



Paul Stephen Gruenenfelder

March 23, 1955 - March 3, 2026

Paul Stephen Gruenenfelder, 70, died at his home in Highland, IN on March 3, 2026. Throughout his life Paul was severely mentally disabled. He did not let that prevent him from leading a full and energetic life. One favorite activity was shopping at the local area Goodwill stores, first for used LPs, then for used VHS tapes, finally for used CDs and DVDs of his favorite musical artists. His tastes were eclectic, running from Dolly Parton, his absolute favorite, through Peter, Paul, and Mary to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Goodwill was followed by lunch at McDonalds, where Paul would finagle as many “big” Diet Cokes as he could from his caregiver. He kept an extensive collection of photographs of his favorite musical performers on his computer at home. Many gallons of ink and many reams of paper were used as Paul printed out copies of those pictures, two or five or ten at a time. As a young person, Paul enjoyed swimming in Lake Michigan and playing solo wiffle ball on the baseball diamond across the street from his home. Those games included a lot of highly animated arguments with the umps. He was a fixture in the neighborhood as he roamed the streets, collecting people’s recyclable cans, bottles, and newspapers. He would then scour the newspapers for pictures of his then favorite thing (airplanes, at the time), of his baby brother’s favorite thing (washers and dryers), and recipes for his mom. His favorite city in the world, though he never lived there, was Toledo, OH, where his uncle had a boat, his favorite aunt would take him everywhere, and he could sneak out of his grandfather’s house, cross a very busy street, and ride the bus downtown

without anyone except the bus-driver knowing. He was an extraordinarily kind gentleman, especially to babies and animals, dogs being his favorite.

Paul is survived by his sister, Rev. Vivian Dawn Gruenenfelder of Dutch Flat, CA and his brother Thomas "Tom" Gruenenfelder of Bloomington, IN. He was preceded in death by his parents, Mildred M. and John B. Gruenenfelder and his brothers, David John Gruenenfelder, John Robert Gruenenfelder, and Gregory Peter Gruenenfelder.

Contributions in Paul's memory may be made to Respite Care Services, www.respitecareservices.org, 9000 Indianapolis Blvd, Highland, IN 46322. Respite Care Services provided Paul a home once his parents became too elderly to continue caring for him at theirs.

Visitation will be held at Burns Funeral Home & Crematory 701 East 7th Street Hobart, IN 46342 on Thursday, March 12, 2026, from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM. A mass of Christian burial will take place at St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church 6060 Miller Avenue Gary, IN 46403 on Friday, March 13, 2026, at 10:00 AM with Rev. Michael Surufka officiating. Burial will follow at Calvary Cemetery 2701 Willowdale Road Portage, IN 46368

Please visit Paul Gruenenfelder's online obituary and guestbook at www.BurnsFuneral.com

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR **12.** 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Burns Funeral Home - Hobart
701 E. 7th Street
Hobart, IN 46342
(219) 942-1117
info@burnsfuneral.com
<https://www.burnsfuneral.com/>

Mass of Christian Burial

MAR **13.** 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Mary Of The Lake Catholic Church
6060 Miller Avenue
Gary, IN 46403