



Mark Crowell

February 13, 1959 - September 27, 2020

Mark Crowell of Ashburn, Virginia, died at age 61, after waging a courageous 10-month battle with brain cancer. His beloved and devoted wife, Sheryl, cherished son, Mark, and dedicated sister, Carmen, were by his side.

Mark is survived by his wife, Sheryl Lyons Crowell, of Ashburn, VA; his son, Mark Layfield Crowell, of New York City, NY; his stepdaughter, Taylor Asbell, of Ashburn, VA; his siblings, Carmen Brewer and her husband, Frank, of MD, James Crowell and his wife, Irma, of NJ, Lee Crowell, of PA, and Emily Hannan and her husband, Thomas, of NJ; his mother-in-law, Arlene Lyons, and father-in-law, Paul Lyons, of MA; his sisters-in-law, Crystal Lyons and her dear friend, Jamie Ryan, Sandra Ganguly and her husband, Promeet, and Jennifer Bloch and her husband, David, all of MA; his brother-in-law, Russell Lyons and his wife, Roselyn, of SC; nieces Melissa Gentzler, Lea Gelman, Amanda Deshpande, Bonnie Baratta, Alexandra Brewer, Taylor Hannan, Makaila, Lynzie, Kelsie, and Avril Lyons, Kiaralyn Ryan, and Sarina Ganguly; nephews Davis, Gregory, and Jeffrey Crowell, Cristian Guillermo, and Dalton, Garrett, Jake, and Drake Lyons; and numerous great nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his mother, Jean Petley Crowell, and his father, Layfield Crowell, both of NJ.

Mark was born on February 13, 1959, in Dover, NJ. He was raised in Rockaway Township, NJ, and graduated from Morris Knolls High School in Denville, NJ. Mark went on to earn his bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Maryland and his master's degree in geology (invertebrate paleontology) from Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Upon graduation, Mark began his lifelong career as a geologist with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, where he remained until his recent retirement.

Mark can best be described as a true Renaissance man with a lifelong quest for and fascination with knowledge, starting with his early enthrallment with his family's set of encyclopedias and multi-colored plastic dinosaurs. He went on later in life to discover numerous artifacts and fossils—including fossilized dinosaur bones—while on assorted archeological and paleontological digs, create and publish crossword puzzles, illustrate Maryland's state dinosaur, write poetry and science fiction, publish peer-reviewed scholarly articles, acquire a vast knowledge of film and vintage television, sketch and paint with charcoal, water colors, and pastels, and cook all things spicy. An avid and adept

Scrabble player and a force-to-be-reckoned-with poker player, Mark was an enthusiastic and a good-natured competitor. Besides these interests and so many more, Mark loved politics, astronomy, the Beatles, wineries, and searching for and finding wild paw paw trees growing throughout the Maryland and Virginia countryside. Most of all, he enjoyed sharing all of these things with his family and friends. Mark was a kind, gentle, and loving man, made happiest by time spent with his adored wife, Sheryl, and much-loved son, Mark. He will be profoundly missed.

Due to the restrictions of Covid 19, in-person attendance at Mark's memorial service will be by invitation only; however, all are invited to attend this service virtually, on Saturday, November 14, at noon. Please visit the Loudoun Funeral Chapel and Crematory website (<https://www.loudounfuneralchapel.com>) for more details. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Glioblastoma Foundation (<https://glioblastomafoundation.org/get-involved/donate>) in Mark's name are appreciated.

Events

NOV **Memorial Service** 12:00PM - 01:00PM

14

Loudoun Funeral Chapel

158 Catoctin Circle, S.E., Leesburg, VA, US, 20175

Comments



“ A webcast video has been added.



Loudoun Funeral Chapels - November 10, 2020 at 09:38 AM



“ Wonderful! The minister's homily was sensitive, realistic, and summarized perfectly the unalterable fact that that nothing lasts, and the things that we value the most will one day be gone and our pain will be great. But those gifts we treasured are what make life worth living "The Lord giveth, and the lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Bruce Douglas

Bruce Douglas - November 14, 2020 at 01:07 PM



“ Thank you for inviting me to Mark's online memorial service. It has been heartwarming to hear everyone's memories of him.

I will always remember Mark's amazing dinosaur artwork from childhood and feel so very fortunate that we reconnected on Facebook last year. This gave us an opportunity to get to each other a little bit as adults. The image of Mark I will hold is that of a very sweet and kind man who had been blessed with a beautiful bride.

Wishing Mark's family and friends peace and strength during this difficult time. — Dora Crow

Dora - November 14, 2020 at 01:29 PM



“ Lovely service that captured Mark's personality, interests, and the love he shared with family and friends. Best wishes to you all. Karen Prestegaard

karen prestegaard - November 14, 2020 at 01:39 PM



“ Mark's service was beautiful. His loved ones captured Mark's essence with their loving thoughts and memories. We were privileged to have spent many lovely hours with Mark throughout the years thanks to Carmen and Frank, our dear friends. Our sincere sympathy go out to Markie, Cheryl, and all of his family. Michele Dudash and Charlie Fenster

Michele Dudash Fenster - November 14, 2020 at 03:57 PM



“ I'm sure you made a lasting impression on those you met. You were one of my childhood best friends. I was in awe of you ability to draw. You could make dinosaurs come to life on paper. I never understood your fascination with dinosaurs. I should not be surprised with your field of study. I will never forget the many summers we spent playing wiffle ball in your back yard. (Over the roof was a home run :)) You had this quiet yet confident way about you. You had a wonderful life that ended too soon. Your fascination with all things will live on with those left behind. You were a very special part of my childhood that will never be forgotten. Rest in peace my friend.
Mark A. Lusardi

Mark Lusardi - June 07, 2021 at 11:43 PM



“ My Uncle Mark was one of the kindest, funniest, and most interesting people I have ever met. Over the years, I have heard a lot of praise for his many attributes and talents. I wanted to take a minute to focus specifically on one: his excellent taste.

Growing up, I went over Uncle Mark's house at least once a month. Uncle Mark would take each of these visits as an opportunity to teach me about music, movies, and food, three things for which he had enormous passion and in which he had exquisite taste. When I was 12 years old and growing out of teeny bopper music, I started to listen to the Beatles with my mom. I mentioned this to Uncle Mark and within the hour, he had burned me a mix CD with songs from all of his favorite bands from the 60s and 70s – the Grateful Dead, the Velvet Underground, Led Zeppelin, and many more. That CD changed my world! I listened to Uncle Mark's mix CD constantly, and then eventually branched out to learn more about each of the bands on it. His excellent taste in music and his generous gesture of wanting to share it with me forever changed how I listened to music and what I listened to.

I also remember when, a few years later, I told Uncle Mark that I had never seen Blade Runner. Uncle Mark sought to remedy that right away! Even though we were in the middle of a family gathering, he sent me to the basement TV room to watch it and insisted I tell him what I thought when it was over. As a result of being exposed to movies like this by Uncle Mark, I am a SciFi fan to this day. More importantly, Uncle Mark's enthusiasm for film taught me that movies could be more than just entertainment; they could be transcendental experiences.

Finally, food. Some people can't eat food when it's too spicy; I can't eat food when it isn't spicy enough! Uncle Mark played a key role in developing my appreciation for spice. With my mom, he cooked his way through several dozens of Thai and Indian cookbooks, in order learn the styles and perfect his favorite recipes. His approach was scholarly: he would make different versions of the same dish, testing each in order to determine which one was "the best." He was always going to specialty stores to get the most exotic and authentic ingredients, and he was always excited to share a new chutney or chili pickle with me. I will miss having Uncle Mark as a comrade in the pursuit of enjoying all things spicy. I will especially miss cooking and eating with him at our Annual Indian Food Christmas dinner, an initiative started by Uncle Mark when he rightly decided, in my opinion, that traditional Christmas food was too bland. This has always been my favorite holiday event of the year. I wish I could have kept sharing Indian Food Christmas with Uncle Mark for years to come.

Uncle Mark, I am so sad that I will not be able to continue learning about music, movies, food, and other aspects of your exquisitely developed taste from you. I will also miss so much more about you, especially your humor, your kindness, your intelligence. Rest in peace. We love you.

Alexandra Brewer
Niece
Winston-Salem, NC



“ I will always remember how gentle and kind he was. And so funny! He had such a good sense of humor and his sarcasm would always make me laugh. I remember whenever we would visit him, he spent so much time with us, showing us his archaeology case, introducing us to his cats, playing with us outside and showing us great movies that he would hype up and get me all excited to see! Whenever I was going to see him or he was coming to see us, I would always be so excited.

He was such a great uncle and I wish I could've spent more time with him. He had so much love for his family. I loved his laugh. It was so kind and gentle, just like him. He was so smart and interesting to talk to – whenever we were on vacation, I would love to hear him talk about history, geology, or anything really. He was such an educated man. I can't say enough good things about him. He was such an awesome uncle to me. I love you always, Uncle Mark.

Gregory Crowell
Nephew
Peddler Village, PA

Gregory Crowell - November 13, 2020 at 01:48 PM



“ As a child I enjoyed uncle Marks quirky sense of humor and his intense love for knowledge. My son Isaiah who is now 16 has always reminded me of him because he loves science! They didn't know each other at all but when we saw him at Amanda and Amit's wedding Isaiah really enjoyed talking with him. He was amazed at how smart he was and that he was a scientist:) That made me so happy! Uncle Mark has always seemed to me to be a man of intention. This is a quality to be envied

Lea Gelman
Niece
St. Joesph, MO

Lea Gelman - November 13, 2020 at 01:46 PM



“ When I was a little girl, I thought my Uncle Mark was quite possibly THE coolest guy I knew. I mean, he was a scientist! He went on digs for dinosaur fossils! Whenever we visited him, he would take the time to show me each and every artifact he had on display. He took each piece out to let me touch them. He was so passionate about teaching me and I loved him for it. I would always brag to my friends that my uncle was an paleontologist.

He was also a very talented artist. During those visits, we would sit together, and he would draw me pictures of dinosaurs. I would watch in amazement at his ability to be able to draw these beautiful pictures purely from his memory. I still have some of his drawings – I remember one time he gave me a gift - it was a dinosaur book and on the back cover he drew a dinosaur for me because he knew how much I loved it.

Mark's real job was a geologist for FEMA. Which I found to be just as interesting! I'd ask him about his job and he explained to me that he would have to travel and study coastal erosion and draw up maps according to his findings. These were the maps used by our government. He knew so much about the environment and how our earth is changing. You want to know about global warming? This. Was. Your. Man.

Another one of his passions was our family history. He took the time (years) to study and create our family tree. He made so many cool discoveries of our ancestors. And because of him, our family has this vast knowledge of our history. You know William Penn? He found out he is our relative! What an amazing thing he has done for us and all of our generations to follow.

As I got older and began exploring options in academics, I remember having many conversations with him about it. He was passionate about education and encouraged me to study science. He said I would never go wrong with it. And he was right.

Uncle Mark I'm still trying to process the fact that you're not here with us anymore. And that you had to pass at this terrible time where visits weren't a possibility. My heart breaks that I couldn't say goodbye to you. Your memory will always be with me and the lessons you taught me were invaluable. We loved you so much, your quirkinesses, your gentle disposition, your passion for politics, and music and movies and cooking your Indian food.

Rest In Peace dear uncle. You're loved by so many.

Amanda Crowell
Niece
Phoenixville, PA



“ When I think of my Uncle Mark, I remember him spontaneously drawing mazes for us to do when we were kids. And they were hard!

His love of cooking and sharing ethnic foods, especially Indian. It was always so delicious and he was always so excited to share it. He taught Mark Layfield and me how to cook a Thai pork and broccolini recipe last February. I had never cooked with him before and I hold that memory dear.

He was the first one to know that I was dating Josh! He was driving me to the airport after one of my visits with Grace and Alli and asked, “so, do you have a boyfriend?” We had a nice talk about it. He was encouraging and also very concerned for my happiness. There are some things I will always remember about Uncle Mark – that he was caring, giving, and genuine.

When he was dating Aunt Sheryl, the miracle of discovering that her house is only 3 minutes from where Grace and Alli were living. It was so fun to see them get to know Uncle Mark during our visits.

Watching him throw a frisbee with Dad, Uncle Frank, and Uncle Jim at the park. They were all so good at it!

He went to see Grace’s Veteran’s Day concert at school because I couldn’t make the trip and he FaceTimed the whole thing for me.

Melissa Gentzler
Niece
Leavenworth, KS

Melissa Gentzler - November 13, 2020 at 01:38 PM



“ When I think of my Uncle Mark, many memories come to mind. I think of his love for his cats, and how he'd always have a sweet photo or funny video of them he couldn't wait to share. His passion for movies—particularly Jurassic Park, and the hours I spent one afternoon as a kid watching the films with him and my parents and cousin Mark. The Alien series, too, although I never got around to watching those even after his plea to my parents that I wasn't too young. How he adored the Beatles and was always up for re-watching their 1964 Ed Sullivan Show performance. His eagerness to cook Indian food for any occasion, even Thanksgiving, despite the occasional skeptic. The time he brought miracle berries—a fruit that makes sour foods taste sweet—to Aunt Carmen and Uncle Frank's house and insisted we all eat one followed by a lemon slice so we could experience the phenomenon with him. How he was always so enthusiastic to share his latest gadget, that it was almost a guarantee a few family members were persuaded to buy one for themselves before the visit was through.

When I think of my Uncle Mark, I think of his laugh and smile and the delight he took in sharing the things he loved with the people he loved, and how truly lucky I was to catch glimpses of the world through his lens.

Taylor Hannan
Niece
Burlington VT

Taylor Hannan - November 13, 2020 at 01:34 PM



“ Peace, love, and prayers for Mark, Sheryl, and Mark's entire family.



Crystal - November 13, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ I will miss him at the beach where we had memorable times together. He was a fine man -- very thoughtful and considerate. He will be missed by all. He was a great geologist -- very creative.

Love,

Paul Lyons (Sheryl Lyons Crowell's father)



Paul Lyons - November 12, 2020 at 11:57 PM



“ My favorite memories are those playing the “Whist” card game with Mark. He loved the strategy involved in the game and from the time he learned how to play, he was always interested in learning more from those who were more experienced. I loved how he was always excited about getting together to play cards with our large family. He had a playful nature, a love for games, and I loved that about him.

I remember earlier this year telling my sister (Sheryl Crowell) how excited I was about a new game called “Catan” I had learned from my sister Sandra – and hoped that they (Mark and Sheryl) would want to learn how to play when they came to visit. She responded by texting me a picture of Mark’s vast Catan game collection. I was stunned because it is not a game everyone has heard about but for certain, it made sense that a true gamer like Mark would not already know about the game ... but also have practically every variation of the game that existed!

Mark was a gentle and kind soul. He had a great sense of humor. He was easy going and so easy to love. The love between Mark Crowell and Sheryl Crowell is real, pure, and everlasting. It is God-given and the love lives on. May we all be so blessed with such precious, undying love. Mark, I know you will be Sheryl’s very own angel watching over her from Heaven. May you send us all gentle and comforting reminders that your spirit is alive and well. Peace be with you. God bless you. We miss you.

Love and prayers,
Crystal Lyons



Crystal Lyons - November 12, 2020 at 12:48 AM



“ Carmen & Frank & Alex purchased the Rose Tribute for the family of Mark Crowell.



Frank D. Brewer - November 10, 2020 at 07:02 PM



“ Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Mark Crowell.



November 10, 2020 at 10:52 AM



“ Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Mark Crowell.



November 09, 2020 at 05:00 PM



“ Dept. of Finance & Budget, Loudoun County, VA purchased the Magnificent Life Spray for the family of Mark Crowell.



Dept. of Finance & Budget, Loudoun County, VA - November 09, 2020 at 12:19 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Shared Photos



Sheryl Crowell - November 03, 2020 at 12:29 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mark Crowell.



November 02, 2020 at 11:06 PM



“ To Mark's family, I am so sorry for your loss. Mark was one of the most dedicated and professional public servants I've ever known but as so many have noted, he had many interests and was probably the nicest person anyone could ever meet. While we mostly worked together on implementing a new statutory requirement for an advisory council, Mark was tireless in resolving every issue no matter how stressful it was at times. And even when we no longer worked on projects together, and Mark would be speeding his way through the halls taking care of things, he made time to share information about cool places to visit and fun things to do. My favorite memories of him involve his sharing recipes and cooking tips (along with a lot of cautions on what not to do) and telling me where to go for Indian spices and lentils in Vienna. If anyone deserved a long and happy retirement, it was Mark because he would have made the most of it and tried to see to it that his family and friends enjoyed it with him. With my deepest sympathy, Lynda Pilgrim

Lynda Pilgrim - November 02, 2020 at 10:31 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Mark Crowell Memorial Video



Sheryl Crowell - November 02, 2020 at 11:31 AM



“ This video was a beautiful and touching tribute to a sweet and amazing man's life tragically cut short. I am so glad that Mark found the love of his life in Sheryl! My love and sincere sympathy goes out to each one of you. Michele

Michele Dudash Fenster - November 14, 2020 at 04:15 PM



“ A Poem Dedicated to Mark Crowell

Gone Away

By Dori Martinez Freudiger

Going into the Dollar Store, I saw dinosaurs
little plastic dinosaur toys, dinosaur candies and cookies
and coloring books all for a dollar and no more.

T-Rex, pterodactyl, triceratops, brontosaurus,
stegosaurus, raptors, and
other "terrible lizards" as Sir Richard Owens first glimpsed.

Existing 100s of million of years ago in the Jurassic,
Triassic and Cretaceous periods
they ruled the world it seemed.

Extinction
extinction event
Only fossil bones remain the paleontologists lament.

From his extraordinary imagination the dinosaur drawings
never ceased
He who loved the dinosaurs throughout his life time
is now gone from this world.

And gazing up at the birds in the branches
listen to their secret songs
telling us to notice that they are dinosaurs transformed.

And like a wondrous dinosaur he lives on through time
in our thoughts and
in memories.

Dori Freudiger - October 25, 2020 at 03:30 PM



“ I had the true pleasure to meet Mark over past couple of years and it was immediately apparent what a diverse range of interests and activities filled his life! And it was also abundantly clear just how genuine, friendly and down to earth he was. He was like that the very first time we met and he was always like that! Just a tremendous and very impressive person who will be in our hearts and minds forever...

Dave Battaglia - October 15, 2020 at 03:38 PM



“ I worked with Mark for many years at FEMA. I wanted to share a memory of how much fun Mark was to work with.

One year FEMA had a mapping conference in Chicago right before Christmas. We all know Mark hated to fly so he decided to take the train to Chicago. I decided to take the train also since I had a bad ear infection. Our co-worker Bill decided to go with us via train.

As always the happy hour planner, I came prepared with a distraction for the long train ride. I packed a plastic container of Rum and a deck of Uno cards. So Mark, Bill, and I had Rum and Cokes and played Uno. I don't recall who won; it didn't matter. It was just great fun.

I set my alarm for the wee hours of the morning to get to see the Pittsburgh skyline which I love and to see the Christmas lights people set up whose property bordered the train tracks.

With the effects of the Rum and Cokes, we all overslept and almost missed breakfast on the train. Bill knocked on our doors to wake us up for breakfast.

Mark was a kind, gentle soul and a true global citizen. I will miss him and best to Sheryl and son Mark (of whom Mark spoke so often and so proudly), and all the family.

Allyson Lichtenfels

Allyson Lichtenfels - October 14, 2020 at 04:59 PM



“ Hi Mark,

We only met a handful of times but it was clear to me right away that you are a very cool guy. I know you are having a great time in Heaven, my friend. You are healthy, happy, and FOREVER!

Your friend always,

Jamie Ryan

Jamie Ryan - October 13, 2020 at 10:30 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Rev. Louis Schwebius - October 11, 2020 at 08:38 AM



“ 233 files added to the album Shared Photos



Sheryl Crowell - October 10, 2020 at 12:26 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Mark Crowell Artwork



Sheryl Crowell - October 09, 2020 at 08:54 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Shared Photos



Sheryl Crowell - October 09, 2020 at 08:49 PM



“ 6 files added to the album Mark Crowell Artwork



Sheryl Crowell - October 09, 2020 at 01:18 PM



“ I was so sorry to hear about Mark's passing. I worked with him at FEMA for many years, and so enjoyed our conversations. He was a great storyteller and I learned so much from him. As stated in the obituary, Mark was a true Renaissance man - and he will be greatly missed.

Karen Helbrecht

Karen Helbrecht - October 07, 2020 at 12:18 PM



“ Mark was a sensitive, gentle guy who as a boy loved hanging with the neighborhood “gang” in Birchwood. I lost track of him many years ago, but based on the words shared by his family he was still that gentle soul. My condolences to his family.

Andy Morra - October 07, 2020 at 09:57 AM



“ Teresa Lickey lit a candle in memory of Mark Crowell



Teresa Lickey - October 07, 2020 at 07:33 AM



“ I only knew him when he was young. He lived up the the street from me. He was fascinated with dinosaurs and illustrated them in great and accurate detail. I have always respected his talent and am saddened to hear of his death. My condolences to his family, and I wish them peace. It sounds as though he always followed he bliss. A life well-lived.

Sandi Shoo - October 03, 2020 at 11:53 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Sheryl Crowell - October 02, 2020 at 09:47 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Sheryl Crowell - October 02, 2020 at 08:35 PM



“ I'll never forget how proud and tickled Mark was when his crossword puzzle was published in the Washington Post. He was a very special person.

Anne Flowers - October 02, 2020 at 12:13 PM



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Mark Crowell.



October 02, 2020 at 08:28 AM



“ My true love, my best friend, my partner, my spouse. I miss you ever so dearly and don't know how to live life and continue on without you. You were brave and courageous and you never stopped to amaze me. I love you so much.

Sheryl Lyons Crowell - October 01, 2020 at 11:01 PM



“ I am so deeply saddened to hear of Mark's passing; his family members and friends are in my thoughts. I worked with Mark at FEMA between 2007 and his retirement, and I can say without question that he was an unwaveringly caring man. He never missed an opportunity to ask about my family, and my children, and always had a kind word. We lost a true gentleman and a scholar. Sincerely, Jennifer Tylander

Jennifer Tylander - October 01, 2020 at 05:48 PM