



Kelly S. Cronk

November 6, 1946 - July 26, 2022

Kelly Stuart Cronk, 75, of New Castle passed away peacefully on Tuesday, July 26, 2022, at Community Rehabilitation Hospital North in Indianapolis. He was born on November 6, 1946, in New Castle, a son of Robert and Harriett (Dunaway) Cronk.

Those left to cherish Kelly's memory include his wife Jane (Vyain) Cronk of New Castle; a daughter-in-law, Gena Navitskis Dant, and granddaughter, Lucia Dant of Mesa, Arizona; siblings, Vince Cronk of Lewisville, Dr. Joseph Cronk (wife Nancy) of Daleville, Meg (Cronk) Levy (husband Matt) of Albuquerque, New Mexico; two sisters-in-law, Linda (Vyain) Neal (husband Richard) of Noblesville and Carol (Vyain) Barefoot (husband Bruce) of Muncie; and brother-in-law, David Vyain of Scottsbluff, Nebraska. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a foster son, Darius Dale Dant, and a brother-in-law, Michael Eugene Vyain.

Darius Dant came to live with Kelly and Jane during his senior year of New Castle High School. He remained with them through his college years at Purdue University and considered them to be his parents. Kelly and Jane traveled many times to Arizona to stay with him and his wife and daughter. Sadly, Darius passed away in February of 2021 from cancer.

Kelly graduated from Walter P. Chrysler High School in 1965, where he was active in football and baseball. He graduated from Ball State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1971 and with a Master of Arts in 1980. He was also a student athletic trainer at Ball State.

He was a member of St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Muncie, Indiana.

Kelly taught physical education and health classes for 35 years at Shenandoah School Corporation from 1975 to his retirement in 2010. He was active in their extracurricular sports programs. Student athletes called him "Coach" when he was head coach for the Raider wrestling team for twenty four years and an assistant coach for the football program for fifteen years. They called him "Doc" when he was their athletic trainer. "Coach Craze" became another nickname for him. He also coached girls' track and taught driver's education.

During his wrestling coach career, Kelly took wrestlers to state eight times and had two placers at state. Coach Cronk was especially proud of his induction into the Indiana Wrestling Hall of Fame in February 1999. Ten wrestlers from Kelly's first wrestling team attended the banquet honoring their coach. All of his wrestlers remember the team mascot, the Tasmanian Devil, or Taz, whom Coach Cronk used as a motivational tool. Raider wrestling was known as a powerhouse around the state.

Kelly was the consummate host. He had the extraordinary ability to put people at ease and to make them feel comfortable. He and his wife hosted many dinner parties during their life together. In fact, on their first date in college, Kelly cooked a meal for Jane. Kelly's love for cooking for family and friends continued throughout the couple's fifty-two years of marriage. After many cooked meals for family and friends, "Chef Kel" became a moniker for him.

Kelly and Jane also hosted exchange students. They fell into this role accidentally, but they absolutely loved the idea of learning about other cultures. Their exchange students were: Blanca De Ayerbe Cartagena from Zaragoza, Spain; Maria Lierenfeld from Cologne, Germany; and Denise, Andre, and Caio from Sao Paulo, Brazil. All of these foreign students were treated and loved as if they were Kelly and Jane's children. And, each exchange student had a special dish that he or she would request from Chef Kel.

If "Renaissance man" describes a person with skills and talents in many varied subjects, then Kelly is right up there with Leonardo da Vinci. He studied fine wine like a sommelier, and he studied cars like an automotive engineer. He was "Chef Kel" when he pattered in the kitchen preparing a gourmet meal. He could analyze defensive schemes in football as well as he analyzed efficient shopping at Kroger. He could discuss themes in Shakespeare's plays and discuss the philosophy of existentialism. He could demonstrate effective moves in wrestling as well as demonstrate smooth moves in dancing. He was just as happy to travel to Arizona as he was to travel to Traverse City and Pt. Betsie, Michigan. He appreciated funky fashions in shorts and hats as well as he appreciated the humor in a play on words. He could relax listening to The Righteous Brothers or Ed Sheeran and relax playing the guitar. He took as much pleasure working alone on his property's landscaping as he did having coffee with his friends. He could stay active by running, jogging, or walking, and he could play a round of golf. He loved to experience fine dining in unique restaurants as much as he enjoyed watching World War 2 documentaries on television at home. People of all ages were fascinated by his wide-ranging interests and enjoyed engaging with him. Kelly Cronk was a true Twenty First Century Renaissance Man.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be offered to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, Henry County Community Foundation, or the Shenandoah High School Athletics Department.

Friends may call from 4 - 8 P.M. on Thursday, August 4, 2022, at Sproles Family Funeral Home in New Castle.

A Mass of Christian burial will be held at 10:00 A.M., Friday August 5, 2022, at St. Lawrence Catholic Church, 820 E. Charles St., Muncie, Indiana 47302.

Following the Mass, friends are invited to join the family for a luncheon at First Friends Meeting, 503 S Main St, New Castle, IN 47362.

You may send the family a personal condolence www.sprolesfamilycares.com.

The Sproles family and staff are honored to serve the family of Kelly Cronk.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 4. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Sproles Family Funeral Home
2400 S Memorial Dr
New Castle, IN 47362
(765) 521-2400
toms@sprolesfamilycares.com
<https://www.sprolesfamilycares.com/>

Mass of Christian Burial

AUG 5. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Lawrence Catholic Church
820 E Charles Street
Muncie, IN 47305

Tribute Wall



“ *Sproles Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Kelly S. Cronk*



Sproles Family Funeral Home - August 05, 2022 at 04:24 PM



“ *Adam D. Peavler purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Kelly S. Cronk.*



Adam D. Peavler - August 05, 2022 at 03:53 PM

AP

“ This one hurts and it is difficult to convey my gratitude for such an amazing man in a way that represents the the impact he had on my life. Coach Cronk encouraged me to wrestle at a young age and I resisted until the 8th grade. With his help and encouragement, I was able to amass 115 wins in 3 years as a varsity wrestler. I built upon that record by wrestling for MacMurray College where I won over 75 matches in 2 & 1/2 seasons. Coach Cronk maintained close contact with me throughout my college years and was a huge source of encouragement.

What stands out to me the most is that I would have never attended college or earned a Bachelor's Degree without the sport of wrestling and without Coach Cronk's mentorship. I went on to wrestle for coaches whose skills far exceeded anything or anyone I'd ever seen in Indiana, but that would not have been possible without Coach Cronk & his mentorship.

With my education and never quit attitude, I've gone on to enjoy a tremendous amount of success in the corporate world that would not have been possible without the foundation that Coach Cronk helped to lay. The life skills, never-quit attitude and will to win were born out of my days on the mat and Coach Cronk was a big part of that. Today, I teach my 3 kids that a college education is simply expected and both of my Elementary age children earned all A's last year.

I guess the best thing that one could say about a man is that they positively impacted the lives of our children. What I hope Coach Cronk knew is that the changes he had on my life have been generational and will pay dividends long after I join him in whatever lies next.

May this great man lie in peace & may we never forget his legacy!

Adam D. Peavler

Class of 1999, HWT. (Or as Coach would have called me Heavy

Duty)

Adam Peavler - August 05, 2022 at 03:47 PM

AP

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Adam Peavler - August 05, 2022 at 03:15 PM

TS

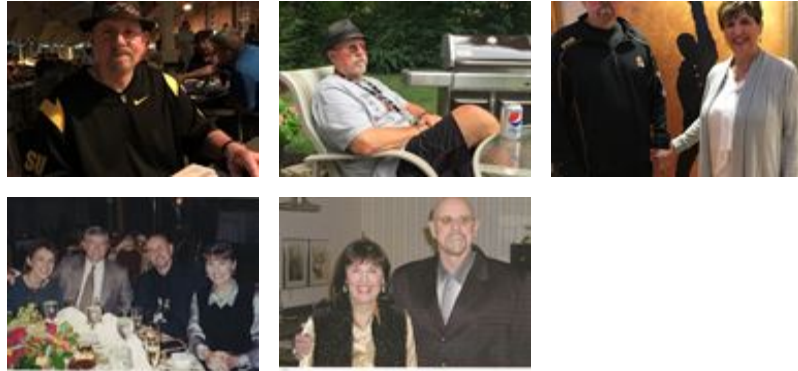
“ Coach, you will be missed. You were a great role model, very tough and could always get just a little more effort out of me! Especially during “Constant Motion” for the first 20 mins of practice. Always enjoyed trotting with him and the rest of the team for 6a runs, he was a motivator. Rest In Peace Coach.



Todd Sears - August 04, 2022 at 10:06 PM



“ 63 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Sproles Family Funeral Home - August 04, 2022 at 01:09 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Kelly S. Cronk.*



August 04, 2022 at 10:42 AM



“ *So Sorry to hear about Kelly passing. My deepest sympathy to you, Jane. Sorry for your loss. I'm sure Kelly is in Gods loving hands.*
Linda Vyain

Linda C. Vyain - August 04, 2022 at 09:31 AM

“ I was brokenhearted to hear the news of Mr. Cronk’s passing. It’s difficult not to wish someone as wonderful as him could live forever. However, I know that he is, both heavenly, as well as in the hearts and memories of so many.

Mr. Cronk was my P.E and health teacher throughout middle school. I fondly remember him sitting on the bleachers with his legs crossed, arms up behind his head with his hands interlocked while monitoring gym class. I will never forget the thought-provoking brain teasers he would ask me: “if I am pretending to be pretending, then am I really pretending?” and “Do good neighbors make good fences or do good fences make good neighbors?” I still remember the names of certain muscles from taking his bones and muscles test in 8th grade. He once put an extra credit question on one of his tests that asked, “what kind of shampoo does Mr. Cronk use?” Like the nervous valedictorian I was, I panicked and put “head and shoulders” even though he had a shaved head. I was so mad at him for putting that question on there, and he got such a kick out of my frustration.

He frequently called me “Britt” and would always extended his hand to me for a high five when walking down the high school hall years later.

Mr. Cronk was also my drivers education teacher. He always said he would help me practice parallel parking before my drivers test even though I was done with driver’s ed. I took him up on the offer, and he spent a weekend afternoon practicing with me. His tips and tricks helped me pass the test, and I remember being so excited to call and tell him.

At my high school graduation open house, Mr. Cronk began serving others food as he was getting his own plate. He continued to serve throughout most of the day, and I have a picture of him doing so. He was the embodiment of servant leadership.

Well done, Mr. Cronk. Miss you already.

My condolences to Jane and all those who knew and loved Mr. Cronk.

*Sincerely,
Brittany Webber
Class of 2009*

Brittany Webber - August 03, 2022 at 08:58 PM

TR

“ *I was a sophomore on the wrestling team when Mr. Cronk came to Shenandoah. He changed my life and the life of any young man who wrestled for him. In an amazing coincidence, the man my son had heard so much about was the time keeper on the mat when he wrestled semi-state at New Castle. Rest in peace Coach.* ”

Terry Reed - August 03, 2022 at 05:36 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Kelly S. Cronk.* ”



August 03, 2022 at 02:53 PM

CR

“ I represent one of many of Coach Cronk’s students who were educated, shaped, developed, challenged, mentored, etc... We were all lucky to spend our formative years around a man who had so much to give and was up to the task of tolerating us until we were ready to receive it. He could be tough when he had to be as he challenged your quick thinking skills on the field. But he always knew how to get through to you. He had an amazingly strong index finger that he could get in between the shoulder pads and onto your chest plate with precision. Most of all he had no favorites. He had love for all. Love for all weight classes, all defensive positions and he was the official leader of the F.O.O.L. His story of meeting Duck Butkus was always a good once a year pregame ritual for the linebacking crew. As I embark on a chapter of my life that I had never considered probable but had always thought possible. I am reminded of one of his famous sayings. “What the mind can conceive, the body achieve”. Thanks for the life lessons Coach. They were well received. And always appreciated.

Craig Romine - August 02, 2022 at 07:30 PM

RA

“ I know of Kelly through Jane, and send her love. The love and care for Kelly is obvious in each entry, with his impact on the lives of those mentioned. His photo is lovely, raising a glass to life and his obviously mattered to so many.

Roberta L Allen - August 01, 2022 at 11:14 PM

RM

“ Rick McLain lit a candle in memory of Kelly S. Cronk



Rick McLain - August 01, 2022 at 04:46 PM

RM

“ I am going to miss seeing Kelly at our weekly coffee meetings at Cafe Royal. Us men had our special seats each week, mine right next to him. Lots of valuable information was always discussed. Lol!

Rick McLain - August 01, 2022 at 04:45 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Kelly S. Cronk.



August 01, 2022 at 02:50 PM

RM

“ I remember at Duane Ehle's funeral Coach told me, "Well Rex, all I can figure is God needed a good 105 pounder". It was just what I needed to hear at the time.

I can't imagine Coach resting so I will just say "Thank You!!" And leave it at that.

Jane, thanks for sharing your husband with us over the years. So sorry for this loss.

Rex Masterson, class of 1981

rex masterson - August 01, 2022 at 01:38 PM

ZR

“ Coach Cronk coached me in wrestling and football between 2010 and 2012. He was responsible for nicknames I still have to this day because my last name was too long to say every time. I remember he always has a cooler full of the ice sparkling waters at practice and when you made a good play he'd pull you over to talk and give you a drink of them on a hot day! Seeing him years after school at the ymca he always still took time to shake your hand and ask how you were doing. My thoughts and prayers with his family. He will be missed

Zachary Rittenberry - August 01, 2022 at 08:16 AM

VP

“ Great memories of times gone away... our deepest sympathy, Jane. He will be missed.
Dave and Vicky Pryor



Vicky Pryor - July 31, 2022 at 07:54 PM

GS

“ I’m a better person for having known Kelly. He was my lifeguard instructor, showing us how a desperate swimmer will try to pull us under and then proceeding to almost drown us! He beat my brains out when we played for the YMCA championship in handball. He was a coach for all seasons. He was a friend for of a lifetime, always there, fifty years and counting.

I believe Kelly is now living in love and light, wrestling with Jacob, cooking for Christ, (I hope he likes that line), coaching us now in spirit, for those of us that will remember his advice.

I’ll take you with me Kell, grateful to have known you and thanking you for choosing me as a lifeguard and friend, for meaningful conversations, giving me bottles of new wine you’d discovered, seeing plays in Chicago, Ashland and Stratford, introducing me to deep dish pizza, Bavarian beer, showing me the real Catholic faith and laughing about our glory days. You were one of a kind. An athlete’s athlete, now soaring on wings like eagles and no longer fighting the effects of Parkinson’s. Your competitive strength is renewed.

Chef Kell was our renaissance man; best in clothes, shoes, bikes, cars, watches, cooking, beers, wine and a romantic who loved black and white movies, disco dancing and Jane. Shakespeare’s Bottom the weaver in A Midsummer Night’s Dream because he could play all the parts. I agree with Hamlet: “He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again. Good night sweet prince, and flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest.”



Gary Sloan - July 31, 2022 at 02:12 PM

PM

“ *Phil Marsh lit a candle in memory of Kelly S. Cronk*



phil marsh - July 31, 2022 at 01:55 PM

DD

“ *Mrs. Coach, Jane. I was lucky to know both Kelly and you! Our team was his first at Shenandoah. He was a very good coach! I will never forget!*
Doug Davis 76-77

Douglas N Davis - July 30, 2022 at 11:52 PM

RD

“ *Ricky Davis lit a candle in memory of Kelly S. Cronk*



Ricky Davis - July 30, 2022 at 11:17 PM

RL

“ *Coach Cronk a man everyone knew, a man who coached you to be the best you could be. He made you proud to be part of the wrestling or football team and knew how to get you to dig deeper. A great teacher, coach, and man of the community. RIP Coach*

Rick Lowe - July 30, 2022 at 11:13 PM

RC

“ Kelly was a dear friend especially the last 6 years at Cafe Royal Every Tuesday he a select group of fellows would discuss the week's topics and talk about great beers and places to go to eat and find them. I was affectionately known to him as "Mocha Man". My deepest sympathy to you Jane, Vince other siblings and families. I will miss him greatly !! Ricky

RICKY LEE COTTMAN - July 30, 2022 at 09:55 PM

JD

“ Jane, I am so sorry for your loss. You are in my prayers. Jennifer Delon

Jennifer Delon - July 30, 2022 at 09:24 PM

AM

“ Mr.Cronk. when I think of him I always either picture him walking down the halls in his shorts and Raider jacket or playing in the band at Church. I felt like he was one of those teachers that always had his door open to the students. He was funny but serious at the same time and seemed to enjoy being Coach. He made a lasting impression on a lot of kids. Prayers to family and friends during this difficult time.

AMY C MCCORMACK - July 30, 2022 at 09:23 PM

AM

“ AMY C MCCORMACK lit a candle in memory of Kelly S. Cronk



AMY C MCCORMACK - July 30, 2022 at 09:05 PM

TG

“ Jane, so sorry to hear of Kelly’s passing.
I was one his students at the middle school and I was on the middle school and high school football teams. Mr. Cronk was a big influence on me and I loved him for being hard on me when I needed it the most. I think of him often.
With all my love, Troy Gorman

Troy Gorman - July 30, 2022 at 08:11 PM

KM

“ So very sorry to hear of his passing. He was a wonderful man and great teacher and coach to many of us at Shenandoah. I surely enjoyed my time I had with him as my teacher. I’m sending love and prayers.



Kirg McCormack - July 30, 2022 at 06:28 PM

NA

“ Nicole Bertram Ashby lit a candle in memory of Kelly S. Cronk



Nicole Bertram Ashby - July 30, 2022 at 03:21 PM

DK

“ Jane, so very very sorry to hear of Kelly’s passing. We worked closely together for 35 years at SMS. He will be greatly missed.

Don and Kathy - July 30, 2022 at 03:10 PM

JW

“ I was a freshman in '77. He saw me in the hallway. Picked me up, ask me how much I weighed. Then told me I could earn a varsity letter if I joined the wrestling team. He was my coach for the rest of my high school years. He inspired me to always give it my all. 6 minutes at full speed, never stop. Nicknamed me Taz. John Wells class of '81.

John Wells - July 30, 2022 at 12:39 AM



“ Coach Changed my life in so many ways past just wrestling a mentor and someone who always was willing to teach.

Nicholas Gross - July 29, 2022 at 10:31 PM

AP

There aren't many people in this world like Coach Cronk, we are blessed to have met him!

adam peavler - August 05, 2022 at 03:59 PM

SS

“ Jane, So very sorry to hear of Kelly's passing. I remember him from SHS and reconnected when I met you at the high school. He was always the sweetest. Sending hugs and prayers to you my friend. Susan Swift

Susan Swift - July 29, 2022 at 10:17 PM

JH

“ Mr Cronk will always be remembered as coach Cronk to many. He was a tremendous wrestling coach. I had him as a football coach throughout high school. Will never forget getting those defensive calls from him wearing the white gloves for signals. Will be truly missed. RiP coach.

Jason Hamel - July 29, 2022 at 09:47 PM

JO

“ Hugs and prayers for you Jane at this difficult time. Love, Rick & Joann

Joann - July 29, 2022 at 09:09 PM

JO

“ Joann lit a candle in memory of Kelly S. Cronk



Joann - July 29, 2022 at 09:06 PM



“ Coach Cronk gave me my nickname of “Bobcat”. He would always call me this whenever he would see me. It was a pleasure playing football for him. This world just became a little darker and quieter without coach hollering from the sidelines. Rest In Peace my friend.

Stephen Matthews - July 29, 2022 at 05:13 PM