



Gary Edward Crews

December 10, 1943 - January 19, 2022

Gary Edward Crews, age 78, of Kissimmee, FL, passed away peacefully on January 19, 2022 at home. He was born on December 10, 1943 in St. Louis, MO, the son of William Edward Jr. and Fern (Fisher) Crews. They moved to Bradley in 1953 and became members of the Wesleyan United Methodist Church. Gary graduated from Bradley Bourbonnais High School in 1961. Gary is a highly decorated veteran of the United States Army – 1st Cavalry in the Vietnam War. During his enlistment as a private first class, he was wounded in action on July 29, 1968 and was awarded the Purple Heart. He also received the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in his actions that were witnessed that same day. After he was honorably discharged, Gary attended Kankakee Community College and received his Associate Degree. He went on to work for the State of Illinois in the Department of Corrections for 28 years.

From a very early age Gary was an avid reader and loved to go fishing. He was a talented basketball player and scored 56 points in an Armory game. He was a coach for St. Joseph's grade school and the Y.M.C.A. Gary had a passion, love, and respect for golf like no other; he scored seven hole-in-ones in his lifetime. He also had a love of music. Elvis, Johnny Cash, and Roy Orbison were among his favorites.

Gary is survived by his wife of forty-five years, Shelley M. (Oliver) Crews, of Kissimmee, FL; his daughter, Danielle R. (Todd) LaRoche of St. Cloud, FL; his sons, Andrew W.F. (Kristin Ferry) Crews of Plainfield and David M. (Brooke

Abney) Crews of Chicago; nine grandsons, Nicholas J. Usewicz, Anthony P. Usewicz, Dylan L. LaRoche, Bryce M. LaRoche, Jude E. Crews, Reid M. Crews, Duke W. Crews, Dane B. Crews, and Vaughn H. G. Crews and one granddaughter, Maclayne L. Crews; a younger brother, Randolph W. "Bucky" Crews and nephew, Logan Crews of Momence; his sister-in-law, Frannie (Mayotte) Crews of Bradley; two nieces, Debi (John) Walsh, of Cabery and Julie (Tom) Kaminke of Longwood; brother-in-law, Mike (Julie Zullo) Crews, of Manteno; numerous nieces and nephews; and several more brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

Gary was preceded in death by his parents; his adored older brother, Stephen "Big Dog" Allen Crews; and his beloved grandmother, "Manicaw" Madge Fisher.

Cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial visitation will be held from 9:00 am until the time of the 11:00 memorial service on Friday, July 29, 2022 at Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Bourbonnais. Inurnment will follow, with full honors, at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood. A celebration of life will be held that same day at 5:00 p.m. at the Bradley American Legion Post 766.

If you have a story to share, please bring it or send it to shelleycrews13@yahoo.com or davidcrews33@gmail.com

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made for his grandchildren's continued education and books.

Cemetery Details

Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery

20953 Hoff Road
Elwood, IL 60421

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

JUL 29. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

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

Memorial Service

JUL 29. 11:00 AM (CT)

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Tribute Wall

JH

“ I just found out about Gary's death, was surprised and very saddened. I have a lot of memories of Gary. He mentored me in basketball, though I was not destined for anything beyond neighborhood play. When I was a senior in high school I joined a CYO team, and asked Gary if he wanted to be on the team. We needed someone good.

We beat every team except one. The most memorable game was against a team called "The CYO Kays." They were football players from Kankakee High, and had uniforms in maroon and blue - the school colors - complete with team name and numerals. They did layup drills before the game, and were so confident and arrogant that they were going to kick our *****. We wore white T-shirts and gym shorts that probably didn't match.

The game was at Steuben Elementary School in Kankakee, which had 9' 6" baskets. I was a pretty good defensive player, and held their highest scorer pointless, but Gary was something to behold. He was stuffing the ball in from above his elbow, just having the time of his life. He scored 56 points, and we won by 28 points. I remember this game like it was yesterday.

Gary had a dry sense of humor, would let Shakespearean witticisms roll off his tongue. Someone who would remember better than me could relate his stories about his brief career as a radio announcer, reading "Crews with the news" on a list like Jack Kerouac in "On the Road." He could have been a media legend.

He was humble about his military experience, though he carried two wounded guys to a helicopter while temporarily blinded by shrapnel. He always rose to the occasion.

I could go on. Too many stories. He was one of the great people I have known in my life, and I have been very lucky to learn from them.

*Jack Hamilton
Madison, Wisconsin*

Jack Hamilton - December 06, 2022 at 05:32 PM

JH

I forgot to send my condolences to Shelley and the rest of Gary's family. I hope you find comfort in the memories of his extraordinary life.

Jack Hamilton - December 06, 2022 at 05:38 PM

SC

*Dear Jack,
Thank you for that memory, the details of it ~ never were written down. And Randy and I, had a hard time remembering certain events that transpired in Gary's lifetime. Now we can 'put it on the boards!' Yes!... he was quite proud of his stint as a radio announcer.... in many ways he was a legend in his own mind, but only shared stuff with his close friends that he made through his lifetime, and we're so grateful he shared his stories and tales of yore. He was indeed an entertainer by heart.*

I was saddened to hear of your sister's passing and sadly, have yet to hear from your younger brother, Jim. I still have all of his detailed letters and cards sent to us over the years.

As I read your text ~ I actually thought it was from Milt?

Is that his correct nickname?

It's been a difficult year without our Gu(ru).... we miss him dearly;(

Thank you for honoring and celebrating his life with your fond memories of him and all he stood for.

Have a blessed start to the new year.

Kind regards, Shelley Crews

Shelley m Crews - January 10, 2023 at 01:52 PM

OS

“ Our heartfelt sympathies purchased the "On Angel's Wings" Sympathy Gift Wind Chime to Send for Funeral Or Memorial for the family of Gary Edward Crews.



Our heartfelt sympathies - July 27, 2022 at 07:53 PM

ES

“ We were sorry to learn of Gary’s death. Reading his obituary and his heroism in combat in Vietnam was no surprise to anyone who knew him. Gary was not afraid of much, if anything. He was a true individual who thought for himself and did not dance to the views of the crowd. He loved nature, being outdoors, and seemed to have a natural knack and savvy for fishing and nature in general. He loved popular music and knew the lyrics of a thousand songs by heart. Over the years, Gary and his brothers, Steve and Randy, entertained thousands of local sporting fans and spectators with their outstanding and natural talents in basketball and other sports. We are so sorry for Shelley’s loss of the love-of-her-life, and it is to her, and their children, Danielle, Andy, David, and grandchildren, and entire family that we extend our deepest sympathy and condolences. Ed & Jean Smith

Ed & Jean Smith - July 24, 2022 at 08:09 AM

SC

Dear Ed and Jean, I'm am just now making a connection with this site.....

*Thank you for all your kind comments about our beloved Gu ❤️
He was the light of our lives and we miss him dearly. He entertained us, right up to the end. He was unique in many ways, and it's been difficult with him being gone.... he's in a far better place than we can ever dream of, no doubt entertaining angels now.... lucky angels.*

I was thankful Gary shared with me about his mother, Fern being a matchmaker for Jean and you, oh so many years ago!

She was one of the sweetest woman, I ever met here on earth ❤️

The night before Gary passed away, he called out for me with the Crews' call, 📞 Randy and I still use it to this day. But he startled me with a loud call and when he realized I was near his side, he apologized for alarming me ~ but he wanted to know who were the three people standing at the end of his bed.... my back stiffened and as I approached him, I looked really hard for the vision he was seeing. I even went as far as to make sure it wasn't a shadow cast from the T.V.? He said "NO"! and covered his left eye completely, he then, with his right /good eye ~ scanned up and down three times, moving from the right side of the bed to the left. And said, "No, there are three people at the end of this bed, and I want to know who there are."

By this time I was near the upper part of the bed, and told him.... they were not meant for me to see them, they were only there for him, and I told him to make an effort and talk to them in any way or fashion and hopefully, they would reveal themselves to him. He was of sound mind and body, save for the bleeding going on behind his left eye from Vietnam;(

I never thought I was going to lose him in the next twenty four hours. We even had an eye appointment the following day, which he never made it to...

Thank you your great tribute to our beloved Gu(ru), better known as Garrison Jay, to your class at Bradley H.S. or was it St. Pat's for you?



Kind regards, continued blessings to Jean and you.

Hugs, Shelley (and a pat on the back from G:)

Shelley Crews - November 28, 2022 at 05:11 PM

VR

“ Vicki And Bob Redmond lit a candle in memory of Gary Edward Crews



Vicki and Bob Redmond - July 02, 2022 at 04:35 AM

SC

Thank you, Vicky and Bob ~ it's been a hard journey without him, but he was looking forward to his last, real adventure ❤️ 🏠 Sc

Shelley Crews - November 28, 2022 at 05:18 PM

EB

“ Emily Blair lit a candle in memory of Gary Edward Crews



Emiley Blair - June 21, 2022 at 03:42 PM

SC

Thank you Emily.... "It is ~ what it is...." 🤔
You'll understand this, if Bob is your husband...?
Trust all is well with your family. Hugs from the family of G.E.Crews 🙏

Shelley Crews - November 28, 2022 at 05:23 PM

JH

Shelley: This is Jim Hamilton, Jack's older brother, not younger. I'm at a family reunion in Libertyville for my Aunt Mary Lou, who just turned 95. I found out Gary died from Jack, not anyone else. So sorry and I'd like to hear from you. I'll be back in Montana later this week. Gary was a good buddy over the years. Again, so very sorry.

Jim Hamilton - May 21, 2023 at 03:48 PM