



Bruce W. VanderKolk

March 16, 1945 - February 18, 2018

Bruce W. VanderKolk, 72, of Bonita Springs, FL and formerly of Oregon, IL, died Sunday, February 18, 2018. He was born March 16, 1945 in Allegan, MI, the son of Wiley and Violet VanderKolk. He married Donna Sue Townsend in 1968.

Mr. VanderKolk graduated from Hopkins High School in 1963 and from Michigan State University in 1967. He received his Masters degree in 1977 from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

While at Michigan State University he was a member of the ROTC program and upon graduation he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. He served in the active Army from 1967-1969 and was a Vietnam veteran. Upon leaving the active Army in 1969, he remained in the Reserve Components and retired in 1994 from the Illinois National Guard as a Brigadier General. He received the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters and Army Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

After leaving the active Army, he joined the Illinois State Police in 1969 and served in a variety of positions, retiring in 2001 as the Commander of the Forensic Sciences Command. He was an Emeritus member of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors and Midwestern Association of Forensic Scientists.

He was a member of Anchor Christian Church in Bonita Springs, FL where he and his wife lived. He was a prior member of Southside Christian Church in Springfield, IL. While living in Oregon, IL, he attended the Oregon Church of God. He was a member of Oregon VFW Post 8739 and Oregon American Legion Post 97.

Mr. VanderKolk is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Donna Sue; his sons, Roger VanderKolk of Woodbury, MN and James (Shelia) VanderKolk of Oregon, IL; and seven cherished grandchildren, Ethan, Corey, Sean, Matthew, Nadia, Caelyn and Madilyn.

A funeral service will be held Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. at Anchor Christian Church, Bonita Springs. Visitation for family and friends will take place at the church from 10:00 a.m. until the time of the service.

A celebration of life service will be held Thursday, March 1, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. at the South Side Christian Church, 2600 S MacArthur Blvd., Springfield, IL. Graveside services with Military Honors will take place Saturday, March 3, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. at Maplewood Cemetery in Hopkins, MI.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that memorial contributions be made to the Anchor Christian Church Building Fund, 11651 E Terry Street, Bonita Springs, FL 34135.

Arrangements are being handled by Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home.

Cemetery Details

Maplewood Cemetery

Hopkins, MI

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 22. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Anchor Christian Church
11651 East Terry St.
Bonita Springs, FL 34135

Funeral Service

FEB 22. 11:00 AM (ET)

Anchor Christian Church
11651 East Terry St.
Bonita Springs, FL 34135

Celebration of Life

MAR 1. 5:00 PM (CT)

South Side Christian Church
2600 S MacArthur Blvd.
Springfield, IL 62704

Tribute Wall



“ *Bruce W. VanderKolk*

October 09, 2023 at 03:40 AM



“ *So sorry for your loss Donna, Roger & Jamie, what a true example of a Christian family. I have lots of wonderful memories of you all. My thoughts & prayers are with you.*


April Fergusson - March 01, 2018 at 06:43 PM



“ *Bruce and I were both forensic laboratory directors, he in Illinois and I in Nevada. He was a strong proponent of forensic science; the Illinois lab in Joliet was the first accredited in the nation. Bruce was an interesting conversationalist and friend, and we lab directors shared many memories of learning, interacting and solving the world's forensic problems at the ASCLD meetings at the FBI Academy.*
Sleep well in the arms of the Lord, Bruce. Know that your are missed.

*Carla Noziglia
Aiken, SC*

Carla Noziglia - February 26, 2018 at 01:08 PM

 Nancy
Lamport

“ Donna so sorry to hear about your loss. I enjoyed the times the day care staff and spouses would get together and the times I spent with Roger and James while you and Bruce went out for the evening. It's been a long time since we taught 24 children between the ages of 2 and 3. You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers. Nancy (Mossman) and Gene Lamport.

Nancy Lamport - February 25, 2018 at 04:47 PM

JC

“ Becky and I would like to extend our sincere condolences to Donna and the entire family. Bruce was a great man of noble and upright character. Becky had the distinct pleasure of working on the bench with him in Drug Chemistry for over a year and experienced not only his professionalism but his warmth and unique humor as well. While I, on the other hand, was privileged to have known him from the very beginning of his forensic career to his retirement. He was my colleague, he was my friend. As he progressed through the system, I experienced his visionary and professional leadership qualities that advanced the Illinois Laboratory System into one of the premier programs in the country. In addition, he also was a strong advocate for Forensic Scientists to actively participate on the national level to advance their specialty areas. However, what I enjoyed most and will always remember was Bruce's lighthearted and humorous perspective whenever we had opportunities to reminisce about our shared experiences throughout our careers. May God comfort and sustain all those who loved him.

Jim Cerven

Jim Cerven - February 24, 2018 at 03:58 PM

SB

“ I offer my sincere condolences to the family of Bruce VanderKolk. I had the honor of working for Bruce as a forensic scientist and as a forensic science manager under his great leadership. Bruce provided me with many opportunities to learn and grow. He was a great leader and mentor. Rest in peace Commander VanderKolk.

Sandy Brown

Sandy Brown - February 22, 2018 at 05:09 PM

JK

“ I worked with Bruce for several years as the Illinois State Police Forensic Laboratory System went through a major change. Bruce took that laboratory system from a group of small geographically oriented crime labs in Illinois to a world class laboratory system. Many of our forensic scientists rose to leadership roles in their own specialty organizations across the nation. For someone who didn't relish public speaking, Bruce was an effective speaker. He was a very organized manager. He did all that he could do to help others learn the skills that he used so effectively. I will never forget what a great person Bruce was to work with and to work for. I regret that I didn't maintain a closer relationship after we retired. I will miss him. I will always remember him and use him as my "internal guide" when it comes to working with other people.

Jim Kreiser

Jim Kreiser - February 22, 2018 at 08:18 AM

KR

“ Wonderful Christian. So loved working with him on projects at So Side Christian Church. Many will miss his wisdom, love for the Lord and guidance. Our sympathy to the family of this great guy.
Kathy Ransom

Kathryn Ransom - February 21, 2018 at 08:43 PM

JR

“ I was Colonel VanderKolk's operations officer at the Illinois State Military Academy. Bruce was not only a fine soldier, but a friend, mentor, and one of the finest examples of strong mental and moral character anyone could ask for. I wish his family all the best during this trying time. May God bless Bruce and all whose lives he touched. Rest in Peace old friend.

Jim Puswaskis, LTC, ret - February 21, 2018 at 07:01 PM

GH

“ I soldiered with COLVanderKolk both at the IIMilitary Academy, and at Sullivan, Il. He was a fine officer and was a good example for many young officers, me included. Condolences to the family. Gary Hamilton

Gary Hamilton - February 21, 2018 at 11:48 AM

RM

“ Bruce was a Commander that was willing to listen to new ideas and opportunities. He was a man that provided me as well as many others the means to advance ourselves and our disciplines. He was a nice person too! Hard to beat the original.

Russell McLain - February 20, 2018 at 08:37 PM

TK

“ I worked with Bruce a number of years through very challenging times as the ISP assumed responsibility for the Chicago Police Department Forensic Laboratory. He was always the most consummate professional and what impressed me most, aside from his tremendous skills and knowledge, was his leadership. He was quiet but extremely effective in making the ISP forensic system the best in the world. All law enforcement and the citizens of Illinois were blessed to have him as one of the top leaders in the history of the ISP. His legacy will live on for many years. My prayers for his family and all of us who will miss him. Teresa Kettelkamp

teresa kettelkamp - February 20, 2018 at 08:21 PM

JT

“ Bruce was Bureau Chief of the Forensic Science Command when I started with Forensics in 1987. Bruce was a great leader. I noticed from my first day that everyone treated each of their co-workers with respect. As I grew to know & care about everyone in the Headquarters office, the atmosphere was so cohesive & happy, it kind of surprised me. I had never worked with such a great group of people. As time went on, I came to realize that the atmosphere of the office was a result of the leadership we were receiving from Bruce. Even after Bruce retired, his presence was felt throughout the entire FSC! I did not have the opportunity to see Bruce but a couple times after they moved to Florida, but I always was happy to see him when I did. He will be greatly missed!
Jim Titone

Jim Titone - February 20, 2018 at 12:37 PM

JB

“ I was honored to have served under Bruce at the Forensic Sciences Command Headquarters. His leadership led to many firsts for our command. I will never forget him. Joe Bubonic

Joe Bubonic - February 19, 2018 at 09:07 PM