



Clifford W. Smith III

November 13, 1951 - July 19, 2025

Clifford W. Smith III, age 73, of Bourbonnais, passed away peacefully in his home Saturday, July 19th, 2025. He was born November 13th, 1951 in Chicago, son of Dr. Clifford & Shirley Jean Smith. Cliff married Clodagh Marie Casey at St. Irenaeus Catholic Church in Park Forest, IL on March 5th, 1988.

Survived by his wife of 37 years, Clodagh Smith of Bourbonnais; daughter, Bridget & husband Alex DeWees; son, Clifford Smith IV & granddaughter Aurora Smith; one brother, Michael Smith & family of Florida; mother-in-law, Bridie Casey of Ireland; brothers-in-laws and sister-in-law, Niall Casey & family of Ireland, Grainne Casey & family of NY, and Dhara Casey & family of Ireland; and nephews and niece. Cliff is preceded in death by his parents.

Cliff earned both his undergraduate and master's degrees from Bradley University in Peoria, IL, and pursued continuing education at VanderCook College of Music in Chicago, IL.

Cliff was the band director for St. Anne Grade School for 27 years and also taught private lessons every week at King Music for 30+ years. Cliff dedicated his life to not only teaching music but playing the trumpet. He was a member of the Kankakee Municipal Band, The Swing Kings, River Valley Wind Ensemble, Kings of Dixieland, and the Jazz Time Big Band. Cliff enjoyed golfing, playing crossword and solitaire on his phone, and loved history.

Cliff attended & from time to time played music for Maternity B.V.M. Catholic Church of Bourbonnais.

Visitation will be held from 3-8 p.m. on Friday, July 25th, 2025 at Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Bourbonnais. A funeral Mass will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, July 26th, 2025 at Maternity B.V.M. Catholic Church in Bourbonnais. Rev. Father Jason Nesbit will officiate the Mass. Cremation rites will be accorded following the Mass.

Memorials may be made to the Kankakee Municipal Band and Uplifted Care.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL **25.** 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Bourbonnais - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.
295 Main St., NW
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Funeral Mass

JUL **26.** 11:00 AM (CT)

Maternity B.V.M. Catholic Church
308 E. Marsile
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 933-8285
<http://www.mbvchurch.org/>

Tribute Wall



“ Cliff was my high school friend. We played together in the Rich Central band. I will miss him. Sympathies to his family.

Richard Connelly - January 03 at 10:34 PM

JM

“ Julie M. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Clifford W. Smith III.

Julie M. - July 27, 2025 at 08:14 PM

JM

“ I first met Cliff in 2007 when I became the band director at St Anne High School. Cliff was a great friend and mentor to me during my time there. No doubt his legacy will remain in the hearts of his students, family, and friends. I am forever grateful to Cliff for helping me navigate those early days of my teaching career. My condolences to his family, and may he rest in peace.



Jonathan Mayden - July 24, 2025 at 10:05 PM

PC

“ Deepest sympathies to Clodagh, Bridget and Clifford on the sad passing of Cliff, may his gentle soul rest in peace 🙏. Philip and Clodagh Casey

PHILIP CASEY - July 24, 2025 at 04:41 AM

BR

“ Ann and I were very sorry to hear of Cliff’s passing. Cliff was an outstanding music educator. and his concert and jazz bands were always among the very best at contests and festivals in the area. Cliff was also an amazing trumpet player and one of the finest improv soloists I have known. I had the privilege to play alongside Cliff for many years in the Swing Kings Orchestra. I am so grateful for the memories of playing in that group, and sharing the stage next to Cliff was always a blast. Cliff was a great colleague and bandmate and a very kind human being. Our sincerest prayers and condolences to Cliff’s family during this difficult time.

Brad Reel - July 23, 2025 at 01:44 PM

PK

“ Deepest condolences to Clodagh and all the family on the passing of Cliff. May he rest in peace

paschal mc keon - July 23, 2025 at 10:09 AM

PD

“ I met Cliff when we judged high school music contest together. And more recently we saw each other at Fitness Premier Bourbonnais where he could be found working out. Sometimes talking more than working out but always made me laugh. You will be missed Cliff!

Priscilla A Dwyer - July 22, 2025 at 08:00 PM

IF

“ Deepest sympathy to Clodagh and family on the passing of your beloved Cliff. May his beautiful soul rest in eternal peace. Thoughts and prayers are with you all at this sad time. Ita Flood. Mohill.

Ita Flood - July 22, 2025 at 10:59 AM

BB

Deepest sympathy to clodagh and all the Family on the passing of Clifford R.I.P Betty Doyle Bradshaw Mohill Co Leitrim 🙏

Betty Doyle Bradshaw - July 22, 2025 at 05:18 PM

PM

“ *Deepest sympathy to Clodagh, Bridget, Clifford and all the wider Smith and Casey families, may Cliff rest in peace.*

Paul & Colette Murphy - July 22, 2025 at 10:34 AM

WC

“ *So sorry to hear Cliff passed
Enjoyed being his neighbor for over 20 years
Was just talking with him in his front yard about a week ago
Cloda and family you are in our prayers
We're down in Florida until July 30th so won't be able to get back for funeral
Know that you are being thought of and if there's anything you need when we get back just let us know
Love Bill and Linda Campbell*

William Campbell - July 22, 2025 at 10:22 AM

EM

“ *Deepest sympathy to Clodagh and family on the loss of your beloved Clif. He was a true gentleman. Regards, Edel McGarry, Mohill*

Edel McGarry - July 22, 2025 at 10:17 AM

ES

“Cliff was our daughter's clarinet teacher at King Music. She always enjoyed her lessons and insight he shared with her. He also helped her with sax. A wonderful person and teacher. We will keep your family in our thoughts and prayers.

Eric & Amy Sadler - July 22, 2025 at 10:03 AM

MM

“MR MRS sent a virtual gift in memory of Clifford W. Smith III



MR MRS - July 22, 2025 at 07:30 AM

LO

“Cliff was a great friend and co worker at StAnne. He had a lovely family that he adored. He had a special relationship with his students and they worked hard for him. Great band memories!

Laurie Oswald - July 21, 2025 at 10:42 PM

VW

“Mr. Smith was my flute teacher for 2 years. He believed in me and helped me become a better flute player. He always encouraged me to keep moving forward, even when I was nervous to audition for things I thought were too difficult. Thank you, Mr. Smith for all you have done for me.
Kesey Westerhoff

Vicki westerhoff - July 21, 2025 at 08:34 PM

PC

“ I met Cliff in the early 1980s when we were both working at Sam Ash Music on 48th Street in New York City. Our friendship extended beyond just working together, often we would ‘hang out’ after work (across the street at McAnn’s... the pub where Cliff met the love of his life, Clodagh). I attended their wedding and he attended mine (see picture)... which shows my ‘best friends’ - the four of us would call each other ‘Gus’. A ‘Gus’ was the closest of friends... the kind of friend that is always welcome; the kind of friend who knew they didn’t have to ask, “what do you have to eat?” - they were welcome in your refrigerator at all times. Those kinds of friendships are rare and profoundly cherished! No matter how far away, or how long between visits, friendships like this remain.

When Cliff moved back in Illinois, we found a way to get together a few times. I was working for Yamaha music by that time... Each December the MidWest Band Expo was in Chicago - which became a way we could get together at least once a year. Cliff, being a music teacher, would attend with a bunch of students. Cliff had the perfect personality to teach and inspire... and music was his calling! Last time I saw Cliff and Clodagh was about 8 years go — but Cliff and I would talk on the phone and try to catch up. I’ll miss those two hour+ conversations.

Condolences to the family. Rest in peace, my good friend, you will be missed!

Your friend, Phil Clendeninn (Gus).



Phil Clendeninn - July 21, 2025 at 07:42 PM

LS

“ I loved having Cliff as my private clarinet teacher for the past year. I always enjoyed hearing his teaching and college stories. He gave me some wonderful college advice that I will take with me this fall. My condolences to his family.

Lena Sadler - July 21, 2025 at 06:26 PM



“ So sorry to hear of this loss. I knew him from my daughter being in his band class at the St. Anne Grade School. I also knew him more in later years because I worked at the Grade school as a janitor. He was always a very kind and gentle person with all of his students. He taught them very well, always enjoyed the concerts. Sounds like he led a fulfilling life and enjoyed it. Please know that I'm sending plenty of prayers for the whole family for peace and comfort. May he be rip.



Beverly Cranston - July 21, 2025 at 05:21 PM

LO

Hi Bev. Nicely said.

Laurie Oswald - July 24, 2025 at 10:45 AM

AG

“ My son loved having Mr. Smith as a trumpet teacher at King Music and would love it when he subbed for band at his school. After trumpet practice one evening, Mr. Smith informed us about the National Museum of the US Air Force, which we ended up visiting because of him. He will be missed. Our condolences to his family.

Abby Girard - July 21, 2025 at 03:43 PM

KL

“ Mr. Smith left behind a legacy for all young kids playing in the grade school band. I know for myself that became one of the main outlets of mine, and I enjoyed playing in Jazz, concert, and marching band under his direction. He was the kindest, funniest, witty and sarcastic, and truly most loving and compassionate teacher. He touched my spirit as I'm sure he did so many others.



May he rest in power and peace, and continue playing music up in the sky.

Kurt LaShure - July 21, 2025 at 03:15 PM

KL

To add - feel free to stop by my mom's house and yell out for Kevin that you have Oreos so you can hit a golf ball through the picture window anytime 🙌

Kurt LaShure - July 21, 2025 at 03:16 PM

LG

“ As an adult, not having played in many years, I took clarinet lessons from Cliff. He was an excellent teacher for adults as well as children. He would play along and was very encouraging. My condolences to his family.

Linda Guinn - July 21, 2025 at 02:13 PM

AB

“ Mr. Smith was my grade school band director. He gave all his time and heart to each individual. He loves taking us to the St. Patrick's Day parade every year. Music was his passion and he never gave up on anyone that was willing to put in the work. Rest in peace old friend you will definitely be missed by many.

Ashley Blanchette-Howe - July 21, 2025 at 02:07 PM

RL

“ I met cliff when I started working at king music
His passion for music is what I would say from the old school-super
passionate. He inspired so many from his school teaching days to
his private students I've been a witness to see that with my own
eyes . He would judge solo-ensemble contests a lot I would always
ask his best of the day and he would share . All the radical story's
from his music store days in New York where he met jaco pastorios
and other well known musicians . Most of all and I may not of
realized it till just now he truly inspired me and I will miss his
friendship. My condolences to all the family members at this time .
May your hearts and minds find comfort and peace

Ryan Leggott - July 21, 2025 at 01:10 PM