



## Paul Marshall Kipper

September 5, 1951 - December 11, 2022

Paul Marshall Kipper, 71, fun-loving family man and long-form conversationalist, died on December 11th at 7:15 pm, was momentarily resuscitated by true love's kiss, then departed this world for good at 7:17 pm.

Paul married his college sweetheart, Bonnie, 50 years ago. He was later surprised to learn that their ancestors had neighboring farms in Dakota Territory in the 1870s and spent the rest of his life marveling at other "small world" connections. Together Paul and Bonnie raised four children of whom he was exceedingly proud, each of them marrying spouses he considered his children as well: Kari and Ryan Dodson, Rory and Sarah Kipper, Cassie and Ryan Chandler, and John and Maggie Kipper. His long career at the IRS called for the family to relocate every few years - they lived in six states over the course of their life together. Along the way, Paul and his magnetic personality collected an impressive constellation of friends, so many of whom are more aptly described as extended family.

It wasn't until retirement that Paul and Bonnie sat still long enough to consider travel fun and began wandering further afield. Together they explored Italy, Guam, Vietnam, Singapore, and Cambodia. Many have been regaled with tales from his week-long "deployment" on the USS BOXER, arguably his favorite adventure of all.

In every facet of his life, Paul was a study in laser-focused but boundless passion. His hobbies were manifold: he was an avid and skillful golfer, a devoted philatelist, a bourbon connoisseur, and a fossil hunter. He bought and lovingly restored classic Thunderbirds, played accordion, piano and organ, flew RC airplanes, made his own wine (under the label "Pour Paul's"), and watched classic movies.

Loyalty was his superpower and tradition his drug of choice. For years he single-handedly kept Coca-Cola afloat. Local business owners could set their clocks by Paul's arrival, and then expect to lose a few minutes to friendly chit-chat. He will live on in the traditions he started: stashing scratch-off lottery tickets in Christmas stockings, playing his wine glass with his thumb at the end of a holiday meal, and - his McDonald's favorite - playing "1 or 2," wherein one guesses the number of French fries pinched between his fingers.

Paul was a kid at heart and, as such, was terrific at playing silly games to entertain children - he was constantly stealing noses. Goofing around with grandsons Fletcher (6) and Hudson Kipper (17 mos.) was the delight of his final days. Though his cooking left much to be desired, he excelled at kid cuisine like "chili on eggs on toast" - the name is the recipe - and "bologna and cheese people" - insipid sandwiches punched out with gingerbread-man cookie cutters to encourage little appetites.

From the time his kids came along, the family cabin in Wyoming and its raft of improvement projects figured large into every summer. He toiled all day for the promise of a few hours each evening playing nickel slot machines in a Deadwood casino. When there was the opportunity to go to the beach in Delaware, he would feast on piles of crab, play putt-putt, and draw a crowd with his signature sand sculpture of an alligator finishing a meal of a human leg.

Family was Paul's cornerstone, coming as he did from a large and tight knit one, which includes cherished siblings George Kipper, Carol Voorheis, Lynne Ashe, and Louise Berdahl. Since his relatives are geographically dispersed, he logged tens of thousands of miles driving to make visits. It is said that while doing so, he darkened the doorstep of a McDonalds in every single state of this fair union. A true road warrior, he was known for his zero-dark thirty departures and reciting each passing road sign.

The sun rose on very few Sundays that he wasn't in the front pew at St. Mark Lutheran Church, but his fellow regulars will tell you that he didn't sit down before making his rounds as the unofficial Church Lady Greeting Committee. He sang tenor in the choir and occasionally even lent his skills as an accordion player, something learned under duress as a child and dusted off later in life to irritate his wife.

The man survived so much, from aneurysms to car accidents, and a cancer diagnosis that gave him 2 months to live 17 years ago. It was perhaps a bit surprising that he was so unceasingly positive. He was always quick with a bad joke (think great effort for small reward), but even when the punchline fell flat it unfailingly lifted everyone's spirits as they joined in a collective groan. He was a skilled haggler who doggedly but respectfully got exactly what he sought from every interaction - customer service representatives everywhere will be doffing their caps in respect and breathing a sigh of relief. Gregarious and thoughtful, Paul only needed a tiny nudge from Bonnie to turn his outgoing nature and generous spirit into a life of service - he helped set up for the weekly local farmer's market, started the gardens at the Red House, delivered Meals on Wheels, and was a member of the local Rotary Club. His positivity and kind spirit were infectious, he lived well, laughed hard, and the world is better for having had him in it.

There will be a public memorial service at St. Mark Lutheran Church, 1900 Cape La Croix Rd., Cape Girardeau, MO at 2 pm, January 7th. In lieu of flowers, Paul and his family ask that you commit to an annual flu shot to protect yourself and your loved ones and consider a donation to Lutheran World Relief or The Wingman Foundation, causes close to his heart.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JAN 7. 2:00 PM (CT)

St. Mark Lutheran Church  
1900 Cape La Croix Rd.  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

# Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Paul Marshall Kipper.



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January 05, 2023 at 01:39 PM

JB

“Where to start? Co-workers for 16 years and a great friend and golf buddy for 30 years. But my favorite memory isn't about work or golf.

*In Sept of 1998 I walked into Paul's office and told him we need to go to the Army/Navy game in December. He wasn't too receptive to the idea. I then explained we have a unique situation. Our oldest son was in his last year at West Point and Rory was in, I think, his first year at the Naval Academy. Only chance we have with both sons there at the same time. And you need to experience at least one Army/Navy game. Told him to talk it over with Bonnie and let me know.*

*He finally agreed but insisted he take me to see the Naval Academy. (for full disclosure, I'm a Navy vet.). But he wouldn't agree to me taking him to see the United States Military Academy. I told him he might regret not taking that trip.*

*We flew out on a Thursday. Spent the night at Millies house, met Paul's dad for the first time (apple didn't fall far from the tree). Fun night getting to know them.*

*Next morning, we headed to Annapolis. Weather kind of cool and windy so I throw on a long sleeve tee shirt and a hoody. Annapolis was crowded with visitors. Paul shows me around the Academy grounds and the one building we are allowed to go in. We then walked into town to eat lunch. The weather had warmed up a lot, so I take my hoody off. Paul looks at me with a stunned look. I'm wearing my Army spirit shirt which has Go Army down one sleeve and Beat Navy down the other. He walked 5-10 feet ahead of me. I was telling him it's all in fun, and it was, cars honking, people yelling out their windows. Not a single negative reaction or comment.*

*We get to main gate, and he ask if I was putting my hoody back on and I said nope, I'm having fun with this. So, we're standing outside waiting for the Middies to march out in formation when Paul, standing to my right, tells me he was stepping away for a few*

*minutes (probably too embarrassed to stand next to me). Someone taps me on my left shoulder and tells me he's impressed with my shirt. I explain why I'm wearing it. I then ask if he has a child at the Naval Academy and he said no, I'm in the Army, play in the West Point Band and will be performing at half time of tomorrow's game, just brought wife and kids to see the "other " Academy. Paul then walks up and the guy I had been talking with says "Paul", Paul looks up and calls him by his name. These two were roommates their freshmen year of college, hadn't seen each other in 20+ years. No road trip to West Point, but my T-shirt brought two college roommates together again.*

*Took in game on Saturday. Unfortunately, we were unable to get a pick of the four of us together. But we both had fun being with our son that night.*

*Great trip all around.*

*Played our last round of golf together on 11/23/22. Paul nudged me by one stroke. After the round we sat on the tailgate of my truck and just talked for 20/30 minutes. Laughed about how bad we were at golf 30 years ago. Paul amazed at how much we had improved. Talked about family and the upcoming holidays.*

*Paul was so proud of Rory, Kari, John and Cassie. Bonnie, the love of his life, kept him balanced. As Paul would say: she's the ying to my yang. Never understood that, but it's what he said.*

*Gonna miss him a bunch!*

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**Jim Britt** - January 04, 2023 at 06:37 PM

**KB**

*What a beautiful story! Thanks for sharing!*

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**Karen Butts** - January 05, 2023 at 06:48 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Paul Marshall Kipper.*



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January 03, 2023 at 06:25 PM



“ *Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Paul Marshall Kipper.*



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January 02, 2023 at 02:08 PM



“ *George Kipper purchased the Deepest Faith for the family of Paul Marshall Kipper.*



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**George Kipper** - December 17, 2022 at 03:38 PM



“ *We are so sorry for the loss of your dear, sweet grandfather, father, and friend. Our hearts are with you during this very difficult time. Blessings to the family. Carol and Randy Lawson*

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**Carol Lawson** - December 16, 2022 at 10:10 AM

KB

“ Karen Butts purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Paul Marshall Kipper.



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**Karen Butts** - December 15, 2022 at 09:51 PM

MH

“ I shared the back row of the choir with Paul for the past 15 years. He always new his note and mine and would keep things fun and interesting by going up a half step just to create a different harmony or sing with whatever accent he felt best fit the tune. He will be truly missed.

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**Mike Higgins** - December 15, 2022 at 12:38 AM

RE

“ Although I never officially worked for Paul as my IRS manager, I was often a visitor to the Cape office. The obituary tribute to Paul, and his photo, reflects the wonderfully good person he was to his parents, siblings, wife, children and to all of his employees, and to friends everywhere along the way. Paul was, and still is, a really good person, with his soul in heaven with the Lord, and his memory always in our hearts. Richard Elbert, Washington, MO

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**richard elbert** - December 14, 2022 at 07:30 PM

BC

“ What a guy! Bonnie, he was so much like your dad. His humor and grace were like no other. The memories of our kiddos at the cabin as toddlers to teenagers. We will pray for the Berdahl and Kipper families as you move forward. Love & Hugs.

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**Beth Churchill** - December 14, 2022 at 06:47 PM

KB

*Agree, Paul was a lot like Stew. Two great guys!!!*

**Karen Butts** - January 05, 2023 at 06:49 PM

MM

“ *John, I read your invitation to share memories. I have many to share. Here are a few...*

*Your family, with Paul, allowed me to be your pastor for more than sixteen years. Those early years would have turned out quite differently without Paul and Bonnie. Always know that serving as pastor to your family was truly a blessing. Your family was the first to welcome us in 2005 by inviting our young family to stay in your home. On the day I was installed as pastor, Paul noticed I had no family and said to me, "We are your family now."*

*Paul made good on his promise to be family to us in many ways; not least by nurturing the dreams of our boys. I many found memories of Paul making paper airplanes in the fellowship hall with Patrick and Sam along with many other memories.*

*Paul was an inspiration and especially supportive of Sam in his decision to accept his appointment to the United States Naval Academy. We were really looking forward to hosting Paul and Bonnie as part of our Army v Navy watch party. I so wanted to be with Paul to watch my son march onto the field in Philadelphia this year. We were concerned when we learned he could not be with us. We now mourn his loss with you.*

*I deeply appreciated Paul's support, friendship, and most of all for fulfilling his promise to be family to my own family. Peace be with you as you mourn his loss and celebrate his life.*

**Mike Malone** - December 14, 2022 at 04:43 PM

JK

“ *Feel free to share a memory of Dad. We would love to hear your stories!* ”

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**John Kipper** - December 14, 2022 at 04:04 PM