exposing kids to nature and environmental education. His garden at Alton Middle School and his work with Rock Spring Park introduced so many to the beauty and science of nature. He was a kind soul and I am heartbroken to learn this sad news. I hope that volunteers can help his vision continue.

Sandy Crawford - March 29, 2023 at 07:48 PM



“ Sig would have always been my “phone-a-friend”  
Gonna miss you,  
Lisa Holland

Lisa Holland - March 29, 2023 at 07:30 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.



March 29, 2023 at 07:11 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.



March 29, 2023 at 06:14 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Sigurd "Sig" Utgaard.*



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March 29, 2023 at 05:52 PM