



## Frederick Ralph Steffen "Fred"

November 3, 1947 - August 18, 2022

Age 74. Residence Milwaukee Beloved husband of Jean Rucker.

Fred was passionate about life, he loved his wife, Jean, who he was married to for 37 years. He loved handball, his TR6, music, foreign movies, fashion and art.

His life was filled with many long time friends. Tradition was a big part of Fred, for many years he had dinner with his friend Russ every Thursday, just switching to lunch lately. Friday night fish fry was a tradition at the Silver Spring House ( where Fred and Jean met) with his long time friends David and Vicky and Mark and Carolyn.

He loved his weekly lunch dates with his friend, David, and he especially enjoyed it when Dustin and Sean would join them and also enjoyed his weekly breakfasts with his friend, Brett. Mahjong with Bill and Jody were nights filled with cocktails and laughs and Fred held the lead in the win category. His days were filled these traditional adventures. Fred loved to travel and he and Jean had three trips planned over the next few months, including traveling to Italy where they had spent their honeymoon.

Fred loved so many people and was loved by so many people, friends, nieces, nephews, sister and brother-in-laws and hand ball players. He

touched the lives of everyone he knew, he was a kind and gentle soul with a quirky sense of humor and he will be missed forever.

A Celebration of Fred's Life will be held on Saturday, September 17th after 5:00 PM at Northshore Funeral Services followed by a Memorial Service at 6:30 PM

# Tribute Wall

SS

“ Fred was like an uncle to me. I can remember as a kid whenever I'd see him he always took the time to find out what was new in my life. He was kind like that. Also, Fred and my Dad (David Schoenecker) would go to lunch every Tuesday. They wanted to try every lunch spot in Milwaukee. From time to time I would tag along and I always loved hearing about Fred's love for Milwaukee and its history. It was inspiring. And last, but surely not least I will never forget Fred's style. He was a sharp dresser. Fred, thank you for the time we had together, you will be missed.

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**Sean Schoenecker** - September 16, 2022 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ We have known our friend Fred for nearly half a decade now, both on and off the handball court. As a sportsman he was-as others have said-aways a gentleman. But he was also a competitor, always working at improving his game. Even with Parkinsons he worked out religiously and methodically re-learned his steps and shots, never showing frustration or irritation at any life difficulties thrown his way-truly "Steady Freddie".But it is Fred's love of life and quirkiness that we remember. A deadpan comment accompanied by a twinkle in the eye that gave away his wicked sense of humor, a dapper dresser (velvet jackets, collector ties, exotic prints and colors!), a thrower of over-the-top parties (who has a themed Christmas tree in every room??), a collector of art ("more art in your house than in most galleries" exclaimed a gallery-owning neighbor).When we think of Fred we think of music and monster floor to ceiling speakers, backyard movie projectors in the summer, oddball fluorescent wall signs, DayGlo canes emerging from hosta beds, and porcelain hands emerging from bathroom walls to offer us soap. Good times! We miss him so much.

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**Carolyn Hudson and Mark Simpson** - September 16, 2022 at 12:00 AM

VS

“ Whenever I think of Fred, I think of just how incredibly kind and sweet he was. Whether it was a mahjong night at my parents (Vicky David Schoenecker) home or brunch after the Polar Bear Plunge at Jean and Fred's (no, none of us actually took the plunge) or trips to Chicago, Fred always kept me smiling with his questions and stories. I will miss Fred but I am so thankful for my memories with him!

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**Vanessa Schoenecker** - September 16, 2022 at 12:00 AM

VD

“ Oh God, how hard it is to say goodbye to a friend of a life time!!! Dearest, Freddy Edy like I used to call you, you're our great, best friend!! You'll be missed and you'll be our friend forever.....

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**Vicky David** - September 15, 2022 at 12:00 AM

VD

“ Oh God, how hard it is to say goodbye to a friend of a life time!!! Dearest, Freddy Edy like I used to call you, you're our great, best friend!! You'll be missed and you'll be our friend forever.....

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**Vicky David** - September 15, 2022 at 12:00 AM

PM

“ He was

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**Peter McCarty** - September 14, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SS

“ He was my doubles partner for a few tournaments. A unique soul who will be missed. But my memories will always be cherished. [Sonny Shah, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]

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**Sonny Shah** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

RS

“ *Could always count on having a pleasant conversation with Fred after the game. He will be missed. [Rick Steinberg, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Rick Steinberg** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DF

“ *I hadn't seen Fred in many years but remember him as a true gentleman and sportsman. This is a real loss to the Wisconsin handball fraternity. My condolences to his family. [David Fleming, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**David Fleming** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

RD

“ *Fred was gentlemen thru and thru...May God be with him! [Ric Daul, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Ric Daul** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ *Just saw the news - how horrible! Fred was such a gentleman. We will all miss him. I will pray for him and his family. [Jeff Santaga, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Jeff Santaga** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SL

“ *RIP Fred. [Shawn Linnell, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Shawn Linnell** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

CG

“ Sad news & a terrible way to die. I knew Fred for over 40 years. [Charlie Gauger, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]

Charlie Gauger - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JW

“ Sad news. [Jeff Wesson, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]

Jeff Wesson - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

EW

“ Terrible news. Fred and I met at the JCC in 1977, so we've been friends for many years. We both joined the WAC in 1980 along with a few other players at the JCC, including Rod Bodmer. [Ed Wersted, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]

Ed Wersted - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JL

“ Thanks for sharing. How sad. [James Lowe, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]

James Lowe - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

FF

“ Thanks for sharing. I will miss Fred as my usual partner Monday's and Wednesday's. His game was improving weekly and he was again enjoying handball. RIP [Fred Fischer, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]

Fred Fischer - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DW

“ *That's a tough one. I'm glad I had a chance to see Fred at Rod's celebration. [Dennis Wild, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Dennis Wild** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BP

“ *The responses and words for Fred speak volumes of his kind person and soul that he was. He was a true and dedicated friend for many and an exceptional one to Russ Kania, David Schnoecker and Mark Simpson. A faithful husband to his wife. Battling through a hip replacement and Parkinson's disease showed his resilience and spark for the perfect game. A love affair between a man and his car that ended in a Shakespearean way. May Freddy Rest In Peace. [Billy Paulin, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Billy Paulin** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

TG

“ *We played every Monday for 18 years. Playing partners with Jim Scholler, Alonso, and several others. Always friendly games and beer was great afterwards. We split tickets for brewer games for many years. This is a sad day for me but I have to remember the good times for sure. See you down the road Fred. RIP. [Tom Gunnill, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Tom Gunnill** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MK

“ *Very sad indeed. Fred was such a sweet and pleasant person. He had the gift of staying connected with his family and friends. Seem like each time I asked about someone, he had recently talked with them or had a lunch with them. A sad loss for the handball community. My condolences to his family. [Mike Korpela, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Mike Korpela** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

SR

“ *Very sorry to hear this news. God Bless Fred. [Scott Richter, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Scott Richter** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BK

“ *Like many of you I played with Fred regularly in the 80's & 90's when he would only play singles. True gentleman and was always on time. Had a few favorite shots you had to avoid giving him and would admonish himself for "setting you up" when you killed it. [Barry Kerwin, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Barry Kerwin** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JW

“ *Wherever he is, you know he's rolling em out off the back wall in his assortment of mint condition tournament shirts from the 70s. That whip off the back wall was sweet. [Jeff Wernstein, handball friend response to the "Sad News" thread]*

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**Jeff Wernstein** - September 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LA

“ Uncle Freddie will be sorely missed by all. Will miss your quirky and colorful sense of style and your curly hair. We will miss family gatherings and your quiet but witty comments that always came at the right time. You left a big mark in a lot of peoples hearts, until we all meet again ❤️

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**Lyz, Luna and Alex** - September 02, 2022 at 12:00 AM

PR

“ Uncle Freddy French fry was a name given to Fred from my daughter Courtney many years ago. He was a favorite to both of my kids. His classy style and cool clothes were something we all admired. He was so very witty, and sometimes we never knew if he was serious or not. He was such a gentle soul and very well versed in the finer things in life like art, music and so much more. He was passionate about things he had an interest in and could be so engaging about those things in conversation. He will be missed so much by our family. Jean, you picked a really great guy. Rest In Peace Fred.

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**Pam Rucker** - September 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

IW

“ My Uncle Fred was a kind, funny, inquisitive and gentle man. From as far back as I remember, Fred treated me like an adult and made me feel seen. His quiet sense of humor made me laugh. I remember countless dinners with Jean and Fred discussing art, travel, life, theater and food. I looked forward to every event with Jean and Fred. I always looked forward to seeing the outfit Fred would be wearing because I didn't know anyone that dressed as nice as him. To this day when Ronald and I see a nice dressed man, we always think of Fred. There are so few relationships like Fred and Jean and I will deeply miss Jean's other half.

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**Ingrid Weisse** - September 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

RT

“ My wife, Ingrid is Uncle Fred and Aunt Jean's niece. We moved to Milwaukee from Hawaii about thirteen years ago. Though Ingrid and I hadn't married yet, they made me feel like family from day one. Uncle Fred always treated everyone, young and old, like his equal. I can do vividly hear his kind, deep voice and his patient inquisitive manner. In Hawaii, we call the way he treated others: aloha. He had a tendency to allow others to take center stage in conversations and gatherings. So I will always cherish the times when he would lead Ingrid and me through his house explaining the various pieces of art from his collection. It was a joy to see him filled with passion; he knew so much about the artists and had such interesting insights about the art. Spending time with Uncle Fred, I saw also how he considered Aunt Jean. It seemed like at every moment, he knew what Aunt Jean would be wanting, worried about, or thinking about. I will miss Uncle Fred dearly.

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**Ronald Tang** - September 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

LA

“ We will sorely miss Uncle Freddie and his colorful, eccentric outfits. A man of few words but always the one to come in with a witty and comedic comment. Truly an absolute kind and genuine soul. Will miss his knowledge on so many things, the way he adored Auntie Jean and his upbeat outlook on life. We will continue to think of you and share countless memories as time goes on. Greatly missed but never forgotten Uncle Freddie!

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**Lyz, Luna, and Alex** - September 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

ET

“ Uncle Freddie- I can't believe I'm writing this. It's hard to believe. We will miss your witty jokes, sense of humor, kindness and compassion and so much more. I will forever cherish my memories with you and aunt Jean. We will always talk about the good times and keep your memory alive. We love you Fred!

Emily Thompson - September 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

KF

“ I was Fred's boxing coach. You heard that right, boxing. Although I sometimes give boxers

Kelly Findley - September 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

GR

“ I always enjoyed visiting with Fred at family gatherings. He was such a quick wit and a kind man. He would never say a negative word and was a true gentleman.

Gary Rucker - September 01, 2022 at 12:00 AM

TM

“ A friendship that lasts over 40 years is special and always cherished. Fred had several, I was lucky to be one of them!!!Fred lived his best life every day, which gave us, our best memories of him.

TC McCarty - August 31, 2022 at 12:00 AM

TM

“ I remember Fred telling me about a girl who approached him at Silver Spring House, he told me that she was the one !!! Her name was Jean Rucker. He was so happy to have found her.

TC McCarty - August 31, 2022 at 12:00 AM

TM

“ Fred was always my guest for the annual surgery summer party. Year after year the nurses would ask me if I was bringing Fred. They all loved him !!!!

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**TC McCarty** - August 31, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MR

“ Fred was an amazing man of who shared some wisdom with me that i'll never forget. Fred and Jean opened me up to eccentric culture I gravitated to in life and explored many angles of it. Fred will not be forgotten by me, and many other people who's life he touched. Truly a great man who inspired me in some ways to be who I am today. Thank you for all the memories Fred, thank you for being in my life Uncle.

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**Michael Rucker** - August 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

CR

“ I remember the first time I met Fred. He had a quirky sense of humor. Fred always had a smile on his face and at times you were not sure what he was thinking with his dry, quirky sense of humor. I believe Fred was always kind to Jean, and permitted Jean to have her way. Fred never said an unkind word about anyone which we should learn from. Jean and Fred were just beginning their Golden Years of traveling the globe which was sadly taken from them both. Fred will be watching over his soul mate, Jean for many years to come. Rest In Peace, beloved Fred. Always in our Thoughts. Forever in our Hearts.

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**Carol Rucker** - August 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

DW

“ Just thinking about Fred brings a smile to my face for so many countless reasons: \*the twinkle in his eye whenever he looked at Jean \*the helpful hand he gave to anyone in need\*the care that he showed others\*his style from the tip of his fancy shoes to the top of his great curly head of hair\*his countless, endless, bountiful humor which he always had ready, but always saved for the perfect moment \*the endless love he shared with friends and family\*the gracious host he was at his and Jeans amazing parties\*the patience and kindness he had for his nieces and nephews- enduring tackles and nicknames \*how he listened to everyone so intently \*the knowledge he shared in conversations \*his kind, gentle soulFred Rogers said, There are three ways to ultimate success: The first way is to be kind. The second way is to be kind. The third way is to be kind."Well, Fred Steffen was always kind. Fred Steffen lived the life that Fred Rogers referred to. Always. He was a successful man. The kindest man you could ever meet. I know hes up there watching over and protecting Jean, the love of his life, forever. May Freds kindness lives on in the many lives hes touched.

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**Diane Weisse** - August 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BL

“ Fred was a kind and gentle soul. Fred was always upbeat and positive. He was always kind and never had a negative word to say about anything or anyone, he never complained. He had a such great sense of humor, would often sit quietly and then speak up with his dry sense of humor, hard to describe but it would put a smile on many faces and bring a calm happy feeling to all. I remember the first time I met Fred and many many gatherings, get togethers, and trips had since then followed. Fred was Jean's everything and my heart breaks for her. Fred will be missed! He will always be remembered however at every gathering to follow for being a friend to all and a kind wonderful man.

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**Barb Thompson (sister In Law)** - August 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BL

“ Thank you for your kind words, Fred was a kind and gentle soul he will be missed by all.

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**Barb Thompson (sister In Law)** - August 30, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BF

“ Fred and I belonged to a club neither of us wished to join. The Parkinsons clubbut Fred made it tolerable with his quick wit and genuine interest in other folks conditions.His was a gentle spirit. I looked forward to his arrival for the Friday boxing class. We would take a couple of warm up laps and catch up. We would walk out of class when ended and previewed the weekend.I dont recall him saying a bad word about any one in particular. Fred was determined to cope with the Parkinsons. When having difficulty standing up from floor exercises he would often wave off the helping hand and get up on his own. We all took notice. He was dignified in his struggle.Friday boxing class will never be the same without him. I miss you Fred . Thanks for being there and sharing your humor and wisdom. God Bless.

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**Brian Faracy** - August 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM