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RICK ARNOLD



Rick Arnold

Richard George "Rick" Arnold, 46, of Chesterfield, Mo., died suddenly Thursday, March 6, 2008, at his residence.

A gifted writer, loving son, brother and uncle, Rick triumphed over adversity repeatedly and with good humor. That humor, however, was often, if not always, filled with tortuous puns.

No words written about Rick can capture this man, a feat only possible if he had written these words himself.

Rick was born Jan. 18, 1962, in Belleville, Ill., the son of Richard E. and Joyce A. Arnold. At birth, doctors warned that birth defects would prevent Rick from achieving success in a physical or mental capacity. But, Rick proved them wrong. His intelligence, wit and tenacity drove him to fulfill his dreams of being a professional writer and wordsmith. He was a steadfast friend, an extraordinary talent and his own man.

Rick earned a Master's degree in Journalism from Iowa State University and a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from Tarkio College (Tarkio, Mo.). He was a 1980 graduate of Althoff Catholic High School, where he was awarded the American Legion Citizenship Medal for courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, scholarship and service, attributes he affirmed every day of his life.

In a 20-year career in journalism and public relations, Rick was a reporter, editor and columnist for the Journal Newspapers of Southern Illinois and assistant managing editor and editorial page editor of the Effingham Daily News. His bylines also appeared in the St. Louis Sun newspaper.

For the last ten years, Rick worked in marketing and public relations at Maryville University. Most recently, he was the writer and editor of the Maryville Messenger/U-News, an internal online newsletter for employees. He also was the senior news release writer. For years, Rick also wrote and edited the Maryville University alumni magazine.

Earlier, he worked in public relations, marketing and sports information for Southwestern Illinois Community College (formerly Belleville Area College) in Belleville, Ill.

Rick believed in the power of words and, whether in a simple note or a polished narrative, he used his gift to offer support, congratulations and his love. Rick's stationery was a yellow legal pad, dispensing handwritten masterpieces in his trademark penmanship, which chiseled his words into the paper.

Rick focused on sharing himself generously. He would spend countless, patient hours with his adoring nieces and nephews, playing games and puzzles and especially reading. Over the years, Rick volunteered for the Chesterfield Art Gallery, adult literacy programs, Call for Help, Meals on Wheels, trivia nights, and as President of the St. Augustine of Canterbury School Board. He was a youth baseball umpire and, in high school, inspired thousands of spectators as the equipment manager for the Althoff Catholic High School basketball and football teams.

Rick loved to read... anything. He filled his home with books, magazines and newspapers from around the country, stacks of which he insisted on reading in chronological order.

He was a walking encyclopedia with a voracious appetite for knowledge (and cheeseburgers, chocolate cake and pizza). Rick was the "answer man," just a phone call away for any question in any category.

An informed sports fan, Rick enjoyed attending games with family and friends. A lover of comic books and pinball, Rick chuckled his way through life with a childlike spirit.

Rick is survived by his parents, Richard E. and Joyce A., nee Blim, Arnold of Belleville, Ill.; siblings, Maria (Wayne) Jung of Union, Ky.; Elisa (Dave Rule) Arnold of Shiloh, Ill.; Angela (Jerry) Stauder of St. Peters, Mo.; Joseph V. (Whitney) Arnold of Louisville, Ky.; and Charissa (Ryan) Steffensmeier of Belleville, Ill.

Rick was greatly loved by his many nieces and nephews: Christopher, Lindsie and Lauren Jung; Kayla, Zachary and Matthew Stauder; Samuel and Henry Arnold; and Xavier, Tobias and Helena Steffensmeier.

Visitation is from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday, March 9, 2008, at George Renner & Sons Funeral Home, Belleville, Ill. The Funeral Mass will be held at 10 a.m. Monday, March 10, 2008, at St. Augustine of Canterbury Church, Belleville, Ill., with the Rev. Gene Neff and the Rev. Jack McEvilly officiating. Burial will be at Lake View Memorial Gardens, Fairview Heights, Ill.

A scholarship has been established in Rick's memory for students studying communications at Maryville University, where he mentored many budding journalists. Memorial contributions may be made to: The Rick Arnold Memorial Scholarship, Maryville University, c/o Beth Albes, Interim Vice President for Advancement, 650 Maryville University Drive, St. Louis, Mo. 63141. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.rennerfh.com.

"I do hope whatever adversity you may encounter will not be so bad that you cannot gain something positive from the experience. If a problem is too big, that's OK, that's why God created older brothers."
- Rick Arnold, 1992

GEORGE RENNER & SONS FUNERAL HOME, Belleville, Ill.

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