



Mr. Steven Bruegger

June 16, 1953 - July 22, 2021

On Thursday, July 22, 2021, Steven Robert Bruegger, loving son, brother, uncle and friend, passed away at the age of 68. Born in Lansing, Michigan on June 16, 1953 he was preceded in death by parents Robert Huntley and Patricia Claire Bruegger. Steve spent years of his life seeing the world and most importantly spreading joy everywhere he went. He spent 25 years as a dedicated coworker and employee for the Kmart Corporation, retiring finally in 1999. A lover of gardening and antiquing, he also collected exotic fish, enjoyed documenting life with photographs and spent extensive time researching his family genealogy. He was passionate about helping people and the community, often volunteering his time at the Senior Friendship Center in Sarasota, being recognized several times for his service, and participating in the annual Singing Christmas Tree in Sarasota, FL. Steve had an infectious smile and laugh that could turn anyone's day around. For over 50 years he never let his health issues or disabilities get in his way of living life or helping others, he truly loved life and reminded others to live theirs to the fullest.

He is survived by siblings, Sandra S. Whitmill of Plant City, FL, William Bruegger (Jodi) of Evansville, IN, and Michael Bruegger (Beth) of New Port Richey, FL; nieces and nephews, Jennifer, Sarah, Hannah, Aaron, Lola, and Ella; Aunt and Uncle, Judy and Larry Litterst of St. Cloud, MN and many cousins. Services to be held at a later date at Estes-Leadley Greater Lansing Chapel, 325 W Washtenaw Street, Lansing. Interment in Chapel Hill Memorial

Gardens, Lansing. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Diabetes Association at diabetes.org.

Tribute Wall

DD

“ Steve and I first met on a day cruise. He was commenting how short the people were around him...right before he turned to hit his forehead on the top of the doorway everyone was going through. I have so many good memories of our times together that I will keep forever. He was one of a kind and will be sorely missed.

Daniel Delahaye - September 11, 2021 at 01:49 PM

BB

“ Best big brother a little brother could have!
Many many memories!

Bill Bruegger - August 25, 2021 at 05:54 PM

BC

“ Steve was a special guy, a really sincere person with a beautiful smile. He always brightened up the Friendship Center and I have missed seeing him. He lived near me and I would run into him occasionally . My sympathy to his family members. Bless you all.

Bette Lou Cookson - August 15, 2021 at 08:41 PM

CA

“ Steve was one of the wittiest kindest people I have ever known. His sense of humor was legendary. He volunteered for me for many years at Senior Friendship acted. Steve never complained. He was an inspiration to me and many others. His family meant the world to him.

caroline Allen - August 14, 2021 at 09:48 AM

JL

“ I was six years old when my mother (Steve's maternal grandmother) told me I had just become an Aunt. I had no idea what that meant, nor did my friends in 1st grade. But, Steve became my real live baby doll.

We literally grew up together in Lansing and were playmates, whether downstairs in my playroom or at his house. I have told people that he was the little brother I never had, as I was the last of three girls born to my parents coming as a surprise to them late in life. I can see him in his little dress up outfit with bow tie as a little kid, or very tall Steve standing next to me in his snazzy high school cap and gown. He was so proud to be a wedding photographer for us, recording every single person who attended our wedding. I missed him when he moved to Wisconsin and then Florida, but we tried to still keep in touch.

Every day I see Steve's smile and I hear his delightful laugh. Never have I seen a person go through so very much and yet remain so upbeat. When a medical emergency struck him, he took everything in stride. One year we were visiting in Florida and walking on the beach. He called to say he had managed--with no feeling in his feet--to jam a ballpoint pen that was in his shoe into his foot. But, he still intended to keep beach walking. My three adult children have all said that Steve lived every moment of his life with courage, persistence, caring for others, laughter, and a spirit that was beyond imagination.

Whether he was entertaining us all with unbelievable zany costumes, telling stories that made us all laugh, coming up with witty comments, or just wrapping you in a giant hug, Steve was the sweetest guy. There are so many memories I have of my first nephew, but I will share one here that shows the depth of his love of family. He certainly had many cousins around his own age, and as a guy in his mid-twenties, who would think he would be excited about another one? But, when our first baby (Chandler) was born in 1979, Steve made sure he was showered with gifts--many K-Mart blue

light specials, like hats, shirts, tiny shoes, and toys. We will never forget when he showed up at our home in Minnesota with a life size toy mountain lion who "lived" with us for many years, taking up a good deal of space in the kids' rooms.

Steve--you will be entertaining the angels in heaven and--I am certain--offering to plant some flowers for them or, you will share with them some pickled bologna or any of your other favorite treats. You were an angel on earth, and we miss you terribly.

From your Minnesota and Colorado family: Uncle Larry, Aunt Judy, and Cousins Chandler, Adrienne and Graham and their families.



Judy Litterst - July 31, 2021 at 04:02 PM



Love this !

Beth Bruegger - August 02, 2021 at 07:43 AM

PM

“ *I remember the Halloween we all dressed up and he was Big Bird. He made his costume and it was so authentic that when we went to the mall all the kids wanted their picture with him. He laughed and was so patient with them all. I also remember going camping and his 6'7 body in a pup tent! I will miss him but sure will see him again and he will be healthy once more*

Pat McGruthet - July 29, 2021 at 02:17 AM



Jennifer
Strickland

“ It took me a few days to be able to write this, and I’m fighting the tears as I do. I wanted to share some of my favorite Uncle Steve memories. Uncle Steve was always up for an adventure, with a big smile and a loud a chuckle.

Complications from diabetes landed Uncle Steve in a nursing home, it was hard for him because he was in his 50s and much too young (and young at heart) for a nursing home. He would wheel around town on his motorized wheel chair and also ride the SCAT bus- One time when I was around 18, I was at the beach with my friends, I saw a tall man in the distance, and low and behold- Uncle Steve had “escaped” the nursing home and was at Lido beach!

He suffered with orthostatic hypotension so that parked his very tall, 6’7? butt in a wheel chair, but still he made the best of it. He rode the bus to get around- so often that he became a member of the SCAT board! I guess since he’s gone it’s “safe” to tell this story- The Sarasota county sheriff’s office had information that people were buying and selling drugs on the bus, so who did they recruit to become their “informant?” Uncle Steve of course! LOL! He said, “who would ever suspect the guy in the wheel chair of working with the cops?!”

Another one of my favorite things about him was his creative (sometimes messy) decorating style! My favorite as a kid was his claw foot bath tub that he turned into a fish tank. He had a serious love for hoarding antiques, I acquired his love, and I have many of his antiques decorating my house.

Uncle Steve also loved genealogy and family history, this is something I also had in common with him. Before covid I spent some time in the nursing home with him and read him a newspaper article about his great grandfather, my great great grandfather, faking a robbery and how he hid the money in a boot in his basement, once caught he fainted from all the excitement. Uncle Steve got a kick out of that story.

I'm gonna miss him and his funny little sarcastic comments he would always whisper under his breath to me and bunk. And how he would laugh about how micro-managing my mom could be, but he loved her dearly and always appreciated everything she did for him. I remember one time he sent me and my mom to buy fish from a guy off of Craigslist. Oh man! My mom was not happy. Oh Uncle Steve! LOL

Uncle Steve LOVED Christmas, maybe more than me. Which is A LOT. He had the biggest heart- He organized a senior Christmas present drive, so that everyone in the nursing home could get a Christmas present.

He loved dressing up for Halloween! Uncle Si and Tarzan may have been my favorites.

And He LOVED FOOD. I hope he's eating lots of candy cookies and casseroles up there.

There is some comfort in knowing he is no longer suffering. I just wish SO BADLY life could have been different for him, easier on him. I know for many reasons life was hard for him. I believe his testimony will be that even when he was suffering, he smiled through it all, and made others smile, too. I admire him for that. He lived a more adventurous life, full of love and laughter, than most able-bodied, healthy people do. Someone should write a book about him, because we could all learn a few lessons about life from Uncle Steve.



Jennifer Strickland - July 27, 2021 at 11:07 PM

JS

Thank you for sharing these precious memories with all of your families. (I am First cousin to Bob Bruegger) Steve's mom Pat gave me in 1966 a crib and highchair and pottie chair for my first born daughter. Hugs and memories.

Jacqueline Mulvihill Smith - July 28, 2021 at 02:50 PM

MZ

I was saddened to hear of Steve's passing. He moved into our neighborhood in fifth grade, and although he was a couple years older than I, we became fast friends. We did a lot of tree climbing, bike riding and most memorable, walking downtown to the library. It was several miles and keeping up with someone whose legs are at least a foot longer than your own was always a nice workout, however I was in better shape then. We lost touch until a few years ago, connected on classmates.com. We had a few conversations and it brought back great memories. My condolences to the family. Mark Zande

Mark Zande - July 31, 2021 at 05:50 AM



Awww... Jenny - perfect words about Steve... I remember him always being in the Christmas Carole tree too up at the top!

Beth Bruegger - August 02, 2021 at 07:45 AM

MF

“ Steve and I worked at Kmart for years. He was like a brother to me. We ended up sharing a duplex together. Him on one side me on the other. We would ride home and say let's take a walk on the beach. Get home change and hop into his trusty van. Loved our long walks and talks. Of course his side of the duplex had beautiful flowers mine would always die. We went to see Bob Parker the price is right but they never called us down. That was his favorite show. He had a heart so big. Always there to lend a hand or listen. So many parties so many fun memories. I could go on and on. Gonna miss him so much. But now he's with others and no more pain. Fly High Steve.

Mury Bellamy Forseth - July 25, 2021 at 09:37 PM



Jennifer Strickland

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Jennifer Strickland - July 25, 2021 at 12:01 PM



“ OK I'll start: If anyone knew Steve, you know how much he loved to talk - I think even more than me! He always had a story about everything. Steve suffered with his diabetes for may years. He would tell his "diabetic stories" and laughed about the situations he got himself in because of that. The time they had to land the plane in Miami as he passed out, and woke up in a hospital where no one spoke English, or the time he was warming his feet and his shoes started smoking at the firepit outside as he had no sensation in his feet, and the time he was on an island somewhere with a hurricane coming and he had to knock on hotel doors begging for snacks so his blood sugar wouldn't drop too low (as everyone was barricaded in their rooms) . I used many of these stories in my classroom to teach students about the complications of diabetes. And yet he never complained, not ever. What I remember most about Steve was his hearty laugh and smile which matched his beautiful heart. He loved his family. I know Mom and Dad Bruegger were waiting on the other side and I'm sure you are running around on legs that now work and hanging out at the beach. We love you Steve!

Love - Beth & Mike, Hannah and Aaron

Beth Bruegger - July 25, 2021 at 09:47 AM

JS



Jennifer Strickland - July 25, 2021 at 10:57 AM

TL

Steve was always cheerful and made me laugh when I worked with him in the early 80d. Larger than life, and always a truly great man. R.I.P. Steve.

Tom L - July 25, 2021 at 12:32 PM

VM

Steve was a great male friend and enjoyed his smile and laugh. If you felt bad he would make you feel better by laughing. He and my friend Mury were at Hospital when I had my son and I named him Stephen.

Victoria McNeal - July 25, 2021 at 03:52 PM

RH

Steve was in my class of '71. Great guy who was always smiling. I was a majorette with his sister Sandy. Super family. Love and prayers to you all.

Renee (Thompson) Heide - July 26, 2021 at 12:06 AM

JT

I loved Steve and he was my dear cousin. There was a space in time when we were the same height. I stopped growing when I hit 5'3", and he always teased me about my lack of height. While attending college at Lake Superior College, in Sault Ste Marie, Michigan he would visit his Grandmother, and my Aunt, Lillian, who lived in Lansing. I remember one evening we went bowling, and Steve had a few too many Manhattans. I was a little hesitant in taking him back to his Grandmother's house, and he just laughed. We lost touch after he moved to Florida. We reconnected via Facebook over working on our family genealogy. Sending love, prayers and hugs to his family and friends.

Julie Mulvihill Thom - July 28, 2021 at 06:12 PM