



David M. Stearns

Jan 18, 1949 — Jul 3, 2026

David "Dave" Stearns, age 77, passed away peacefully on July 3, 2026, at AngelsGrace Hospice in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, after a long journey with dementia. Born on January 18, 1949, in Waukesha, Wisconsin, to Clifford and Pearl (Leberman) Stearns, David lived a life defined by hard work, dedication to his community, and a deep love for his family.

David was a proud graduate of Waukesha South High School, class of 1967. He cherished his high school years and later served as a committee member and master of ceremonies for several class reunions. After high school, he attended UW-Milwaukee before embarking on a lifelong career in the lighting industry. His professional journey began humbly in the warehouse at The Lighthouse, a lighting showroom on West Main Street in downtown Waukesha. David's determination and entrepreneurial spirit led him to work for a manufacturer's representative agency before founding his own business, Stearns Lighting Sales (SLS). Through SLS, David successfully represented several lighting manufacturers across Wisconsin and Upper Michigan.

David's commitment to his hometown of Waukesha was unwavering. Over the years, he served on numerous community organizations and boards, always striving to make a positive impact. He was a two-term Waukesha City Council Alderman and Chairman of the Waukesha Redevelopment Authority. David also served as President of the board of directors for the Waukesha Area Chamber of Commerce and was recognized for his contributions to the South Side Business Council. His dedication extended to cultural and educational initiatives as President and member of the Waukesha Public Library Board of Trustees. Additionally, he was an active member of the Waukesha Lions Club and Rotary Club. Beyond Waukesha, David contributed to broader causes as a board member of the Milwaukee Alzheimer's Association, representing Waukesha County.

David was an active member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, serving on church council and teaching junior high Sunday School and first year confirmation classes for many years.

David's passions extended beyond his professional and civic endeavors. He loved music, particularly from the 1950s and 60s, and owned an extensive record collection he compiled over his lifetime. He was always hunting down that rare 45 missing from



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his catalog, and was especially fond of Frank Sinatra and The Beach Boys. He also had an enduring love for old cars and spent countless hours restoring and showing them throughout his life. As President of the Waukesha Old Car Club, he shared this passion with others who appreciated automotive history. One of his proudest accomplishments was writing and publishing a book titled **Car Guy**, which chronicled his life experiences and the significant role cars played in shaping them. Among his most thrilling adventures was driving in multiple presidential motorcades, an honor he cherished deeply.

Family was at the heart of David's life. He is survived by his beloved wife of 58 years, Connie (Turkoske) Stearns; his children Amy Oaks (Jon), Scott Stearns (Anne), Craig Stearns (Jen), and Sara Irizarry (Carlos); his grandchildren Connor Oaks, Jordan Oaks, Carter Stearns, Simon Stearns, Sophie Stearns, and Catalina Irizarry; his brothers Steve Stearns (Wendy) and Chip Stearns (Donna), and his sister Linda Congdon, along with numerous nieces and nephews. David's parents, Clifford and Pearl Stearns, preceded him in death.

David's legacy is one of integrity, perseverance, and service to others. Whether through his business ventures, community involvement, or time spent fixing things around the house, he set an enduring example for his children to approach every task with care and excellence.

May David's memory bring comfort to all who knew him and inspire others to live with the same dedication and passion that defined his remarkable life. Visitation will be held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 424 Hyde Park Ave, Waukesha on Monday, July 13th beginning at 10:00am, with the funeral service to follow at 11:30am.

David's family would appreciate memorials to St. Marks Lutheran Church or AngelsGrace Hospice.