



John Wesley Stuehmeier

May 4, 1951 - May 15, 2025

The Centralia Area has lost a truly genuine man, John Wesley Stuehmeier. John passed away, at home, peacefully with his loving wife and family by his side, on Thursday, May 15, 2025, at the age of 74.

Born on May 4, 1951, in Centralia, Illinois, the son of Wesley Louis Stuehmeier and Maxine (Scott) Stuehmeier. John married Cathy (Poninski) on December 20, 1986, and they were blessed to live the Greatest Love Story for 38 years.

Surrounded by those he loved, John is survived by his devoted wife, Cathy Stuehmeier; his two step-sons, Aaron and Andrew Wilson; and his beloved grandchildren: Blake Thomas Wilson, Joshua Joseph Wilson (fiance' Jacey), Cameron Charles Wilson, Stephen Andrew Wilson, Mikayla Erin Wilson, and Brighton Mark Wilson. He also leaves behind two cherished great-grandchildren, Ruston Charles Wilson and Blaire Leigh Wilson. Niece Jennifer Simms and husband Kenny and great niece Fraya.

John shared a close bond with his brother, Mike Sutherland, and sister-in-law, Judy, along with his two God children, Amanda (Sutherland) Ponyi and John Paul Sutherland. He will be remembered fondly by his sisters-in-law Marsha DePew (husband Mark), Toni Gray, Connie Poninski, and Terry Forth, as well as his brother-in-law Paul Allen Poninski,(wife Linda), numerous nieces and

nephews, and life-long friend, Bud Davis, and special friends Cris Cawthon and daughter Paisley, (who called him Papa John), and Cynthia Sera Wilson. His loving connections extended to family friends: Jennifer Hirst and husband Ron, of Fenton, MO, along with their children, Lauren, and Rachel. John also leaves behind his Shoppers Weekly Family: Peggy Johnson, Scott Pinkowski, Cindy Goodnight, Ray Albert, Judy Schaefer, Stephanie Daniels, Samuel Mince, Sharon Whipple, Cris Cawthon, Jay Borum, Cliff and Cyndi Sanders. A special thank you to Marsha DePew for your tireless care and to Residential Hospice for your care and compassion shown to our beloved John.

John was preceded in death by his parents, Wesley and Maxine Stuehmeier, sister, Linda (Stuehmeier) Francisco, brother-in-law Tom Gray, and mother-in-law Laverne Poninski.

He was proud to be an alumnus of Centralia Township High School Class of 1969 and the University of Illinois. After attending the U of I, John helped his father at Raines Furniture. Later, John started working side by side with Cathy at the WILY/WRXX Radio Station. In September of 1988, John and Cathy started the Shoppers Weekly in Centralia and it became the largest weekly paper in Southern Illinois for 36 years. John's dedication to his community was evident through his exemplary service on the Centralia City Council from 1999 to 2003 and as the Mayor of Centralia from 2003 to 2007. Over the years he contributed significantly to various committees and projects including the Historic Preservation Committee, Downtown Redevelopment Committee, Centralia Area Housing Task Force, and the Locust Street Fair, among others. Known for his passion for the Centralia Balloon Fest, he created the High Fly Annual Award and Tip of the Hat Award to honor outstanding community contributions. John lived a life rich in love, public service, and community involvement, and was also a founding member of Band Aide. He was an animal activist alongside his wife, Cathy. John championed numerous causes with an open heart, demonstrating his boundless capacity for love and

compassion towards all living beings. His passion extended to being an esteemed member of the Save Murray Coalition and one of the founding members of the Centralia Area Historical Museum. He was known as Mr. Centralia. His legacy of kindness, dedication, and service will forever be remembered by those whose lives he touched. His memory will live on in the hearts of his family and friends, and in the community he tirelessly served and loved.

A Visitation for family and friends will be held Monday, May 19, 2025, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home in Centralia. On Tuesday, May 20, 2025, a Funeral Service will be held at 11:00 AM at the Funeral Home with Pastor Steve Upchurch officiating. Burial will follow at Calvary Cemetery in Centralia.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that memorial donations be made in John's honor to Band Aide and will be graciously accepted at the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home, located at 235 North Sycamore Street, Centralia, Illinois 62801, (618)532-3523, who is honored to be of service to John's Family. Online condolences may be made to the family by visiting www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com and the Funeral Home Facebook page.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY **19**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home
235 N. Sycamore Street
Centralia, IL 62801

Funeral Service

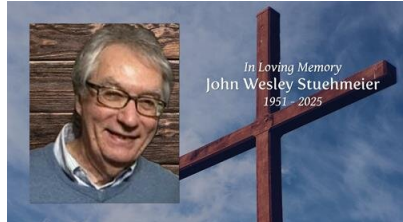
MAY **20**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home
235 N. Sycamore Street
Centralia, IL 62801

Tribute Wall



“ *Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of John Wesley Stuehmeier*



Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services - May 19, 2025 at 04:58 PM

JM

Great Tribute Kathy!

Judith Meeks-Hakim - October 02, 2025 at 09:16 PM

JM

“ *John and I met playing brass in the grade school band. He was a good person and very involved in Centralia activities. For me one of the best was helping preserve the Orphans stain glass masterpiece. He was thoughtful, helpful and kind. You have my good thoughts and prayers in this difficult time.*

John W Timothy, Jr MD - July 02, 2025 at 09:02 AM

CH

“ *Thinking of all of you at this sad time. John was always a joy. He will be missed.*

Deepest sympathy, Charlotte howe and Greg Kleeman

Charlotte Howe - May 25, 2025 at 08:58 PM

DK

“ When I was in local politics he was incredibly kind to me from the very beginning! He was such a joy to see at chamber events, fundraisers, ribbon cuttings and anywhere he could be found. Our community lost one of the greats!

Daniel Knox - May 21, 2025 at 08:16 AM

GK

“ My thoughts and prayers to John’s families. I used to work at the Shopper’s Weekly several years ago and he was a great man to work with and will be greatly missed.

Gretchen Kopecky - May 20, 2025 at 08:15 AM



“ Susan Kleinedler lit a candle in memory of John Wesley Stuehmeier



Susan Kleinedler - May 19, 2025 at 03:28 PM

FF

“ Freeman Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Wesley Stuehmeier.

Freeman Family - May 19, 2025 at 09:50 AM

FF

“ Freeman Family purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of John Wesley Stuehmeier.



Freeman Family - May 19, 2025 at 09:50 AM

PH

“ My prayers go out to Cathy and family. John and Cathy lived to Centralia Grow. Good good people. Hugs to Cathy your days will be tuff but you are too❤️

Patti J Hahn - May 18, 2025 at 11:28 PM

LF

“ Love, Ronnie, Lisa and Sheilah Forth purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of John Wesley Stuehmeier.



Love, Ronnie, Lisa and Sheilah Forth - May 17, 2025 at 09:01 PM

DR

“ John and Cathy were my neighbors across the street when they lived on West Broadway.
25 years ago my youngest son pulled a crock pot of hot liquid over on him and we had to take him to Children’s Hospital in St. Louis. I stayed with the baby and John came across the street and gave my husband Joe some cash to help me out the nine days I stayed there.
He and Cathy were some of the sweetest people we ever met. May he rest in peace and Cathy my heart hurts for you.
I live in Arizona now but I still think of the kindness you and John showed us as neighbors.
God bless you💕💕

Debra Rogers - May 17, 2025 at 08:39 PM

CH

“ My deepest condolences to Cathy and the family.

Cheri - May 17, 2025 at 07:14 PM

BW

“ My deepest sympathies to the family. John was a kind and thoughtful man. He was always willing to help. Centralia will miss him. God bless you as you move on.

Brenda White - May 17, 2025 at 10:02 AM

NA

“ Have a lot of memories of John. RIP my friend. Prayers for the Stuehmeier family

Noland Atchison - May 16, 2025 at 05:30 PM

D.

“ *What a lovely man! What a huge loss.*

D.D. - May 16, 2025 at 04:14 PM

CH

“ *I am so sorry for the families loss. John was always so kind to me. I am deeply sorry to hear of his passing.*

Cheryl DeChausse Simmons

cheryl - May 16, 2025 at 03:11 PM

PB

“ *I am deeply saddened by the loss of my classmate and dear friend, John!! He will be so missed by so many!! What a wonderful, kind man he was!! Godspeed! 🙏💔😇*

Peggy Myers Beal - May 16, 2025 at 12:57 PM

BS

“ *Belinda Hopkins and family (Judys sister purchased the Small Garden Dish for the family of John Wesley Stuehmeier.*



Belinda Hopkins and family (Judys sister - May 16, 2025 at 11:52 AM

BS

“ *Belinda Hopkins and family (Judys sister planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Wesley Stuehmeier.*

Belinda Hopkins and family (Judys sister - May 16, 2025 at 11:52 AM

PF

“ *My deepest condolences to Cathy and the Stuehmeier family, I didn't know John very well, but my interactions with him were always nice. He was a very good man and will be greatly missed.*

Peter Ford - May 16, 2025 at 11:34 AM

RR

Cathy please accept our deepest sympathies. Prayers for you and your family and friends.

Ruth Rinne - May 16, 2025 at 11:50 AM

RW

Very sorry for your loss, Cathy.

Roger Wright - May 16, 2025 at 02:55 PM