



## Matthew Pokojski

February 9, 1965 - March 13, 2026

Matthew Pokojski, a lifelong resident of Centralia, Illinois, passed away on Friday, March 13, 2026, at the age of 61. Born on February 9, 1965, in Centralia, Matthew is the son of Stanley and Doris (Phillips) Pokojski. On November 21, 1987, he married Beth D. Stewart and she survives.

A proud alumnus of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Matthew graduated in 1987 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education. He leveraged his passion and knowledge by shaping countless young minds over a distinguished 30-year career as a Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Salem, Brownstown, Woodlawn, and Waltonville schools.

Matthew's commitment to agriculture extended beyond the classroom. He was an active member of the Marion County Farm Bureau and the Central City Baptist Church. His profound impact on the agricultural community was recognized through accolades such as the Honorary State FFA Degree, and he was a lifetime member of the National FFA Alumni. Additionally, Matthew devoted much of his life to farming and raising cattle in Centralia Township.

Matthew leaves behind a loving family, including his devoted wife, Beth D. (Stewart) Pokojski; his son, Tyler Pokojski, and daughter-in-law, Madeline; his cherished mother, Doris Pokojski; his beloved sister, Christa Pokojski; his mother-in-law, Maxine Stewart; and his uncle, W.J. Phillips. He was preceded

in death by his father, Stanley Pokojski; his brother, Gregory Pokojski; his grandparents, William T. and Fern (Moklar) Phillips, Dorothy (Verble) Pokojski; and father-in-law, Guy L. Stewart.

Friends and family are invited to pay their respects during the visitation on Friday, March 20, 2026, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM at Sutherland-Garnier Funeral Home in Centralia. A memorial service celebrating Matthew's life will follow at 5:00 PM.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Illinois Foundation FFA or the Marion County Farm Bureau Foundation, and will be accepted by 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 Matthew's Family. Online condolences may be made to the family 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.

Matthew will be remembered for his warmth, wisdom, and unwavering dedication to his family, community, and the agricultural industry. His legacy will continue to inspire all who knew him.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 20. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

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

## Celebration of Life

MAR 20. 5:00 PM - 5:30 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 Matthew Pokojski*



Sutherland Funeral Homes, Cemetery and Cremation Services - March 20 at 11:07 AM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Matthew Pokojski.*



March 20 at 09:44 AM



“ *It is with deepest sympathy I wish to send my condolences to Matt's family. Matt had a big heart for life and an even bigger smile to make everyone's day brighter. I spent many hours attending FFA/Ag Educational events with Matt and one of my best times during any of these activities was getting to talk to Matt. We would always have a great laugh together during these events. Matt was a special person who you will never forget. God bless Matt's family during this difficult time.*

*Rick Harre, retired Ag teach Central (Breese)*

Rick Harre - March 20 at 09:06 AM

JA

“ *My condolences to Beth and Tyler upon the passing of a truly wonderful man! Matt's legacy will be carried on through them in his absence. My memories of Matt will include his sense of humor, his gregarious laugh, his commitment to agriculture and conservation, the young lives he helped guide in positive direction and him simply being one of the good guys!*

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**James** - March 20 at 09:05 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Matthew Pokojski.*



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March 20 at 08:43 AM



“ *Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray was purchased for the family of Matthew Pokojski.*



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March 19 at 08:06 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Matthew Pokojski.*

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March 19 at 08:06 PM

ST

“ *Salem FFA 2022-2023 Officer Team purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Matthew Pokojski.*



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**Salem FFA 2022-2023 Officer Team** - March 19 at 03:28 PM



“ *On behalf of the 2002-2003 Salem FFA Officer Team we extend our deepest condolences. We are planting a Memorial Tree in honor of Mr. P and hope his family finds comfort in memories during this difficult time.*

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**Kimberlee Clark** - March 19 at 10:14 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Matthew Pokojski.*

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March 19 at 10:03 AM

RB

“ *I had known Matt for many years as the Ag teacher in Salem. He was a fine teacher and person. The last time I would have visited him was when I was a Illinois Vocational Curriculum Consultant for CEV in Lubbock TX. I'm so sorry to learn of Matt's passing. May all his family know there are many wishing them well as they move forward from this sad event. Bob Brown, retired LeRoy Ag Teacher.*

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**Robert E Brown** - March 19 at 09:30 AM

LS

“ I enjoyed working with Matt at Salem Community High School. He was a strong advocate for the Ag program and a staunch defender of his students. I know there were some students we shared over the years that struggled and wouldn't have made it to graduation without Mr. P's guidance. And anyone who knew him well has stories to tell of his ornery humor. My husband and I ask God to bless his wife and the rest of the family with happy memories to carry them through.

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**Lisa and John Stephenson** - March 18 at 10:28 PM

ST

“ Seth, Megan, Wally, and Rose Tate purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Matthew Pokojski.



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**Seth, Megan, Wally, and Rose Tate** - March 18 at 05:27 PM

BN

“ As a young Ag teacher starting out one of the first friends I made was Matt. He was always good to ask for advice or just talk about teaching. We spent many FFA events standing around talking about many things but of course our favorite subject was cattle. I will always remember those conversations and of course that laugh. Beth and Tyler, I will continue to have you in my prayers during this hard time.

*Ben Newbury*

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**Ben Newbury** - March 18 at 03:51 PM

KA

“ Mrs. Pokojski and Christa -

*I just heard about Matthew's passing. I'm so sorry for your loss. Even though we haven't seen each other in a long time, I remember you and your family fondly, and my heart goes out to you.*

*Please know you're in my thoughts during this difficult time. Wishing you comfort and strength in the days ahead. ☐*

*Kristy Bone Adams*

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**Kristy Adams** - March 18 at 02:14 PM

JS

“ *Had the pleasure of knowing Mr. P. thru my years in FFA, especially during my time as a section officer. God's best to the family.*

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**James Shelby** - March 18 at 01:36 PM

PM

“ *So sorry for your loss. I worked at Salem High School with Matt. He was always happy with a good word for everyone. He will be missed!*

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**Parsy McArthur** - March 18 at 01:28 PM

TS

“ *Tim & Bertha Schultz purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Matthew Pokojski.*



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**Tim & Bertha Schultz** - March 18 at 12:05 PM

JB

“ Matt always had a smile on his face and was willing to help anyone who asked, student or teacher. He was a great teacher and FFA Advisor, and a great role model and mentor for many in agricultural education. My condolences to the family on the loss of a great man.

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**Joshua Berg** - March 18 at 08:37 AM

DG

“ Matt was such a good mentor to me as I began my Agriculture Teaching Career in FFA Section 21 back in 2000. When I first met Matt, I thought to myself...what a mountain of a man, with such a kind heart. He had the presence, patience and the demeanor to listen first and then help others, with sound advice. I believe Matt always put others first... That's what made him such a good teacher. My thoughts and prayers to his family in this time of sadness.

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**Daymon Gast** - March 17 at 10:52 PM

JK

“ Matt was a tremendous person. He was so kind and so knowledgeable about so many facets of agriculture. He was a wonderful teacher to his students. He was a great friend to many of his agriculture teacher friends. Matt and I had so many fun moments as we discussed so many topics. Matt will be missed by all who knew him. He has a special place in my heart and the hearts of many other students, friends and teachers. May your soul rest in peace and may the eternal light shine upon you.

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**John T. Kabat** - March 17 at 10:24 PM

DC

“ *Duncan Girls Cricia & Clarissa purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Matthew Pokojski.*



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**Duncan Girls Cricia & Clarissa** - March 17 at 09:57 PM

HB

“ *To Mr. Pokojski's family, I am very sorry for your loss. He was a great teacher who recognized his students' interests and talents and led them to opportunities that matched. He was also a friend to many. May he rest in peace after a life well lived.*

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**Holly Hayes Bush** - March 17 at 06:48 PM