

Richard Hurley Bremner

August 27, 1943 (Enterprise, AL) August 4, 2023 (Mackinaw, IL)



The natural world lost a great friend when **Richard "Rick" Hurley Bremner**, 79, died peacefully August 4, 2023, at his home in Mackinaw, IL.

Rick was born August 27, 1943, in Enterprise, AL, and was raised in Chicago and Rockford, IL, by his mother Marian and adoptive dad, Robert Bremner. Rick's father, Irving Hurley, was killed shortly after landing with his tank battalion at Utah Beach on D-Day. Rick was able to visit the Normandy landing sites and re-trace his father's path. The trip had been a lifelong goal and it was filled with miracles.

A veteran of the US Army, Rick served in the Berlin Brigade as the Assistant Secretary to the Deputy Brigade

Commander from 1969-71, stationed in Berlin, Germany. There, he was awarded the Commendation Medal for his exceptional work. He was a member of the Deer Creek American Legion, the Lion's Club, and was a patriotic American.

Rick graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University with a degree in history and a teaching certificate, and he earned his Master's Degree from Illinois State University in 1984. He taught 6th grade students at Irving School and Bloomington Junior High School (BJHS) for 32 years where he made lifelong friendships with both students and staff. He was an adopted father to many of his students who accepted his support, trust, and love even as they grew to adulthood. As a member of the Outdoor Education Program at BJHS, Rick spent two weeks every spring camping with students and teaching them about the great outdoors. There, he was known for his elaborate tent set ups and his retelling of Native American stories. He was selected by the Mclean County Soil and Water Conservation District as the Conservation Education Teacher of the Year in 2002. Va Dotten Chew!

Rick was devoted to nature and showed this through his actions and service to his community. He planted many trees throughout his life, picked up trash along the

rural roadways, and every summer morning cleared goose poop from the public beach at Heritage Lake so the kids could swim. Rick was also a member of the Wetlands Action Team that helped develop the 1998 Mackinaw River Watershed Management Plan. A lifelong fisherman, Rick explored other rivers and the natural life along the riparian way on the Illinois, Peshtigo, Menominee, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Sugar Creek, Eleven Points, Mendenhall, and the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.

In 2004, Rick was a trained tornado spotter and volunteered as an Emergency Management member for the Village of Mackinaw. For many years he reported daily weather observations and precipitation amounts for the National Weather Service in Lincoln and monitored severe weather as it moved through Tazewell County. In 2014, he received a Special Service Award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for his efforts.

Rick was, for a time, a professional dart thrower and won several tournaments with his skill. He was a Cubs and NASCAR fan and attended many games at Wrigley Field and races at several tracks. He roasted his own coffee beans for a time and, much to his wife's dismay, made his own grand scale ice cubes. As one friend said, "He was life beyond life."

Rick is survived by his wife of 51 years, Janet Bremner (nee Monninger); and his two children: Robert "Bo" Bremner (Michelle Hilgendorf Barner), and Kelsey Bremner (Phil Walker); and his brothers and their spouses: Rob (Terri) Bremner, Bill (Deb) Bremner, and John (Lori) Bremner. Rick was loved deeply by his entire extended family, in-laws, cousins, nieces and nephews. He is also survived by his official foster daughters: Rebecca and AleSandra Stone and several other former students who simply claimed him as their "dad."

His support, self-deprecating humor and fun approach to life will be missed by his friends - The Monday Nighters, Euchre Group, Friday Happy Hour, and his poker buddies who started playing together nearly 50 years ago. His ability to sacrifice, provide, support, forgive, and love will be forever ingrained in all he knew.

A Celebration of Life will take place at Carmody-Flynn Funeral Home 1800 Eastland Dr., Bloomington, IL, in the Gathering Room on Saturday, August 12, 2023, from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Memorials can be made to the Irene Gamsky Scholarship for Irving Students at Irving Scholarship, Irving School, 602 W. Jackson, Bloomington 61701; the Ecology Action Center's Tree Corps program, PO Box 97, Normal, IL, 61761; or the Parklands Foundation, PO Box 12, Normal, IL, 61761.

References:

[Richard Bremner Obituary \(1943 - 2023\) - Bloomington, IL - The Pantagraph \(legacy.com\)](#)