



Rex Dearmont Rust

September 12, 1969 - January 6, 2022

Rex Dearmont Rust, a prominent Cape Girardeau businessman and a much beloved member of one of Missouri's most distinguished families, died Thursday, Jan. 6, the age of 52 in Houston, Texas.

Rex was born into a large family on Sept. 12, 1969, in Cape Girardeau, the youngest child of Gary Wayne and Wendy Kurka Rust. He was educated at the teacher Training School - or Campus School -- on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University, before transferring to the Cape Girardeau public school system.

After two years at Cape Central High School, Rex transferred to Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, Massachusetts. In his three years at Deerfield Rex distinguished himself in every possible way. Rex was elected class president his sophomore, junior and senior years, as he excelled both in the classroom and in varsity athletics. His senior year saw him named captain of the football, basketball and baseball teams. His outstanding qualities were recognized as Rex received the James A. Gunn Award for "outstanding contribution to school life for his loyalty and leadership", the Frank Boyden Award for scholar athlete, the Tom Ashley Award for outstanding football player and the Williams Cup given annually to the class member who best exemplifies Deerfield ideals. He also was the chosen Delegate to the first Missouri Scholars Academy (1 of 200 students from over 16,000 applicants) and was the recipient of a life- changing travel scholarship to India for 3 weeks. He graduated Cum Laude in 1988.

Rex proceeded on to Harvard University for his undergraduate work. At Harvard, among elite students from all over the world, his work and zest for life earned him still more distinction for the leadership qualities that marked every phase of his life. He was a member of A.D. Finals Club and played baseball for Harvard for three years. His studies included a semester abroad at the London School of Economics and three months traveling through Europe. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics, graduating Cum Laude in 1992.

Following graduation, Rex worked for two years in the mergers and acquisitions department of Smith Barney in New York. From there he joined the private equity firm Code, Hennessy and Simmons in Chicago, where he spent three years. Next, Rex moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he spent three years working with the private equity firm Colonnade Capital.

While in Richmond, Rex was especially blessed as he met the love of his life Sherry L. Mills in February of 1998. On Aug. 8, 2005, Rex and Sherry married in an outdoor ceremony on the beach in Maui, Hawaii. Sherry remained his beloved and cherished partner in all things until the day he died.

In 2000, Rex returned home to Cape Girardeau to serve as co-president of Rust Communications, a second-generation media company that owns and operates more than 40 newspapers; dozens of websites and specialty publications; minority ownership in 17 radio stations; and a digital agency specializing in web site development, event production, social media marketing and other digital services. In addition to media assets, Rust managed a portfolio of commercial real estate investments through its Rust Property Management subsidiary. Based in Cape Girardeau, Rust's companies have operations in nine states, primarily in the Midwest.

Along with his leadership in several local civic organizations in Cape Girardeau, including Cape Chamber of Commerce Board (President 2004), Southeast Missouri State University Athletic Boosters Board (President 2003), Old Town Cape Board, and chairman of the finance committee for La Croix United Methodist Church, Rex served on the Inland Press Association Board (President 2012), American Press Institute Board, Page Cooperative Board, the Division of Youth Services Board for the state of Missouri, Big Brothers Big Sisters ABC Board, Boy Scouts of America Board and was a member of the St. Louis Young Presidents Organization. This week he was recognized by Lions International with its highest award, the Melvin Jones Fellow.

Rex and Sherry shared their passion for serving the Lord in their leadership in the marriage and prison ministries at La Croix United Methodist Church. Rex and Sherry became certified in Prepare/Enrich to offer premarital counseling to couples in their church, as well as to friends who were seeking to learn more about their relationship compatibility or those going into marriage. Rex even became an ordained minister to perform a marriage ceremony at Busch Stadium during a St. Louis Cardinals game for a dear friend (of course, he required them to go through the premarital counseling before agreeing to do the ceremony).

Rex also had a heart for those in prison. He often visited Charleston Maximum Security Prison with a group of men from La Croix. There were two programs that were dear to his heart. One was called the Story Link program. This is where inmates could read a book to their child, have it recorded in their own voice with a personal message and then have it mailed to their child. The other was Men's Fraternity. This program was one that encouraged and taught men how to live lives of authentic manhood as modeled by Jesus Christ and directed by the Word of God. These programs were life-changing, not only for the inmates, but for Rex as well. He often spoke of how much of a blessing those inmates were to him and the wonderful gift of redemption and grace our God gives to us all freely.

In 2010 Rex was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. This challenge he bore up, with Sherry by his side, as he did every challenge that came his way through life: with humility and candor, strength and dignity, relying on and giving eloquent voice to God's grace. In this as in so many other unnumbered ways, Rex was a rare and steadfast inspiration to others.

More than a few of those who loved him have observed that Rex lived more in his 52 years than others have lived in three longer lifetimes. He always met you with a big, beaming smile and typically a hug to match. The room lit up when he walked in. He was an encourager and loved all people. And they loved him back. He had a sense of humor like no other and brought joy to everyone he met. And how he loved to dance. As his wife will tell you... he didn't need a partner on the dance floor. Just him and the music. He was known for his "centipede" on the dance floor and most every wedding reception received the gift of that particular performance from him. He loved flying and had his pilot's license for many years until his MS diagnosis and required medication meant the end of his cherished flying.

Rex also enjoyed travel, concerts, real estate development, golf, hiking, listening to "hair bands" of the 80's and spending time with his wife. He also loved doing the "crazy shot" when taking a photo. There could be one serious shot, but there had to be a "crazy one" as well (and the crazy shot was always the best). He was one in a million and to know him was to love him. But more than all of these, he loved Jesus with all of his being and he shined the light of Christ in even his most difficult valleys. His motto was Love God, Love Others. And he did both beautifully.

Survivors include his wife and best friend, Sherry Mills Rust; his parents, Gary Wayne and Wendy Kurka Rust; and his brothers Gary Wayne II, Wynn Bradford and Jon Kurka Rust; and sisters Penny Rochelle Rust Terry and Holly Rust Payne; together with stepson Jeremy Spencer and granddaughter, Kaylee Grace Spencer; 13 nieces and nephews; and

three great-nephews.

Visitation will be held at La Croix Methodist Church in Cape Girardeau from 5 to 7 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 16. Funeral services will be at La Croix Church at 2 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 17, with the Rev. Ron Watts officiating.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorials take the form of donations in his name to La Croix Church, <https://www.lacroixchurch.org/give/> or to Peace Players International, an organization that uses basketball to bridge divides and develop young leaders in communities of conflict throughout the world and in the U.S., <https://peaceplayers.networkforgood.com/>.

Arrangements are courtesy of Ford and Sons Funeral Home.

Events

JAN **Visitation** 05:00PM - 07:00PM

16

LaCroix United Methodist Church

3102 Lexington, Cape Girardeau, MO, US, 63701

JAN **Memorial Service** 02:00PM

17

LaCroix United Methodist Church

3102 Lexington, Cape Girardeau, MO, US, 63701

Comments



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Rex Dearmont Rust.



January 16 at 11:32 PM



“ This is definitely a voice from the past. I taught Rex in the 7th grade and he was a young man that quickly touched my heart. He always had a smile on his face & a song in his heart. That Christmas, I wrote a letter to Santa asking for acceptance (the inside as well as the outside) of all young people & I had a list of struggles that adolescents face. Rex was deeply touched by this & his mom wrote me a note. Rex epitomized what teaching is all about - to touch a life and have them be better, caring people in life. Thank you Rex for touching my life & I will always remember your glistening smile! Donna Ellis

Donna Ellis - January 13 at 09:29 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Rex Dearmont Rust.



January 12 at 09:22 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Rex Dearmont Rust.



January 12 at 06:56 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Rex Dearmont Rust.



January 12 at 02:40 PM



“ It was my privilege to become acquainted with Rex approximately 15 years ago. I was pursuing political interests and our paths crossed through his media service. As a Democrat in Southeast Missouri , I truly appreciated the respect and dignity offered me by Rex and the entire Rust family. Our friendship began then and was unending. My remembrance of this fine, Christian man is totally positive. I offer my sincerest condolences. Indeed, as the poem states, you left “footprints”.

Steve Hodges
East Prairie, MO



Steve Hodges - January 12 at 06:14 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Rex Dearmont Rust.



January 11 at 05:20 PM



“ I served on various newspaper association boards with Rex. He was the main reason I stayed on those boards for so many years. I enjoyed working with him so much. He always had something both insightful and funny to say. I very much admired his business acumen. At times I would ask him for advice about a situation at one of my newspapers. Briefly and with humor he would point out something I had overlooked, then guide me to a reasonable solution. Although he was 15 years younger than I am, I considered him my mentor.

My favorite Christmas card of all time came from Rex and Sherry. They were dressed as pink, human-size rabbits!

My prayers for Rex, and for my friends Sherry, Gary, Wendy and Jon

Robin Martin, owner of The Santa Fe New Mexican, The Taos News

Robin martin - January 11 at 03:36 PM



“ I wasn't around Rex much and only saw him occasionally when he was in Virginia with Sherry, but on the few occasions that I did, he was always friendly to my family and I. I know that he will definitely be missed. My thoughts and prayers are with the entire family.

Christy Ballou - January 10 at 10:22 AM



“ To quote the great Rush Limbaugh
“He has assumed room temperature “

M Thomas Jolley - January 09 at 07:29 PM



“ Any time I introduced Rex to friend or family, I mentioned the special baseball memory we shared. In our early teens, Rex and I played youth baseball together. One afternoon, I caught the perfect game he pitched. While I thought it was quite an accomplishment, Rex laughed, and shrugged it off.

That was typical of the Rex I knew; he was talented, but humble. He was a good-spirited person who enjoyed laughter, and appreciated those close to him.

Rex will definitely be missed. We will be praying for his family, and loved ones during this difficult time.

Jess R Bolen Jr

Jess R Bolen Jr - January 09 at 06:48 PM



“ Sorry to hear of Rex's passing. I have good memories of Rex growing up. He always seemed upbeat and positive. My condolences to his wife, his parents and his brothers and sisters. God Bless, Rob Hale

Robert Hale - January 09 at 05:40 PM



“ Forever grateful. Rex rest in Eterna peace and watch over your sweetheart Sherry and your family!!!

Irene Ayieko - January 09 at 01:14 AM



“ Kimberly Hahs-Jones lit a candle in memory of Rex Dearmont Rust



Kimberly Hahs-Jones - January 08 at 10:32 PM



“ Lily and Rose Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Rex Dearmont Rust.



January 08 at 08:22 PM



“ Rex, I will always profoundly and personally miss you. Your friendship; optimism; courage; resilience; positive nature; work ethic--especially community service; professionalism in your career; kindness; genuine unshakable faith; intelligence; wit; "great jokes;" love of your family--especially your wonderful wife Sherry--and love of your country, will be with me forever! God bless you! Condolences to your wonderful family!

Mitch Gerber

Mitch Gerber - January 08 at 06:12 PM



“ Rex, I will always profoundly and personally miss you. Your friendship; optimism; courage; resilience; positive nature; work ethic--especially community service; professionalism in your career; kindness; genuine unshakable faith; intelligence; wit; "great jokes;" love of your family--especially your wonderful wife Sherry--and love of your country, will be with me forever! God bless you! Condolences to your wonderful family!

Mitch Gerber

Mitch Gerber - January 08 at 06:11 PM



“ Dana Rylee lit a candle in memory of Rex Dearmont Rust



Dana Rylee - January 08 at 05:40 PM



“ Sandy Robertson lit a candle in memory of Rex Dearmont Rust



Sandy Robertson - January 08 at 03:09 PM



“ So sorry for your loss, sending hugs and love to you

Sandy Robertson - January 08 at 03:11 PM



“ Though I didn't personally know, Rex....his approach to a most difficult and trying time in his life was met vigor and grace combined....his attitude was an inspiration to me and he brought glory to the Lord whom he served.

John Langston - January 08 at 08:02 PM



“ Rex was a man who had many reasons that could have made him prideful; however, it seems he was wise beyond his years and learned one of the greatest secrets of true happiness which is humility. James 4:6-10. May he Rest In Peace.

Ross & Cynthia Austin

Cynthia Austin - January 08 at 02:13 PM



“ Sending Hugs and Prayers. So sorry for the loss of our friend! May the many memories help us and you - as we know he is having a wonderful time in heaven now and looking down on us below.



Tina Riehn - January 08 at 09:08 AM



“ R.I.P Rex

SW



Stephanie - January 08 at 12:07 AM