



Reginald "Dusty" Louis Zaunbrecher, Jr.

March 19, 2020

Reginald "Dusty" Louis Zaunbrecher, Jr.

Rayne, LA - Private graveside services will be held for immediate family members only at St. Joseph Cemetery #2, Mausoleum in Rayne, LA for Reginald "Dusty" Louis Zaunbrecher, Jr., 69, who died Thursday, March 19, 2020 at The Ellington Nursing Home in Rayne, LA.

Inurnment will be in the St. Joseph Cemetery #2, Mausoleum in Rayne, LA.

Fr. Kevin Bordelon, Pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church will conduct the graveside services.

Dusty will be remembered as a gifted athlete, outdoorsman, and committed environmentalist. He graduated from Rayne High School and USL, where he was a member of the football team and actively involved in student government. He went to Washington D.C. as a congressional staffer on the House subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and the Environment, earned a masters degree at Catholic University and served as legislative counsel to the International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies and National Wildlife Federation from there to Jackson Hole, Wyoming where he started his own environmental consulting firm and spent many happy years hunting, fishing and working in wetlands conservation. Returning to Louisiana in retirement

Dusty spent his later years fly fishing in the marsh and hosting friends and family at his camp at Lake Arthur. He will be remembered for his love of the outdoors and commitment to causes he believed in.

Survivors include sister, Elaine Z. Schiller and spouse Steve of Olympia, WA, two brothers, Chris Zaunbrecher and spouse Peggy of Rayne, Lester "Jody" Joseph Zaunbrecher and spouse Kay of Arnaudville, one nephew, Nick Schiller, six nieces, Stephanie S. Vaughn and spouse Douglas, Christina Z. Mayeux and spouse Jude, Cicely Zaunbrecher, Catherine Zaunbrecher, Claire Zaunbrecher, Eve Zaunbrecher, 3 great nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by father, Reginald Louis Zaunbrecher, Sr., mother, Marion Trahan Zaunbrecher, paternal grandparents, Ferdinand and Eve Thelma Hines Zaunbrecher, maternal grandparents, Lester and Manila Rees Trahan, and nephew, Alex Zaunbrecher.

Friends may view the obituary and guestbook online at www.gossenfuneralhome.net.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Gossen Funeral Home, Inc. of Rayne, LA, (337) 334-3141.

Gossen Funeral Home, Inc.

Previous Events

Graveside Service

MAR 24. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Joseph Cemetery #2 Mausoleum.
400 East Betty Street
Rayne, LA

Cemetery

MAR 24 (CT)

St. Joseph Cemetery #2 Mausoleum.
400 East Betty Street
Rayne, LA

Tribute Wall

BW

“ *When Dusty came to Virginia to work in Washington DC, he purchased an old hand-hewn log house and he entrusted this 19 year old kid to restore the place. That kid was me and that was 40 years ago. He was one of my first clients and I always thought highly of him. I offer my condolences to his family and friends.*

Bill Wine - April 24, 2020 at 07:23 PM

AH

“First, all my condolences to the Zaunbrecher and Schiller families, and to Dusty’s dear friends in Louisiana. Your visits and calls and support and company meant so much to him.

I was lucky enough to be Dusty’s partner from the early 1980s until the mid-1990s, and his friend for all the years since then. As many have commented, he was kind and sweet-natured; also handsome, athletic, smart, and funny. He was adventurous; he was fun. He was interested in so many things—sports, hunting and fishing, backpacking and skiing, boats, birds, dogs, cooking, gardening, politics and current events, maps, poetry, writing, and above all, the natural world in all its variety and splendor. He was a skilled conservationist and he worked hard to preserve the land and wildlife he loved, balanced by time enjoying and savoring it.

We met in Washington, DC, when he was working as a lobbyist for the National Wildlife Federation and, in his spare time, finishing up the restoration of his log cabin out in Virginia. One summer, wanting a break from DC, we landed a summer volunteer job as guardians of a beautiful lake in Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. I’ll never understand how it happened that we—the lowest of the low in the park hierarchy, mere volunteers—were given the most heavenly living quarters in the entire park (and possibly in the world)—a gorgeous log cabin in the wildflower-filled meadows on the edge of Cottonwood Creek, right below the Grand Teton. (Elaine and her family came to visit; she knows what it was like.) We lived mostly on homemade bread, wild mushrooms, huckleberries, and trout that Dusty caught—I knew with his fishing and cooking skills we would never go hungry. The elk would bring their spotted calves out into the meadow by the cabin to graze, and ducks would surf the waves of the creek past our back door. Dusty would sit for hours by the creek with his coffee just taking in the beauty. We spent that summer, and the next, hiking and canoeing and fishing, then we left DC for good and moved to Jackson Hole year round.

Dusty worked for conservation nonprofits for a few years, then

started his own wetlands consulting business, Headwaters Ecology. He worked hard to make the business a success and he got to know the waterways of northern Wyoming intimately. In winter he delighted in snow and cold weather and skiing. He became renowned for his splendid cooking, and we had many happy gatherings of friends in our little cabin near Wilson, friends who still remember him, and his sweetness and humor and wit, with great fondness. He was a great traveler too, and we had amazing journeys to Europe and the Caribbean and Chile and Alaska (usually some fishing was involved).

Dusty and I had a lovely long-distance friendship in recent years, and I always loved checking in and hearing his insightful and funny perspective on the world. I feel so lucky to have known him, and to have spent such wonderful, magical years with him. I'm sorry he's gone, and I miss him every day.

In a text he sent at the end of January, he said this: "I've heard it said we define ourselves by our memories...My self-defined world was a miraculous fairy tale without compare."

And, to end, here's a poem he loved, "At the Cabin" by William Stafford:

*Across the snowed-in roof
winter drags a foot
like a timid person
interrupting us—*

*For I am thinking of you.
Clear from the top window
west from this house
the day bends on, downward;*

*And through that top window
hills dodge everywhere,
all the hills freezing*

in one cold fire.

*It's a wild target
winter has made:
this cabin in the center
of a silence around your name.*

Ann Harvey - April 12, 2020 at 09:12 PM

GF

“ *It is with a heavy heart that I write this. First of all condolences to the Zaunbrecher family.*

Dusty will always hold a special place in my heart. I met him almost 25 years ago on my 23rd birthday, as he agreed to share a some time during his lunch to give a kid fresh out of college with a Biology degree some advice on getting a job. I left his office several hours later with my first “real” job. I worked for Headwaters Ecology for the next six years.

It is impossible to describe in words what a positive impact he would have on my life. This man had impeccable character, defined by kindness, integrity and authenticity. So grateful to spend so much time with him, as he treated me like a son. Dusty taught me so much, not only about wetlands, but about what living a meaningful life was about. You are truly missed. Much love.

Grant Fulbright - April 07, 2020 at 12:36 PM

JK

“ *My condolences to Mr. Chris, family, and his friends. Mr. Reginald was the definition of a true gentleman. Sure will miss him & that sweet smile. I'm forever grateful & honored to have known him.*

Jada Kratzer - March 24, 2020 at 06:45 PM

DB

“ *Dusty was the sweetest person ever! He and I were lifeguards during the summer of 1967 and he always helped Mr. Cart and Ms. King with the daily run of the pool. I'll remember him forever.*

Donna Sonnier Blank - March 24, 2020 at 12:35 PM

EE

“ *Elizabeth Easterling lit a candle in memory of Reginald "Dusty" Louis Zaunbrecher, Jr.*



Elizabeth Easterling - March 23, 2020 at 03:32 PM

EE

Dusty was a very good friend of mine and he will be greatly missed.gone but not forgotten. Praying for the family .

Elizabeth Easterling - March 23, 2020 at 03:34 PM

BH

“ *2 files added to the album Memories Album*



Beth Hebert - March 23, 2020 at 10:11 AM

JB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



John Breaux - March 23, 2020 at 09:19 AM

MH

“ *Age difference has no boundaries when it comes to friendship. I found a friend in Dusty about 10 years ago when I'd see him each day on his porch while I worked at the shop. I'd walk over daily for just a few minutes to chat.*

He was so excited to watch my website come up, and wanted to see all the things that I'd build each week, and he'd tell me all about Ferdi, Uncle Bubba and his dad, and growing up with "the gang" he called them. He'd thank me each and every time I'd go to visit him, especially when he was at the Ellington.

His body slowly betrayed him, but his mind remained as sharp as the fillet knives he used when cleaning his fish.

He couldn't talk towards the end, but the last thing he told as he pounded his chest twice with his fist was "I love you brother, thanks for everything", without a voice. I'll always remember that smile he gave me as he said that..

Matt

Matt Hebert - March 22, 2020 at 09:08 PM

BH

I know how much he deeply appreciated your friendship because he told me! Here's to you, Dusty!

Beth Hebert - March 23, 2020 at 09:59 AM

LL

Larry and I are so deeply sorry for your loss! I had the privilege to meet Dusty when he first arrived at the Ellington! We will keep the Zaunbrecher family in our prayers! 🙏❤️🙏

Larry and Delores Lagneaux - March 23, 2020 at 01:33 PM

NB

So sorry for yall loss

Natalie benoit - March 23, 2020 at 09:49 PM

GW

So sorry for your loss...I knew Dusty from the Breaux staff...great guy.

Gail Wolf - March 24, 2020 at 11:32 AM

JB

Condolences to Dusty's family. A true Louisiana man. Honored to have known and worked with him. Met Dusty in Washington, D.C., in 1978, when he worked for then-U.S.Rep. John Breaux. Made the office a fun place to work. Dusty was loved and admired by all as a fellow staffer and friend. May memories of him help to sustain his family and friends always. Sincerely, Johnny Broussard, Fairfax, VA

Johnny Broussard - March 24, 2020 at 11:47 AM

JK

Matt, it was heartwarming to witness such an amazing friendship.

Jada Kratzer - March 24, 2020 at 07:04 PM

AH

He loved you, Matt--he told me about you and how much you meant to him.

Ann Harvey - April 12, 2020 at 09:19 PM

MH

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Matt Hebert - March 22, 2020 at 08:56 PM

AH

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Ann Harvey - March 22, 2020 at 12:25 PM



These are beautiful photos Ann! Thank you for sharing them.

Casey Zaunbrecher - March 23, 2020 at 12:40 PM

DH

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



DW Hunt - March 21, 2020 at 09:52 PM

DH

“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



DW Hunt - March 21, 2020 at 09:46 PM

JB

“ *Jack Bonin*

Dusty was an inspiration as an athlete, student and close friend. I am so glad I had the chance to visit with him before he passed. He now has a much better view of God's work with the outdoors and wildlife from where he is now.

Rest well my Friend.

Jack

Jack Bonin - March 21, 2020 at 07:00 PM

RG

“ *The Dusty I knew was building a cabin out near the Blue Ridge of Virginia. He had a love of the outdoors which he seemed willing to share with another Washingtonian who craved time alone in the woods. Dusty seemed to appreciate how stars, birds and rivers could complement a life of words, politics and strife.*

Robin Gradison - March 21, 2020 at 04:02 PM

AH

So beautifully said.

Ann Harvey - March 22, 2020 at 12:30 AM

JB

“ I met Dusty 45 yrs ago in Washington DC I was 10yrs old at the time and he had just started to work for my dad. He was like a big brother who loved the outdoors and to fish and hunt. We were both out of our element in the big city and he helped me find nature regardless of where we lived. He probably never knew the impact he had on my life but I greatly appreciated it.
John Breaux, Jr.

John Breaux - March 21, 2020 at 03:05 PM

CH

Thanks for sharing that John. Dusty's time on the Hill with your dad and the friends he made there shaped his entire life. Chris

chris - March 21, 2020 at 07:23 PM

DF

“ RIP Old friend and family member. Tell your Mom, Dad, Bubba and Mona hello for us. D.D & Chery Z. Folds

DD & Cheryl Folds - March 21, 2020 at 01:42 PM

CB

“ Reggie was a kind & gentle soul. I will always remember his sweet smile & gentle words. Happy to hear he is at peace with our Lord. My deepest sympathy to his family & all who loved him.

Charlene Bourque - March 21, 2020 at 01:36 PM

GH

my cousin and loved childhood buddy, we spent many a lazy summers day, no shirts, no socks, just cut off jeans, myself, Dusty, Russell, and Tony at the old Zaunbrecher farm.you will be terribly missed, please put in a few good words for us down here, tell all of our family up there hello. Geoffrey Hebert

geoffrey Hebert - March 21, 2020 at 03:36 PM

DR

Chris and Peggy, I am sorry for your loss. My sincerest condolences to the family.

Dale Rourk - March 21, 2020 at 06:59 PM

SF

*I am sorry for your loss- lost track of the family after I moved but always remember Dusty when I visited your mom
Susan Petitjean Flores*

susan petitjean flores - March 21, 2020 at 10:04 PM

JC

Troy and I are sad to learn of Dusty's death. We extend our deepest condolences and prayers to the entire Zaunbrecher and Schiller families. 🙏

June Cooper - March 22, 2020 at 07:55 AM

CM

Deepest condolences to the Zaunbrecher and Schiller families. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Herman and Carol Mayeux

Carol Mayeux - March 22, 2020 at 06:47 PM

ET

Dusty, I meant to go and visit you when we had our 50th reunion. I didn't and I apologize. There are so many things we mean to do in life and don't for whatever reason. This is a hard lesson . If there is something you want to do, then DO IT because tomorrow isn't guaranteed. You may never get another chance.

Evans Thibodeaux - March 25, 2020 at 08:15 AM