



Stephen F. Esslinger

August 9, 1946 - August 11, 2015

Stephen F. Esslinger, 69, of Elmwood, passed away at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, August 11, 2015 at the OSF Richard L. Owens Hospice Home in Peoria. He was born August 9, 1946 in Washington, IL to Russell M. and Neva Lichtenberger Esslinger. They preceded him in death. He married Bonnie Frazelle in Lewistown, IL on May 14, 1966. She survives.

Also surviving are three children, Dawn (Mike) Carter of Lindenhurst, IL, Tonya (Mike) Doty of Peoria, Heather (Lendsy) Gaiter of Peoria; nine grandchildren, Brittany, Alexis, Ashlee, Kevin, Trever, Zach, Uniquek, Ellaina, Sierra; three great-grandchildren, Aniyah, Nevaeh, Kiyan; sister, Camille (John) Gibson of Peoria; sister-in-law, Jeri (Butch) Guenther of Eureka; and two nephews, Eric (Michelle) Guenther of Washington and Shawn (Abby) Guenther of Decatur.

Stephen worked as a Police Officer for the City of Peoria. "Essy" as he became known in the department was hired by the City of Peoria Police Department in November of 1971. His skills and abilities led to him being chosen as a Field Training Officer, bearing the responsibility for training newly hired police officers and he continued to serve in this capacity until his promotion to the rank of Sergeant in 1983. Many officers he trained still call him "Dad"

As a Sergeant he supervised the Communication Dispatch and Information Center, Third Shift Patrol, and the Special Investigations Division.

He was promoted to Lieutenant in 1993 and graduated from the Northwestern

University School of Police Staff and Command. During his time as a Lieutenant he served as Commander of several divisions including, Third Shift Patrol, Juvenile, Criminal Investigations, and Special Investigations.

He was appointed Captain on June 6, 1999 and was the Commander of The Uniformed Services Division, the largest division of the police department until his retirement on March 20, 2003. He was proud to be a Peoria Police Officer.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to the OSF Richard L. Owens Hospice Home in Peoria.

Stephen's visitation will be from 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, August 16, 2015 at Deiters Funeral Home and Crematory in Washington. Funeral Mass will be at 11 a.m. Monday, August 17 at The Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria, with further visitation there one hour prior to Mass. Burial will be at LeHigh Cemetery in rural Elmwood.

Cemetery Details

LeHigh Cemetery

Elmwood, IL

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **16**. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Deiters Funeral Home & Crematory - Washington
2075 Washington Road
Washington, IL 61571
(309) 745-5999

Visitation

AUG **17**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Cathedral of St Mary of Immaculate Conception
Peoria, IL

Funeral Mass

AUG **17**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Cathedral of St Mary of Immaculate Conception
Peoria, IL

Tribute Wall

LE

“ *Bonnie,
I am sorry to hear that Stephen passed away. You are in my prayers
and I wish you well.*

*Lee Evans
Usher*

Lee Evans - September 03, 2015 at 11:03 AM

BM

“ *Dear Bonnie and Family,*

*I was greatly saddened to learn of Steve's passing. He was a "cop's
cop" in every respect and larger than life. He led from the front, by
example, and set a very high bar with his objectivity, fairness,
honesty, integrity and dedication to family, the PPD and our country.
Those of us who were fortunate enough to serve with Steve are all
the better for that honor and privilege. May God's love and grace
undergird all of you during this most difficult time and may Steve
rest in much deserved eternal peace.*

Bill Muir

Bill Muir - August 28, 2015 at 08:19 PM

SA

“ My deepest condolences to you, Bonnie, and your family. I knew Steve from the Police Department-he was a wonderful, gracious and helpful man. You and Steve loaned your trailer to me when I was moving into my first house and I was so thankful for your generosity!

He will be greatly missed and he has left wonderful memories with anyone who knew him.

-Sally B.

Sally - August 20, 2015 at 02:41 AM

MT

“ My husband and I would like to give our condolences to Bonnie and family. Steve was a very good neighbor as well as Bonnie. We will miss Steve very much. Our prayers are with the Esslinger family and are more than happy to help Bonnie any time she needs. Very appreciative next door neighbors, Marcia and Jack.

Marcia Thomas - August 17, 2015 at 09:23 PM

PF

“ You just never know about the life you will enjoy on earth. Being retired should be a fine time, but it can be cut short.

Sorry for what has taken place.

Steve did enjoy and share wonderful memories. You now have those to rest on.

Phyllis & Terry Fondriest

Phyllis & Terry Fondriest - August 17, 2015 at 06:27 PM

SB

“ My sincerest heartfelt condolences go out to you Bonnie, Dawn, Tonya. and Heather. I have many fond memories of Steve. I got to know all of you many years ago at the Peoria Civic Center. When I worked the lowerbowl behind the stage at concerts we talked and talked. He would have me in stitches from laughing so hard. Steve was a wonderful husband and father. And Im sure once all the grandbabies started arriving he was probably wrapped around all their fingers. Steve was a great influence in my life. He will be missed.
With much love....Sherri Boyer

Sherri Boyer - August 16, 2015 at 11:23 PM

SC

“ Rest In Peace Steve!!! To Bonnie, Dawn, Tonya, & Heather I'm Sorry for the loss of your Husband and Father. I know you all will miss him but know he will be FOREVER watching over you all!!!
With LOVE and RESPECT
Scott Campbell



Scott Campbell - August 15, 2015 at 08:07 PM

TH

“ Aunt Bon, Dawn, Tonya, and Heather.... We have so many memories, all of which included roaring laughter from Uncle Steve. Not sure we've ever seen him have a bad day.

From outdoor cookouts (tricking me into eating Rabbit, telling me it was chicken), parties in their basement, at the farm, etc. It was always a good time. The best moments were when our Dad and Uncle Steve started sharing their shenanigans with all from their days at Ace Ambulance. (in knowing some of these, it amazed us that Uncle Steve became a Cop)! They could go on for hours, and then next time we all got together, more stories (none of which were repeats).

We always adored the family unit that we lovingly referred to as "The Slingers"! An incredible family! The best ladies and our lifelong friends, Dawn, Tonya, and Heather. He sure loved his girls and then later all those grandkids.

And, Aunt Bon, it's going to be hard getting used to just one of the Steve/Bon dynamic duo being present. You two have always been the cutest couple. We believe it was a perfect complimentary Union of two people.

Thank you for the happiness you brought to our parents, the friendship that has spanned decades. You two were such a significant part of their lives. Uncle Steves passing has brought about such devastating pain and loss, and to others, as well.

We love you all and want you to know, we'll miss Uncle Steves gregarious laughter, and will make sure that the many stories we learned over the years, will go on and on, and never be forgotten.

We love you "Slingers", Tamara, Stefanni, and Melodi Hayes

Tamara Hayes - August 15, 2015 at 07:50 PM

LS

“ *Lori Sprecher lit a candle in memory of Stephen F. Esslinger*



Lori sprecher - August 13, 2015 at 10:02 PM

PA

I'm so sorry for your loss. he was a great man. prayers to you Tonya and family

pam allred - August 16, 2015 at 09:23 AM

BS

“ *Brad, Lori Sprecher lit a candle in memory of Stephen F. Esslinger*



Brad, Lori sprecher - August 13, 2015 at 10:00 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Stephen F. Esslinger.*



August 13, 2015 at 05:52 PM



“ 32 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Deiters Funeral Home & Crematory - August 13, 2015 at 04:12 PM

BV

“ *Bill and Vicci purchased the Lily and Rose Tribute Spray for the family of Stephen F. Esslinger.*



Bill and Vicci - August 13, 2015 at 01:19 PM

LD

“ *Lisa Davidson lit a candle in memory of Stephen F. Esslinger*



Lisa Davidson - August 13, 2015 at 09:18 AM