



Brian "Buzz" Smith

June 14, 1950 - June 28, 2020

Brian "Buzz" Smith, passed away June 28, 2020 at Butterworth Hospital in Grand Rapids from complications from a stroke.

Born to Donald and Lucille Smith on Flag Day, June 14, 1950 in Ypsilanti.

After graduation from Gaylord High School in 1968, he entered the US Navy at Great Lakes Naval Station at Chicago, IL. He served on aircraft carriers Kitty Hawk and the Enterprise during the Vietnam War.

Having learned sewing skills as a teenager served him well. He sewed patches and stripes onto his fellow sailor's uniforms earning enough to pay cash for a car to drive himself home from his discharge in California.

His exposure to martial arts changed his way of life too. Taking part in competitions led to teaching, eventually opening classes in Gaylord and Traverse City. Later building on his skills, he competed and judged internationally.

He wore many hats over the years. Stuntman in two Ernest Borgnine movies, costume designer, sign painter. He was also a licensed heating and cooling technician for J & P in Gaylord and for Sheren in Traverse City.

One of the first public, national recognitions was a feature story in Mechanic's illustrated, for a home-built gull-wing car, using a VW Chassis. Sure drew crowds where he traveled!

He is survived by his wife Janet; brother Martin of Illinois; sisters Annette Vondenberger of Dexter and Diane Newman of Waters; and many nieces and nephews.

Cremation is planned and a memorial service is pending.

Tribute Wall

MK

“ *Mary Kucharek is following this tribute.*

Mary Kucharek - March 27, 2021 at 08:47 AM

 Craig Smith

“ *Brian was my dad. Does anyone know how he died? This is Craig Smith. I live in Washington DC.*

Craig Smith - March 08, 2021 at 05:30 PM

MK

I'm so sorry. I only just found out. What a wonderful man he was.

Mary Jones Kucharek - March 10, 2021 at 07:57 AM

MK

Please let me know if there will be a service.

Mary Jones Kucharek - March 10, 2021 at 07:59 AM

DH

Craig, don't know if you remember me or not, its been several years since we last spoke. Buzz was also like a dad to me, feel honored to have had the chance to have known and trained with him. His death has left me speechless even to this day. Anyway, hit me up with you have time: DMVAREACONSTRUCTION@GMAIL.COM (Dan)

Dan Hudson - December 01, 2021 at 01:20 AM

MK

“ *Brian and I were close friends and he was very special to me. I always called him Brian as a form of endearment instead of his nickname Buzz. He had impressive martial arts skills, mechanical aptitude, and played some great music with the band in Gaylord "back in the day". He had a beautiful soul and I regret not keeping in touch. My condolences to his loved ones.*

Mary Jones Kucharek

Mary Kucharek - March 07, 2021 at 08:40 AM

CH

“ *Buzz's sister and I were great friends in HS. I didn't know him well, he came back to Gaylord just before I left for the Army. I do remember the scavenger hunts and parties he organized. They were great fun. Condolences to his family and friends, I know he left them with many wonderful memories.*

Christina M Hoyt - November 07, 2020 at 03:54 AM

John
Davies

“ *John Davies lit a candle in memory of Brian "Buzz" Smith*



John Davies - July 25, 2020 at 03:24 PM

John
Davies

“ *14 files added to the tribute wall*



John Davies - July 25, 2020 at 02:58 PM

John
Davies

“ *My name is John David Davies. I am Buzzs last student in Maharlika Kuntaw. I trained under him for 3 years and loved him like a Dad. He changed my life forever and because he had faith in me with his tough love, real love, and hard core training, I now lead by serving the Lord, and carrying on the knowledge, message, to others. I will pass on this knowledge and his legacy to the best of my ability. This man was an angel in my life, and I will NEVER forget him. You live thru me Brian. Kuntaw!*

John Davies - July 25, 2020 at 02:53 PM

SB

“ *Buzz was the first boyfriend I had in school loved him then but fell in love with someone else he will be greatly be missed May you fly with the eagles buzz you were a dreat friend*

Susan Bresser - July 01, 2020 at 11:33 PM

OF

Buzz was my Friend for over 25 years. His talents and dedication, Skills and Honesty was inspiring to me and countless others..

He will never be forgotten..

Rest now my Friend..

O.B. Fearnow

Orlando

O.B. Fearnow - July 05, 2020 at 09:57 AM