



## Eric Stephen Gehrs

August 25, 1961 - December 10, 2023

On August 25th, 1961, the vibrant life of Eric Stephen Gehrs began, born to Jack Lee Gehrs and Patsy (Patricia) Joan Harju in Glendale Heights, Illinois. Eric enjoyed the rare privilege of growing up in the very same home where he first drew breath, alongside his cherished sisters, Diana and Linda. A tapestry of fond memories adorned his childhood, with one particularly cherished chapter being the delightful proximity of both his grandmothers residing in the same building. The sweetness of those days was epitomized by visits to Grandma Ina for cookies, followed by equally delightful stops at Grandma Dotty's for yet more sweet treats. Eric's love for his grandmothers and their culinary creations became a cherished hallmark of his life.

Endowed with keen intellect, Eric's academic journey took an accelerated path, allowing him to skip a grade and graduate early from Glenbard North High School in 1978. In 1979, fueled by a sense of duty and patriotism, Eric answered the call to serve his country, joining the United States Navy where he dedicated four years of his life to service.

Following his dedicated service in the Navy, Eric embarked on a new chapter in 1984 when he relocated to the Pacific Northwest, a move inspired by the joy of fatherhood after welcoming his daughter Brooke into the world. Instantly captivated by his blossoming family and the scenic allure of the Willamette Valley, Eric embraced his role as a loving and nurturing father to his adopted son Daniel and biological son Joshua.

An embodiment of hands-on parenting, Eric shared invaluable life skills with

his children, imparting the art of swimming, biking, motorcycling, and even the intricacies of vehicle maintenance. His home was a classroom where he enthusiastically guided his kids through the process of tearing apart and rebuilding motorcycles, sometimes right in the heart of the kitchen. Eric's endearing and playful use of phrases like "beer me" and "pull my finger" became affectionate threads woven into the familial tapestry.

A proud ironworker, Eric contributed to the construction of the Rose Quarter, a source of pride he joyfully pointed out whenever passing by. Transitioning from ironworking, he established a thriving motorcycle salvage business, a testament to his strong work ethic and commitment to providing for his family.

An unwavering enthusiast of the Chicago Bulls, Eric's passion for the game soared to new heights in the presence of Michael Jordan's unparalleled greatness. He was a devoted Bill Swerki's Super Fan, sharing an unyielding love for "Da Bulls, Da Cubs, and Da Bears," and all things Chicago.

Rooted in a profound belief in our Heavenly Father, Eric found solace and community in regular church attendance. The zoo held a special place in his heart, and he relished the simple joys of spending time there, fostering a deep love for animals, especially cats and dogs. His faithful canine companion, Baer, was a constant source of joy and companionship.

As we remember Eric, we cherish the enduring legacy of a man who embraced life with passion, commitment, and a warm sense of humor, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of those he loved.

In the year 2000, Eric was excited to encounter the love of his life, Yong Hong, and their union blossomed into a 23-year marriage filled with shared joys and unwavering companionship. In 2005, the radiant glow of grandparenthood embraced him as he welcomed his first granddaughter into his world. Eric was also thrilled to be a grandparent to a grandson born in 2007, and another granddaughter in 2009. Soon after hearing the news of their third grandchild, Eric and Yong Hong learned that parenthood would once again bring Eric immeasurable joy, and in early September 2009, their beloved daughter Jennifer was born. From that moment onward, she became the radiant center

of his world, a cherished companion who accompanied him everywhere, leaving indelible imprints of happiness in their shared memories.

The tender image of Jennifer's small hand clasping his finger during their walks, punctuated by the simple joy of Happy Meals together, encapsulated the profound bond they shared. In 2010, the blessings of grandparenthood multiplied as Eric joyously welcomed another grandson into his heart, followed by two granddaughters in 2013 and two additional grandsons in 2016. In 2020, his last granddaughter graced the family with warmth and joy, adding the final touch to a legacy brimming with love and cherished family moments. Together with his devoted wife, Eric leaves behind a rich tapestry of love and memories, encompassing four children and nine grandchildren. His enduring legacy, marked by love, family values, and shared moments of happiness, will undoubtedly resonate through the generations to come.

# Tribute Wall

LC

“ *Linda and family, we remain in prayer with you during this time of loss. May God continue to comfort you as you mourn.* ”



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**Love, Covenant Presbyterian Church** - December 15, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AG

“ *We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Evergreen Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Funeral Chapel and Crematory* ”

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**A Memorial Tree was planted for Eric Stephen Gehrs** - December 14, 2023 at 12:00 AM