



## James David DeGroote

June 12, 1952 - July 24, 2023

James David DeGroote, 71, of Bloomington passed away July 24, 2023, at his home. “David”, or as many knew him as “Dad”, was born June 10, 1952 in Evansville, IN to James and Martha (Kavanaugh) DeGroote.

David was born and raised in Evansville, Indiana and went on to obtain his associate degree in Paramedic Sciences from Indiana State University, where he met his first wife Catherine A (Richardson) DeGroote from Elkhart, IN. They were married 12 years and had two daughters. He could never get enough knowledge about the human body and how to save lives. He loved traumas and it is well known that he was a master of keeping calm, educating, prioritizing, compartmentalizing, and even risking his own life in order to save others. He was always pushing the limit and thought outside the box when it came to Emergency Services. He implemented cave rescue training, water rescue, and repelling off of the hospital parking garage, which were unprecedented at the time. He ran mock mass traumas and held his employees to the highest standards. He expected the same from his daughters, who he often involved in many of the trainings.

In 1980, he developed the Bloomington Hospital Ambulance Service. He had a dream of creating a better system to help those in need, and he ran with it. He dedicated almost 30 years to BHAS and left a legacy that is not only admirable, but the number of people that he inspired along the way is countless. He strived for greatness and achieved it. He expected perfection, but was forgiving of flaws. He encouraged and supported so many to help

shape the path of their careers and lives. Many of the people that he hired as teenagers are still working there currently and it is a general consensus that he is the reason they love what they do. He loved knowing that and loved talking about memories he shared during those times. Seeing people grow was a passion of his and there is no doubt that he died proud of each and every employee he had throughout the years.

He retired in 2008 and moved to Navarre, FL with the love of his life, Tami Wellman-DeGroot. Tami and he were married for 27 years and there wasn't a day that went by that he didn't dote on her and his love for her. While in Florida, David began working for Santa Rosa Island Authority as Lead Maintenance Tech/Heavy Equipment Operator after obtaining his CDL. He truly lived out his dreams on that beach, often sending videos to those in Indiana "complaining" about the "terrible view and weather." The beach and just being on the water was something that always gave him peace.

In 2020, after suffering from a severe case of Fungal Meningitis, he and Tami returned to Indiana to be closer to their family. In 2021, he began working for the City of Bloomington Urban Forestry doing lawn care and nature preserve. He has always loved nature and loved what he did. Although always missing his BHAS days, David took every job very seriously and his work ethic was noticed and admired by many. He officially retired in 2023 and spent most of his free time with his family and the "other love of his life", Dakotah (his German Shepherd and best buddy.)

Surviving are his two daughters: Lauren (Reid) Stewart, of Westfield and Catherine "Kate" (Rob) Schnarr of Bloomington; His step-son Zachary (Jessica) Wellman of Bloomington and their children Dylan and Kasey Wellman. He had three grandsons: Brayden Stewart, Preston Stewart, and "Trey" Rowe. Two sisters: Cathy Combs of Florida, and Jami (Mike) Richardson of Evansville, along with many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and sister Carole LeMond.

Instead of a traditional funeral, the family has decided to honor his wishes by cremation and a Celebration of Life. There will be a visitation at Allen Funeral

Home 4155 S. Old St Rd 37 Bloomington on Wednesday August 2nd, 2023 from 4:00pm to 7:00pm, immediately followed by a service at 7:00pm where a select few will speak. David was full of life, lived life in the present, and would NEVER want his loved ones crying over him. That was just him, and it is important to honor him in that way. There will be a separate Celebration of Life at a later date (TBD) for those that would like to share their stories and memories of David.

Family requests, in lieu of any flowers, please know that your support and love is all that is needed. "If love could have saved you, you would have lived FOREVER."

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory have been entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at [www.allencares.com](http://www.allencares.com)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 2. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory  
4155 S. Old State Road 37  
Bloomington, IN 47401  
(812) 824-5905  
<http://www.allencares.com>

## Celebration of Life Service

AUG 2. 7:00 PM (ET)

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory  
4155 S. Old State Road 37  
Bloomington, IN 47401  
(812) 824-5905  
<http://www.allencares.com>

# Tribute Wall

SC

“ David was on the first EMS unit I rode out on when I became a probationary EMT with the Marion Co. General Hospital Ambulance Division in 1973. We went on to become paramedics together. We went on a number of off duty adventures including multiple caving expeditions and camping trips to the "tree house" in southern Indiana. David was always committed to EMS and rescue in particular, so I was not surprised when he integrated the two at the Bloomington EMS service he started. I did not learn of his passing until recently. We have lost a committed EMS and public safety advocate.

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Steve Collier - May 06 at 12:10 PM

MA

“ David....This man and his vision brought Emergency Medical Services to a community that still relied on funeral homes to transport the ill and injured residents. He demanded excellence and competence from all his staff. I worked with David for 24 years at BHAS. With the management of our sponsoring hospital changing, it was clear that his level of compassion and caring would not be obtainable under the new management. David's move to Florida was a major loss for Indiana's and Monroe Counties Emergency Medical Services. He was tough and helped me to become a much stronger paramedic. He will be remembered as a true pioneer in the field of EMS.

Melvin Archer

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melvin archer - October 30, 2024 at 09:09 PM

BG

“ David- in 1981 you granted me an employment opportunity to work for a newly formed hospital-based ambulance service. As a very recently certified, but otherwise completely inexperienced EMT, you must have seen some aspect of potential that allowed you make such a rash decision, especially in view of number of other highly qualified applicants seeking employment. To this day I cannot thank you enough...the following 10 years with BHAS were quite a ride and the greatest job experience ever. I can truly say that I owe much of my life's blessings to the lessons learned under the leadership, mentorship, and friendship you bestowed during my time with BHAS. Saddened to hear of your passing and ever grateful for the day we first met. Cathy and I both have found memories of times shared in the ED with you. You were a remarkable man. On Behalf of my wife, Cathy and myself our greatest sympathy to the Degroote Family and our EMS friends

*Bruce and Cathy Garber*

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**Bruce and Cathy Garber** - August 02, 2023 at 07:58 PM

RH

*Difficult to find the words to say. In 1981 we were blessed to have an incredible experience of bonding and love for EMS and shared this love that you had. Thanks for your incredible support and love for EMS. I will miss you forever and look forward to being with you once again. My last words to you were that I love you.*

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**Rita Herrington** - November 02, 2023 at 11:39 PM

DE

“ 9 files added to the album Memories Album



DeGroot - August 02, 2023 at 04:50 PM

MM

“ Marissa M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James David DeGroot.

Marissa M. - August 01, 2023 at 09:45 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James David DeGroot.

August 01, 2023 at 07:38 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of James David DeGroot.



August 01, 2023 at 07:38 AM



“ *Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of James David DeGroot.*



July 31, 2023 at 04:01 PM



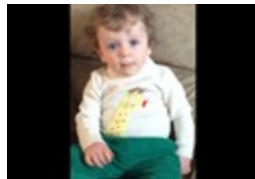
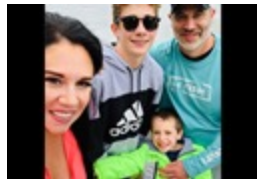
“ *Love, Drew & Natalie purchased the Days of Sunshine Bouquet for the family of James David DeGroot.*



**Love, Drew & Natalie** - July 31, 2023 at 02:21 PM



“ *15 files added to the album Memories Album*



**DeGroot** - July 31, 2023 at 07:19 AM

KH

“ *LifeLine air medical service was in its infancy in 1979. We worked with Dave training on multiple emergency situations. He taught us so much about rescue and trauma management. He was a true professional that loved teaching and sharing his passion with others. So blessed to have had the opportunity. Forever grateful for his generosity, wisdom and contribution to emergency medical management. Rest in peace Dave.*

*Kim Forbes Hartsock*

*IU Methodist Lifeline Flight Nurse/Medic*

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Kim Hartsock - July 30, 2023 at 06:48 PM

DA

“ *Deborah A. purchased the Simply Elegant Spathi phyllum for the family of James David DeGroot.*



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Deborah A. - July 30, 2023 at 03:39 PM

HL

“ *Hoopty L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James David DeGroot.*

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Hoopty L. - July 30, 2023 at 07:55 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of James David DeGroot.*



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July 29, 2023 at 09:57 PM

PS

“ Tami, Jami and Cathy, Caroline and I are so sad to learn of David's untimely passing. His was a very well lived life that won't likely be duplicated. All that has been shared here is definitely true, especially all the fun times we were able to enjoy with all of you at Barkley. May God Bless David's Spirit and comfort your entire extended families four this difficult time

Peter M. Swaim - July 29, 2023 at 04:38 PM

PG

“ When David was in charge of Ambulance Services at Bloomington Hospital, he stood up for his staff and he asked all to honor the patient first. One of his drivers asked an elderly patient what he would be doing if he could choose anything but an ambulance ride. The elderly man said he wished he could go fishing just one more time. Knowing David, the ambulance turned around, went to his home, picked up two fishing poles and called the floor to say they were going to be a little late. They were taking a detour and going fishing. That is how David believed people should be treated. The patient was #1. He stood up for his crew and he put the patients first. What a great loss. I will never forget him.

Pam Grossnickle - July 29, 2023 at 01:10 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of James David DeGroot.



July 29, 2023 at 12:18 PM

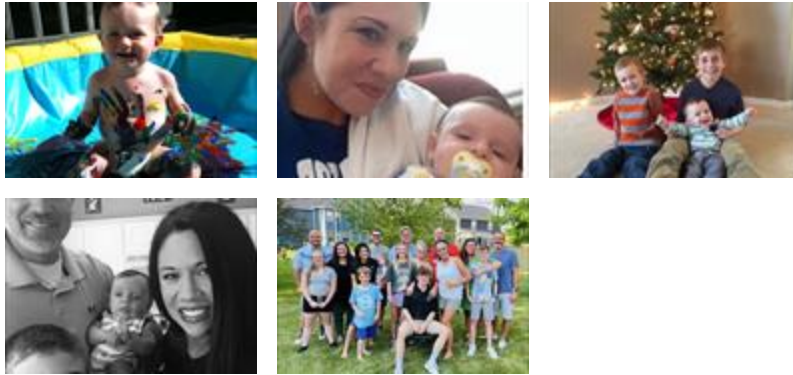


“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James David DeGroot.

July 29, 2023 at 12:18 PM



“ 14 files added to the album Memories Album



DeGroot Family - July 29, 2023 at 12:09 PM



“ David and I grew up together from kindergarten through high school and I can say without hesitation there was never a nicer guy anywhere. His obit really says it all. Dave Ellenstein

David Ellenstein - July 29, 2023 at 12:00 PM



“ Will Ott planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James David DeGroot.

Will Ott - July 29, 2023 at 09:38 AM

WO

“ Will Ott purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of James David DeGroot.



Will Ott - July 29, 2023 at 09:38 AM

WO

“ David was a great and caring person. He fueled my passion for caving and EMS. He created the best ambulance service in Indiana. One no one will ever forget. David , thank you for you dedication to EMS and those you touch, and those you brought up thru the ranks of EMS and life.

William James Ott - July 29, 2023 at 09:35 AM

BC

“ Tami and Family, Bill and I are very sorry for your loss. We both worked at Bloomington Hospital with David. He was a wonderful man and will be truly missed. RIP David. Prayers for all



Bill & Nancy Cowden - July 29, 2023 at 12:30 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Allen Funeral Home and Crematory - July 28, 2023 at 10:16 PM