



Arthur J. Kramer

February 3, 2023

Arthur (Art) J. Kramer lived a rich life full of people that he loved, adventures that he embraced, and kindness that he shared. He was an amazing storyteller, athlete, woodworker and family man. Perhaps his greatest impact was that he was an incredible educator and mentor. He could easily connect with anyone, and had an unwavering belief in the potential of every person he met. Art passed away peacefully on Friday, February 3, 2023 at the age of 80. With his wife and three daughters by his side, and his son on video, he shared that he was ready to say goodbye. He died how he lived: with intention, with humor, and in the company of those he loved.

Art was born on March 16, 1942 to Jacob and Johanna (Schuring) Kramer in Kalamazoo, MI. He was raised in a predominantly Dutch community, surrounded by a large extended family. As a small boy he would help plant starter seedlings in large wooden trays to help his grandfather in the family greenhouses. From a young age, he gravitated toward group sports and fun interaction, and was never one to turn down a dare or healthy competition. As a high-school senior, Art was named "Portage Prep Man in Motion." During his high-school career, he was a varsity star in football, basketball and baseball, was on the honor roll, and served as class president, class treasurer and president of the student council. He continued playing on the varsity level while studying Biology and Physical Education at Hope College.

It was also during college that he met and married his first wife Carole, and they started their family. Art was a natural Dad, and loved his role and the responsibilities and joys of raising two young children. Art received his Masters of Education degree from Penn State and began teaching high school earth science and coaching sports at a large high school in Montgomery Co, MD. He made a career out of having fun by being around youth in teaching, coaching and mentorship roles.

During these teaching years, Art led a handful of summer cross-country adventure oriented trips with some of his students. Outdoor activities included backpacking, caving, rafting, climbing and camping. Those students remained closely connected to Art throughout the past 45 years, and still regard those trips as experiences that changed the course of their lives. He brought a similar enthusiasm and charisma to his roles as Activities Director at Project Rehab, a residential program for high schoolers battling addiction in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and as the director of Camp Merrie-Woode, a girls' summer camp in Cashiers, North Carolina. Art shared both of these roles with his second wife Carolyn, whom he married in 1979. They soon welcomed two more children to their loving family. It was clear that being a father and husband were the jobs he cherished most - he was very involved in the lives of his four children, and there was nothing that took priority over spending time with his family.

Art and Carolyn moved to Maryland in 1990, and he soon began working as a coordinator at the Center for Talented Youth (CTY), a summer enrichment program for academically gifted students run by Johns Hopkins University. Art officially retired from Johns Hopkins University at age 62, but it wasn't long before he was asked to return to CTY to be a site director at the Stanford University site in Palo Alto, CA where he worked for another 7 summers. Here he connected with more educators and students, all of whom admired his leadership and camaraderie.

With a genuine curiosity and kindness, Art was remarkably skilled at creating relationships with people of any age. With youth especially, he wanted to get to know them individually, wanted to help inspire them to find their sparks, and make them laugh. His natural talent for connecting with students inspired other educators and served as a model for how to set high expectations and offer unending support, often with humor, and always with love. These same skills he brought to his role of co-leading church youth groups with Carolyn in the 1990s. He created engaging and unique activities to build community, and allow for spiritual growth and development. His mentorship and fatherly role in these groups also nurtured lasting friendships.

When not working with youth, Art enjoyed a number of outdoor activities and hobbies. He coached his own children in sports, and he continued hiking, camping, canoeing, and spelunking for as long as he could. He loved gardening, caring for animals - especially his dog Buster - and he spent endless hours selflessly picking up trash along the side roads of his community. Many family members and friends were accustomed to receiving handmade gifts from his workshop - pens, name puzzles, wood signs, ornaments, wooden toys, etc.

Art's humor brought out the best in others, and his personality was magnetic. With his immediate and extended family, colleagues, and friends, he was always amazingly present. He was involved in so many significant life events, and all of the day-to-day ones too. We never questioned his love, and he taught us all how to find adventure and joy in every moment.

The last few years of his life were a little quieter (though he did hike to Machu Picchu in Peru at age 70!). Art and Carolyn moved from Maryland to Estes Park, Colorado in 2016 to be closer to their children and grandchildren. They

continued their love of international travel with trips to Iceland, the Galapagos, and most recently, Greece. In addition to devoting time with the Estes Valley Land Trust and ringing bells in the handbell choir at church, he spent much of his time making gifts in his workshop, and visiting with his sister, children and grandchildren. He never tired of driving with Carolyn on road trips through beautiful Rocky Mountain National Park. Art's time on earth is a lesson in a life well lived.

Art is survived by his sister Fran (Kramer) Koets, wife Carolyn Kramer, son Jim Kramer, daughters Cathy Kramer, Kelli (Kramer) Petrick and Christi (Kramer) Kelston, son-in-law Joe Petrick, daughter-in-law Annie Kelston, 3 granddaughters, niece Mary (Koets) Schira, nephew Dave Koets, his former wife Carole DeYoung, and many cousins.

A funeral service will be held in Estes Park, CO on Friday, March 3 at 2:00 pm Mountain Time at the Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies. If you can't join in person, a live stream and recording will be available on <https://pccrusa.org/>

A Celebration of Life and Luncheon will also be held, Saturday, May 20, 2023 at 12pm Eastern Time at Ebenezer United Methodist Church (4901 Woodbine Rd. Sykesville, MD 21784).

In lieu of flowers, please consider planting a tree in memory of Art, or making a donation to one of the following organizations, which were all meaningful to him:

Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies, <https://pccrusa.org/contribute/>

Estes Valley Land Trust, www.evlandtrust.org

Genesee Valley Outdoor Learning Center, www.geneseevalley.org

Center for Talented Youth (CTY) Scholars Program, www.cty.jhu.edu/give-cty

Art was extremely grateful for the love and support of everyone in his life, and he would love to know that he will continue to have an impact on this world after his passing.

From the song "Circle" by Harry Chapin

It seems like I've been here before
I can't remember when
But I have this funny feeling
That we'll all be together again.

As I find you here again
A thought runs through my mind
Our love is like a circle
Let's go 'round one more time.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAR 3. 2:00 PM (MT)

Presbyterian Community Church
1700 Brodie Ave
Estes Park, CO 80517

Celebration of Life & Luncheon

MAY 20. 12:00 PM (ET)

Ebenezer United Methodist Church
4901 Woodbine Road
Sykesville, MD 21784

Tribute Wall

LL

“ Adventure and Uncle Art go hand in hand. When I was young we spent a lot of time with the Kramers. They are fun! I learned early on to be outdoorsy and to appreciate nature. Part of this is because I spent time at Camp Merrie-Woode where Aunt Carolyn and Uncle Art were the directors and Kelli and Christi were the ambassadors. I will be forever grateful for the experiences and all the adventures we had. I'm not sure I ever thanked Uncle Art as an adult but I hope he knows what an impact this had on my life.

Laura L - May 19, 2023 at 02:11 PM

LC

“ I was fortunate to have a number of excellent adventures with Art in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and an amazing trip to France about 10 years ago. There were many memorable stories from the trip - I was hunting for a jumping photo that we attempted to take. We were all laughing so hard trying to take it that no one could jump by the end. I'm not sure we ever succeed in getting all our feet off the group at once - and we all laughed trying to. Lots of love to all of the Kramers in celebrating Art's life!



Leslie W Cook - March 03, 2023 at 11:15 AM

JA

“ i first met Art on a cave trip to Franklin, West Virginia. He was a teacher and it was Columbus day weekend - an extended weekend. My connection was Andy who attended Blair High school - I was at another high school. I left the trip with friends for life an an admiration and respect for a man that seemed to know something about everything. The trip became an annual adventure. Mew people joined the ever expanding group. Children were born, couples married and every October for more than 15 years we met in Franklin - or close by. I am adding a picture of Art, Carolyn and David (Bean) at Franklin - playing a game. Art almost ALWAYS won. I was fortunate enough to be able to visit with him this past year and we always laughed - and laughed hard. I told him he was responsible for the person I am today; he laughed harder.



joe aloi - March 02, 2023 at 10:52 AM

ED

“ One of my fav pictures of Carolyn & Art. Second picture is when Art and I started our heart surgery club. Although Art will be missed by Us all who knew him, luckily he's just a thought or prayer away!



Elmer Downs - March 01, 2023 at 03:01 PM

D(

“ I was a 10th grade student at Blair High School in 1973 when on a autumn Wednesday I picked up a flyer in the lunch room for a weekend caving trip to West Virginia. They were leaving from the parking lot at on Friday. The cost of the trip was \$25. My parents said, "Sure, have fun." This changed the course of my life.

We slept in a cabin on bunk beds all crammed together. I was next to a mouthy Joanne who complained about my skeletal structure. "JESUS H. CHRIST!! You are a Effing Beanpole- you are just sticks!" The nickname stuck. To this day there are still some people who only know me as Bean. Kramer also took students backpacking on weekends throughout the year. We'd leave on a Friday evening and come home Sunday evening smelling of campfire smoke and fresh mountain air having hiked 20-30 miles in the Appalachians. It always felt like we'd crammed a full week into two days.

Every summer he put together a month long trip driving across the country with a group of 30 students. I went on ALL of them. He once said to me, "Bean, the other campers look up to you." This was a joke (I'm 6'4"), praise and encouragement to strive to be my best self, all combined into one.

Art was so much fun to be around. If you were in his presence you were always in on the joke and you laughed. A prankster forever. He saw the humor in every situation. Yet he also had deep empathy when that was required. I stayed in touch with Art and Carolyn over the years since High School. There was this one caving trip in a small group with Carolyn that we almost drowned in Cass Cave - that's another story.

Later my son joined us on caving trips. He was only 14 but felt fully included as an equal among the adults due to Art's respect, humor and warmth. It was generational.

Arthur Kramer was a truly great man who touched the souls of so many people and they were better for it.



David Bakker (Beanpole) - March 01, 2023 at 02:53 PM

CK

“ 1 file added to the album Family



Carolyn Kramer - February 28, 2023 at 06:18 PM

CK

“ 12 files added to the album Family



Carolyn Kramer - February 28, 2023 at 05:14 PM

AN

“ Art thank you for letting me be your friend and to meet your amazing family...what a gift. May you have many Big Gulps where you are...
Anna

anna - February 26, 2023 at 11:57 PM

AN

“ 3 files added to the album CTY connections



anna - February 26, 2023 at 11:53 PM

AM

“ I remember how handy Uncle Art was. I was always impressed with the woodworking projects he shared when we visited. I also remember how happy he looked in the pictures of his and Aunt Carolyn's adventures around the world. I love you, Uncle Art. May you rest in peace. -Amy Weigand

AMY - February 26, 2023 at 06:49 PM

CA

“ Dad, how do I choose just one memory to share? There were thousands that all have left an imprint on my mind and heart. I guess I can just say that you made me laugh more than anyone else. When I think of you now I cry...and then I laugh because that's what you always did for me. I love you to eternity and miss you more than you could imagine. Keep going on wild adventures and join me for a dog walk now and then. ❤️

Cathy - February 26, 2023 at 06:20 PM

CS

“ I had the pleasure of having Art as my supervisor during the summers of 2005 and 2006 @ CTY Palo Alto. Art was one of those supervisors/people that could do anything/everything and remain humble at the same time. He was fun, witty, smart, loved the kids in the program and equally the staff.

From career life to family man, I know Art lived life as it should be!

*Charlie Scruggs
Palm Springs, CA*

Charlie Scruggs - February 26, 2023 at 03:42 PM



“ Just want to share how much we enjoyed Art's visits to IL to see all the cousins at the Welch/Downs family reunions. Always a joy and fun. Could not meet someone so kind, funny and fit right in to the family. It was like he was blood family to all of us. He will be greatly missed, but oh so fondly remembered and he now joins our family reunions in heaven. Love you all, his friends and family, and our great love of awesome memories and the JOY of knowing him and married to our sweet cousin, Carolyn. Love cousins, Nancy, Fred, Mary Lou and Ruth Ann. (Renders/Downs).



Nancy Render Semingson - February 26, 2023 at 01:33 PM

CN

“ *I worked under Art for many of his CTY summers in Palo Alto. His leadership made a safe, fun environment for students and staff alike, and those summers hold some of my most cherished memories.*

Christine Nelson - February 25, 2023 at 11:11 PM