



Wayne R. Williams

May 25, 1935 - July 31, 2020

Dateline: Bloomington, IL

Wayne R. Williams, 85, died at 8:40 p.m. Friday, July 31, 2020 at Fountain View Memory Care Center in Granite City, IL. Born May 25, 1935 in Vergennes, IL, he was the son of Berl and Vivian (Romo) Williams. Mr. Williams graduated from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. He was drafted by the New York Giants Football Team and the Detroit Tigers baseball team. His career in athletic administration and coaching football took him from West Frankfort, Wood River, Granite City, Illinois State University, Alton High School, The University of Illinois and then to his alma mater SIUC where he retired. He was a member of the Salukis Hall of Fame for football and baseball and became a member of the St. Louis Metro Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 2019. He was a member of the Main Street United Methodist Church in Alton. On June 14, 1957 he married the former Janet Ozburn in DuQuoin, IL. She survives. Also surviving are two daughters, Denise Ruebhausen of Rochester, MN and Debbie Williams of Tempe, AZ, two sons, David Williams (Karen) of Colorado Springs, CO and Doug Williams (Cindy) of Bloomington, IL, eight grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and a brother, Gary Williams of DuQuoin, IL. Along with his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Gene Williams. Due to the COVID 19 restrictions on public gatherings, a drive thru visitation will be from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 5, 2020 at Gent Funeral Home in Alton. Please enter the funeral home parking lot from the

Rozier Street entrance. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the SIUC Athletic Foundation or the Alzheimer's Association. The family would like to thank the staff of Fountain View Memory Care Center for their loving care and support. Online guestbook and information may be found at www.geantfuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 5. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Gent Funeral Home & Cremation Services

2409 State Street

Alton, IL 62002

(618) 466-5544

<https://www.gentfuneralhome.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ Wayne R. Williams

January 28, 2023 at 10:19 AM



“ Wayne R. Williams

January 28, 2023 at 08:19 AM



“ I am so sorry for your loss, just heard the news, so a little delayed in sending my condolences. He was a wonderful man, and such a great friend to my Dad, Gerald Hutchcraft, and my husband, Craig Fackler so enjoyed the times together during all the golf outings for the UI. I send my heart filled wishes of caring to your family, as Dave was also a friend of Craig and I. Sadly, Gerald died in 2003, and Craig also passed this past 2020. Again, he truly was one of the "good" ones, and had an infectious smile and personality.

Donna Hutchcraft Fackler

Donna Hutchcraft Fackler - October 03, 2021 at 04:49 PM



“ I had the privilege of playing for Coach Williams in the fall of 1973, his last year in Granite City. That year like all the others was a winning season in a town that did not see much winning. He had the ability to reach into your soul, to make you believe in yourself and your team, And I can tell you, we were way more afraid of disappointing him, than any opponent on earth.

Doug Hartman - December 11, 2020 at 10:07 PM

GF

“ I just read of Wayne's passing in the SIU alumni magazine. My sister Susan (Freeberg) Kelly and I have very fond memories of Wayne from the time we spent together when he worked at Little Grassy Lake Camp for our father (Dr. William Freeberg). He was a great guy back then and from reading the tributes to him, he remained a great guy afterwards. Our condolences and warmest regards.

Glen Freeberg.

Glen V. Freeberg - September 25, 2020 at 06:34 PM

KK

“ I spent a fair amount of time at the William's home when they moved from West Frankfurt to Wood River. My thoughts are with Janet & Denise, I am sorry for your loss.

Kim Smith Killebrew - August 07, 2020 at 09:53 PM

TM

“ Mr. Williams was the best football coach I ever played for. He was tough, wise, and gentle at the same time. He was a heck of a guy. We will miss him very much. My condolences to the family. As a member of the 1964 Wood River football team, we would try our best to win for Coach Williams

Tom Miner Wood River 1964

Thomas G Miner - August 07, 2020 at 08:14 PM

LZ

“ Tonight we said goodbye to my best friend of 50 years father. When I met Denise her family became my family. Wayne was always there with that infectious laugh and contagious smile and the best hugs ever. He was a special person and could be tough as nails and soft as butter. I want to thank the Williams family for sharing him with so many people. I think of him every time I see a deck of cards or a bottle of B & B. We can all learn from his love for life. It was sad to say goodbye but easy in a way knowing his was truly a life well lived.

Lisa Wright Zabawa - August 05, 2020 at 10:38 PM

JR

“ Dear Janet, Dave, Doug, Debbie and Denise,

We are sorry to hear of Wayne's passing. May those precious memories and God's comfort sustain you. His was a life well-lived. I guess the last time we saw Wayne was at the Alton Steak n Shake a few years past. He seemed to remember us.

Our son, Todd, thought so much of him. For awhile there it seemed like Todd was a part of your family especially during the time that he and Dave were on the golf team. He enjoyed being with all of you. Janet, you were almost like a second mom to him. Wishing you well.

Larry & Jan Reid

Jan Reid - August 05, 2020 at 07:39 PM

MB

“ Dear Janet,

Jim and I send our condolences for Wayne's passing. We wish you the best and hope the memories of your life together will provide you with comfort in the days ahead.

Jim & Marge Baiter

Marge Baiter - August 05, 2020 at 01:57 PM

AB

“ Dear Janet, I'm sure the past two years have been difficult for you and Wayne. I wish you the best in the coming months. Ann Badasch

Ann Badasch - August 05, 2020 at 12:08 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Wayne R. Williams.



August 04, 2020 at 04:44 PM

JR

“ I was saddened to learn of Wayne's passing. I was fortunate to know Wayne through college coaching. He was my 'John Wayne' of football coaches....he and Coach Gerry Hart were my mentors in many, many ways. Let me extend my heartfelt condolences and best wishes to Janet & family. John Rauschenberger, Chicago

John Rauschenberger - August 04, 2020 at 01:37 PM

LZ

Today we say goodbye to a great man. I could not imagine 50 years ago when Denise became my best friend that I would meet such a bigger than life person, her father. The Williams family has shared their father and husband with so many people for ever. I cannot look at a deck of cards or a bottle of B & B and not think of Wayne. I will miss his contagious smile, laugh and the best bear hugs ever. To the Williams family, Thank you for sharing this incredible man with us. Goodbye to a Life well lived.

Lisa Wright Zabawa - August 05, 2020 at 07:01 AM

FK

“ *We were sadden to hear this about a true Illinois athletic legend. He not only was a great athlete, he was also a wonderful person. Although occasionally we had our differences about athletic teams, I always enjoyed the time we were together, especially at tailgate gatherings, Busch Stadium's Cardinal Club or private events. The picture here definitely depicts Wayne's personality bigger than life itself.*

*May God provide comfort to his family and his soul rest in peace.
Fred W. & Dorothy Krietemeyer*

Fred W Krietemeyer - August 03, 2020 at 11:31 AM

DW

Freddie we so appreciate your kind words. He so enjoyed you, especially after he was done coaching in the SWC. 😊 Thank you and God bless you pal.

David Williams - August 03, 2020 at 11:12 PM

SH

“ *so sorry to see this obit. mr williams was my drivers ed teacher in west frankfort. late 1950's. i was happy to see he finally got sons. i remember him laughing when the 2nd girl was born. he said that he was the only male in the house, even the dog was a girl! he was a very pleasant man. prayers for the family.*

sally holland - August 03, 2020 at 10:32 AM

DW

Thanks for sharing. My dad was my hero! And by the way, I'm the 2nd daughter, Debbie!

Debbie Williams - August 04, 2020 at 04:18 PM

RN

“ Out deepest sympathies to Janet and family. We have known Wayne and Janet for 54 years. Wayne was Don's mentor in his first coaching job after college. The work relationship quickly developed into a life long friendship. We have many great memories as neighbors and traveling companions. He will always have a special place in our hearts.

Don and Rosalie

Rosalie Neece - August 03, 2020 at 10:15 AM

RA

“ Janet and family I am sorry for your loss! I only knew Wayne a short time but he was such a wonderful man. I will miss that Genine smile he always had when I would talk with him. He truly will be missed.

Rachel - August 03, 2020 at 01:11 AM

KR

“ My condolences Janet to you and your family Wayne was a wonderful person. You were both always so kind to me.

Kathy Robison and family

Kathleen Robison - August 02, 2020 at 11:36 PM

BP

“ Sorry for your loss. Wayne was always a great and generous individual. He treated everyone well and was always fun to be around. Spent many days chatting and enjoying the golf course. He will be missed.

Britt Pavelonis

Britt Pavelonis - August 02, 2020 at 10:18 PM

SW

“ When Wayne came to Granite City, he entered a program that had not won very many games. His first day at practice he gave a talk that told the players we will win and we will work very hard to become good. And in his first season, they won! As long as Wayne was at Granite, the program won at least 6 games a year. We had seasons of 7-2 and 8-1. I am honored that I got to coach with him. His toughness and innovations were outstanding. His players loved him. He made football fun, and we had a lot of good times. Wayne was a tremendous coach and person. He will be missed.

Stan Wojcik

Stan Wojcik - August 02, 2020 at 02:21 PM

MH

“ Janet, Denise, Debbie, David and Doug -

I am so sorry to learn of your fathers passing. He was a great gentleman, great athlete, great coach, and most of all great friend to my dad and mom. After my dad passed away he always took time to visit with my mom. That says a lot and means a lot. I have such fond memories of our families spending time together when we were young...and playing golf with Wayne after he retired at West Frankfort Country Club. He could always hit the ball a mile. He was a big man with a big personality and an infectious laugh. He knew how to live life well and I am thankful to have known him. I hope he and my dad are sharing stories now. I am praying for all of you.

Mike Hart

mike hart - August 02, 2020 at 12:22 PM

SM

“ He was my buddy. Myself, him and donnie played a lot of golf together. So glad i attended the siu game when he received his hall of fame acceptance. My wife and i sat with them. It was an honor

sam mannino - August 01, 2020 at 07:43 PM

MW

“ Coach Williams was one of the biggest influences in my life. Wayne was my motivation to become a football coach and attempt to follow in his footsteps. When Wayne came to coach at Granite City, he changed my life. His ability to motivate and get the most out his players was remarkable. Granite City was a football program in shambles when he took over. Coach Williams changed the culture at the school and made the lowly Warriors competitive in his first year. As a coach, I copied many of Wayne’s techniques, strategies, and even his motivational talks for my 38 year coaching career. I could never thank Coach Williams enough for all he did to shape the coach and man I became. He will be dearly missed by all of his former players.

Mike Wilson - August 01, 2020 at 07:20 PM

DW

Mike your words are beautiful and we thank you.. David

David Williams - August 02, 2020 at 06:28 PM

KC

“ My husband and I joined with our pastor, Karla Frost and her husband Charles, at a monthly church service she gave at Fountainview. We got to know Wayne, he loved singing the hymns and was so kind.

Kiki Cochran - August 01, 2020 at 06:49 PM

DE

“ Wayne grew up just down the street from our family on Line St. in Du Quoin. He has always been the pride of Du Quoin. He and my husband, Jim Elkins, graduated together at DTHS. We are sad to hear this news. Doris (Short) and Jim Elkins

Doris Elkins - August 01, 2020 at 03:27 PM