



David Vern Miller

April 12, 1963 - July 11, 2023

David Vern Miller, age 60, passed away at his home in Chariton, Iowa on Tuesday, July 11, 2023 about 7:20 P.M. David had been admitted to in-home/at-home hospice care on Friday, June 30, 2023 after battling cancer. David was born on Good Friday April 12, 1963 along with his identical twin brother Douglas Martin Miller. David was the youngest twin and youngest child in the Miller family. All six Miller children were born at Adair County Memorial Hospital in Greenfield, Iowa to Ivan Lee Miller and Ethelmarie (Martin) Miller. (YES Ethelmarie is spelled correctly. No space and no middle name!) David's siblings, in birth order, include: Deneise Marie (Miller) Olson and Dennis Lee Miller (also twins), Diane Lynnette (Miller) Schwartz, Deborah Jane (Miller) Benton-Gevock, and Douglas Martin Miller.

David attended all twelve years of primary education and graduated from Bridgewater-Fontanelle Schools in 1981. David and Doug were separated into different classes after kindergarten for first through sixth grade. David was always in West, and Doug was always in East. The separation of twins was common at this time in schools. Mother, Ethelmarie was not in agreement of this decision. The only other primary school that David and Doug attended was the fourth quarter of sixth grade when the "twins" attended South Harrison R-11 School District in Bethany, Missouri due to a temporary work assignment of their father. Ivan was a construction foreman with Schildberg Construction Company based in Greenfield, Iowa. David called many

Bridgewater-Fontanelle, Class of 1981 classmates lifelong friends. David kept in touch with many until his death.

David was united into marriage on Monday, May 13, 2013 to Julie Ann (Boseck) Snyder in the magistrate's office in Audubon County Iowa. A family ceremony was held on September 6, 2013 at the United Methodist Church in Griswold, Iowa and a reception followed at the Community Center in Cumberland, Iowa. David and Julie met while both worked at Cass County Memorial Hospital in Atlantic, Iowa. David was a Certified Medical Lab Technician and Julie was an RN working Special Care/ICU. At this time Doug and Julie worked night shift as nurse partners. David began visiting the hospital on nights when Doug and Julie were both working. Later David visited even when Doug wasn't working the same shift. David and Julie's relationship grew as friends and the two enjoyed going on cruise vacations together. This relationship blossomed and as Julie would say, "We are better together than we are apart."

Straight out of high school in 1981, David (and Doug) attended Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny, Iowa for advanced studies in cooking. Both individually had made their decisions early in junior high school to pursue cooking as their career choice. Home Economics' teacher Mrs. Yvonne Fletcher dedicated six plus years to making the twins ready for their culinary career education. Mrs. Fletcher was instrumental in not only teaching the required basics but challenging both to new and unusual dishes and cooking techniques. David once baked lettuce bread in class. It was edible but that was about it! Home Ec is also where Mrs. Fletcher required them both to learn to sew and learn about childcare. Later David used his sewing skills, as he was the one who altered Julie's wedding gown before their marriage. David also did the sewing when he and his sister Diane made teddy bears and bunnies out of their parents' chenille bedspread and the boys' childhood curtains.

The first trimester of DMACC college classes including Cooking Fundamentals 101 was “review” for both Doug and David, thanks to Mrs. Fletcher. Other students struggled to keep the pace in classes. David fondly would tell the story of starting first day classes with more than 80 students. Two years later, in 1983, the twins graduated with just 11 students! Both earned an Associate of Applied Arts degree in Culinary Arts and certificates of studies in Commercial Cooking and Beginning Restaurant Management. These were a three-year course of study completed in two years. Both graduated in 1983 with no college debt as they both worked several jobs to pay tuition fees as they attended college. David attended the 1983 National Restaurant Association competition in Chicago, Illinois where their graduating culinary class received the Culinary Bronze Award in Buffet Decorating. The culinary class as a whole also received the Cordon Bleu Award of Excellence. Both proudly wore these award ribbons and medals throughout their culinary careers.

David worked as a Chef for many years. His early work history included The Granery in Greenfield, Iowa; Sun Valley Golf and Country Club in Ringgold County, Iowa; Elmhurst County Club in Oskaloosa, Iowa and Grinnell Country Club in Grinnell, Iowa. David made friends with those who worked with and for him in every place he worked. David’s laugh filled the kitchen and he was known for his hard work.

In early 1996, David joined his identical twin brother, when Doug opened and owned Millers’ Bridgewater Café in Bridgewater, Iowa. David had originally wanted no part of this venture but came around when he saw the progress Doug was making in opening and renovating the café.

Both Doug and David started their working careers while in junior high school

in this café, then Mary Lou's Café owned and operated by Mary Lou Williams of Bridgewater. In the days of Mary Lou's Café, everything was scratch made and that is what the twins learned. Good cooking! Mary Lou Williams and her mother Grace Dwyer were instrumental in teaching the two true restaurant cooking and passing along their best work ethic. "If you say you are going to do something, do it. Anything worth doing is worth doing right. If you don't know, ask! Be responsible. You are accountable for your actions. Speak up. If it is worth saying, say it like you mean it."

Millers' Bridgewater Café was known for home style cooking including breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Biscuits and homemade sausage gravy, pancakes the size of a dinner plate with warmed syrup, hash browns from real potatoes, buttercream iced cinnamon rolls, fresh baked pies and desserts, real mashed potatoes with every noon special, real homemade gravy from drippings, real roast beef daily was a given, soft serve ice cream, along with a full menu of other lunch and dinner items were served. Routine nightly specials included all-you-can eat fried chicken, fried fish on Fridays, and rotating random specials including pork picatta, lasagna, veal Marsala, shrimp scampi, and prime rib! Don't forget the prime rib every Friday and Saturday night complete with steak butter that was to die for!

Millers' Bridgewater Café was not only home style cooking; they offered special course dinners they called "Gourmet Dinners." This term was a carryover from the fundraising dinners the two participated in during their college years. These were special dinners, by reservation only, with white linen tablecloths and linen napkins, and candles and flowers on the tables, yes in Bridgewater, Iowa! Reservations were sold in advance only. Some patrons were skeptical about these dinners and the cost involved. When they waited too long and the reservations were full, some patrons stood at the café window to look in and see what they had missed. These dinners drew business in from long distances and the dinners had a following. Skeptics

jumped to buy tickets at the following dinners, and then seldom missed another.

In 1997 David and Doug compiled a cookbook entitled “Family Recipes, Old Time Stories and Memories” first as a family project, but when offered for sale to everyone else, some family had missed out on getting a copy. This led to reprints. The cookbook is a treasure to those who have a copy.

David was an integral part of Millers’ Bridgewater Café but David decided to move on at the peak of the café’s business. This “breakup” was a source of contention between the two brothers but amends were made and led to other ventures for both brothers.

David worked several factory jobs in southwest Iowa after leaving cooking. One factory in Winterset helped him establish new friendships and new relationships. When the factory announced it was closing, David had retraining funds available to him. He took this opportunity to work on a completely different career path. David built on his training and experience as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT-B) and studied to become a phlebotomist. He worked in several area hospitals including Adair County Memorial Hospital in Greenfield, Iowa and Cass County Memorial Hospital in Atlantic.

Several years later, David returned to DMACC and attended classes in Des Moines and Ankeny for further education, this time in the medical lab field. David worked long, full-time night shifts as a hospital phlebotomist while a full-time student so he could afford this education. David often called on the phone from “the morgue” where he slept. These were the only free beds available in the hospital. Sleeping there between clinicals and his work shifts meant he did not have to drive home, then backtrack to classes losing both sleep and time. David sometimes struggled as a “non-traditional” older student

with the needed advanced studies in organic chemistry, microbiology, and advanced math. David earned an Associates of Applied Science degree in Medical Laboratory Technology. He worked night shift at Cass County Memorial Hospital for many years. David was good at his job and had to be as he was most often the sole laboratory night staff. He was responsible for everything lab-wise including ER, med-surg, OB, and send-outs, along with daily lab equipment prep, and running and maintaining equipment controls.

As earlier stated, David met Julie while both worked at Cass County Memorial Hospital in Atlantic, Iowa. In October 2017, David and Julie moved to Centerton, Arkansas where David worked as a Medical Lab Technician (MLT) at Ozarks Community Hospital in Gravette, Arkansas. Later David made a job change working as an MLT for Mercy Hospital in Rogers, Arkansas.

David and Julie returned to Iowa moving to Chariton, IA in April 2022. David developed health problems soon after and was diagnosed with cancer. He dealt with surgeries and treatments to battle his disease process. He fought his own fight!

David's hobbies included traveling, cruises, cooking, cookbook collecting, wood crafting, saw milling, hunting, quilting, arguing with Doug, and anything Bridgewater, Iowa related. David made many Miller Woods log cabin sets similar to Lincoln Logs made from native cut timber that he personally milled from Whoopy Hollow trees.

In their "younger" years, Doug and David made many trips to Canada bear hunting with bow and arrow then fishing. David often told stories about family camping trips to Estes Park, Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, and other places. One of David's favorite lakes was Sprague Lake in RMNP and, not by coincidence, one of his favorite singers, Amy Grant, donated a large

sum of money to help pave the walking trail around the lake and make needed repairs many years ago. David repeatedly told me this fact, and practically led me by the hand to show me the commemorative bronze plaque that told the same details when we vacationed there.

For many years, David never missed “Miller Family Vacation” as they called it A.K.A. Iowa shotgun deer season. The first weekend (including the following Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday) in December was considered almost sacred, and nothing else was to be planned for this time. On this adventurous extended weekend, “the clan” planned to not only harvest deer on the family-owned farm, but process the meat and clean up. It was successful when all freezers were full, which was often! David was the only person around with a 10 shot magazine on a scoped Remington 1100!

David enjoyed vacations to Alaska and shared cruising vacations with other family members including Dad (Ivan), sister Deb, and niece Amanda, as well as his wife Julie. Many pictures show his enthusiasm and his wide smile. In a YouTube video, David can be seen parasailing from a boat. He warns to turn the volume down because his “woo hoo” is quite loud!

David was a longtime volunteer fire fighter and EMT with the Bridgewater Fire Department. People often joked that it was more of a Fire Department catering service, but David and many others were involved in many car scenes, rescues, and medical calls. He spent many hours in training and was also an instructor in CPR/ECC. David seldom talked about the toll these calls had on him both emotionally and physically.

David also worked for Adair County Ambulance as an EMT-B on an as-needed (PRN) basis and for scheduled shifts. It was not uncommon for David to drive while Doug, as a paramedic, was attending to hospital transfers.

David and Doug were baptized together as infants at the United Methodist Church in Fontanelle, Iowa. Again together, the two confirmed their faith at the Bridgewater United Methodist Church in Bridgewater, Iowa. In confirmation classes, they not only learned about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as their personal responsibility of carrying out and practicing their faith, and the gift of life ever after, but also how to fold and fly paper airplanes! Thanks, Pastor!

David is survived by his wife Julie Ann Snyder-Miller of Chariton, Iowa;
daughter Holly (Bion) Ingram of Chariton, Iowa;
son Cody (Alex) Snyder of Red Oak, Iowa;
grandchildren Brooklyn, Taylor, and Emerson Ingram of Chariton, Iowa,
Dominic and Franky Snyder of Red Oak, Iowa, and William Whiteaker of
Bucyrus, Missouri;
great grandchildren Raylen Pace and Kamdyn Ingram of Chariton, Iowa;
mother-in-law Sue Andersen of Atlantic, Iowa;
sisters-in-law Brooke (Brett) Krahn of Centerton, Arkansas and April (Jim)
Forsythe of San Rafael, California;
niece Ashley (Jared) Hull of Fort Worth, Texas;
nephews Curtis Inman of Arlington, Texas and Alexander Forsythe of San
Rafael, California; and many great nieces and nephews;
sister Deneise Olson of Greenfield, Iowa;
brother Dennis Miller of Bridgewater, Iowa;
sister Diane Schwartz and husband Lyle of Story City, Iowa;
sister Deb Benton-Gevock and husband Kenny of Fontanelle, Iowa;
and identical twin brother Douglas Miller and son Hunter of Greenfield, Iowa;
as well as aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews, and a slew of cousins!
The family dogs Riley, Bella and Winston deserve mention here also.

David is preceded in death by
Mother Ethelmarie (Martin) Miller, Father Ivan Lee Miller, Grandfather Virnen

Ray Miller, Grandmother Edna Pauline (Armstrong) Miller, Grandfather Frank Henry Martin, Grandmother Helen Cecilia (Adam) Martin, Sister-in-law Sharon Miller, Nephew Shawn M. Bollhoefer, Great nephews and niece Zayden Benton Christensen and James and Isabell Schwartz, Father-in-law John Andersen and beloved dog Snuggles.

David's wife Julie Snyder-Miller and family along with Douglas Miller, his identical twin brother and family thank all who answered our calls for prayer for peace and comfort for David in his dying days.

Direct cremation of remains was David's choice. David's wishes of no funeral service will be honored. Professional services by Tharp Funeral Home and Crematory in Albia, Iowa.

***Celebration of Life Service**

A Celebration of Life Service for David Vern Miller will be held on Saturday, September 9, 2023 at 4 P.M. at the Bridgewater Activity Center at 502 North Main Street in Bridgewater, Iowa 50837.

Directly following this Celebration of Life service, a light meal will be provided by the family.

Please join us in remembering and celebrating the life of David Miller.

Ashes are to be released by the family privately after this Celebration of Life service. A headstone memorial will be placed in the Fontanelle Cemetery.

Special thanks to the Bridgewater Fire Department. Thanks you!

For further information on this Celebration of Life service, memorials or any

other information, please contact Douglas Miller at 641-745-5108.

Two memorial funds have been established in David's name. They are as follows:

"Take Back Bridgewater, Iowa" Downtown Hanging Flower Basket Project – future use Memorial donations may be sent to:

"Take Back Bridgewater, Iowa"

c/o Pam Frese

P.O. Box 111 Bridgewater, Iowa 50837

Please designate "Memorial fund for David Miller"

American Cancer Society at

<https://raiseyourway.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.personalCampaign&participantID=9598>

When We Fall Apart

Song by Amy Grant, Ryan Stevenson, Vince Gill

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Life will be changing, nothing we can do

The clock is ticking now

All I can think about

Is knowing I have to move on without you somehow

And I just can't believe

That you're the one who's keeping it together

As you hold my hand and say

It's ok to cry

It's ok to fall apart

You don't have to try

To be strong when you are not

And it may take some time to make sense of all your thoughts

But don't ever fight your tears

'Cause there is freedom in every drop

Sometimes the only way to heal a broken heart is when we fall apart

“The only thing certain in life, is change.”

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

SEP **9**. 4:00 PM (CT)

Bridgewater Activity Center
502 North Main St.
Bridgewater, IA 50837