



## Joseph Merkelbach

August 23, 1946 - May 30, 2026

Joseph Merkelbach, 79, of Centralia, passed away on Saturday, May 30, 2026 at Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. Born on August 23, 1946 in Centralia, the son of Edwin and Frances (Schilling) Merkelbach. On December 10, 1969 he married Amelia Moss and she survives in Centralia.

In addition to his wife of 56 years, Amelia Merkelbach of Centralia, he is also survived by his children: Sandra Mitchell of McKinny, Texas, Carl "Corky" Coker and wife Debbie of Walnut Hill, Peggy Bradley of Richland, Texas, John Merkelbach of Centralia, Anne "Libby" Hudson and Andrew of Perryville, Missouri; numerous grandchildren and several great-grandchildren; sister: Sara Ruth Alphin of Springfield, Illinois; several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and son: Randal Coker.

Joseph was professor at Kaskaskia College for many years and also worked at Rockwell. Rather than being inside the house, he was passionate about being outdoors and taking care of his plants. Joseph was the past president of the Shawnee Chapter Illinois Audubon Society and member of the Henry Shaw Cactus and Succulent Society. He was also a member of the Trinity Lutheran Church in Centralia. He was an avid fan of the Chicago Cubs. Joseph's wife, children, and grandchildren were his world.

In accordance to Joseph's wishes, cremation rites will be accorded and a Visitation will be held Tuesday, June 9, 2026 from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home in Centralia, Illinois. While no formal funeral service will be conducted, family and friends are invited to remain following the visitation for a brief memorial gathering and remembrance service, where loved ones will share memories and celebrate Joseph's life. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Shawnee Chapter Illinois Audubon Society and will be accepted by the Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home, 235 North Sycamore Street Centralia, IL 62801, (618)532-3523, who is honored to be of service to Joseph's family. Online condolences may be made by visiting [www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com](http://www.sutherlandfuneralhome.com) and the funeral home Facebook page. To send flowers or a memorial gift to the family, please visit our Sympathy Store.

Joseph's legacy will remain in the hearts of those who knew and loved him and he will be dearly missed by all.

# Upcoming Events

## Visitation

JUN 9. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

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