



Steven George Zecker

September 23, 1952 - November 24, 2020

Steven George Zecker, age 68, Evanston, Illinois, died on November 24, 2020 in his summer home in Moran Township, Michigan. He was born on September 23, 1952 in Detroit, Michigan to John and Edith (Smith) Zecker.

Steven grew up in Detroit and later lived in upstate New York before finally settling down in the Chicago area. He was a professor at Northwestern University for thirty-five years and an alumnus of The University of Michigan.

Steven was a devoted fan of the Michigan Wolverines and the Detroit Red Wings. He loved running, travelling, riding his motorcycles, and exploring the Great Lakes and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He was always ready for a Dairy Queen stop, historical oddities, good music, and poring over maps.

Steven is survived by his wife, Liliana (Barro) Zecker; children, Gabriela Zecker of Brooklyn, New York, Camilla Zecker of Chicago, Illinois, and Lucas Zecker of Evanston, Illinois; and sister, Dorothy (Zecker) Ferber of Detroit, Michigan.

Steven was preceded in death by his mother, Edith Zecker.

No services will be held at this time.

In lieu of flowers, please send contributions to The Night Ministry, 1735 N Ashland Ave Ste 2000, Chicago, IL 60622.

Tribute Wall

SE

“ I was just looking up a number to reach Steve and his obituary popped up. I am so sad to hear this news. Steve was on my dissertation committee in 1987. If it wasn't for Steve, I would ever have finished my Ph.D. He was a wonderful professor and mentor. May his memory be for a blessing. Shana Erenberg

Shana Erenberg - May 13, 2025 at 11:13 PM



“ Steven George Zecker

October 05, 2023 at 09:54 AM



“ Steven George Zecker

October 02, 2023 at 10:14 PM

MS

“ I did a google search to see what Dr. Zecker was up to and was so sorry to find this news. As an undergraduate and graduate student he was an incredible professor, advisor, and role model. He had an amazing way to make even the most challenging and dry subject (Statistics) meaningful and exciting. He had a real spark of enthusiasm for what he did and I loved being in his classes. On long days of testing and assessments he would excitedly coordinate lunch orders for our group so as to keep us nourished and motivated. There were a couple low points in my academic career and he went above and beyond to provide wise advice and encouragement. He was an incredible faculty member and made a huge impact on me and my career. I'm grateful for his time, wisdom, and thoughtfulness. - Matthew Steliga CSD alum BS 96, MA 97.

Matthew Steliga - July 13, 2023 at 11:03 PM

RG

“ I was reaching out to Steve yesterday and his email bounced back. I am so very, very sorry to hear that he passed away. I worked with Steve as a collaborator on several projects in my role as a Professor at the Feinberg School of Medicine. He also tested some of my children and helped them to understand successful learning strategies, ultimately leading to acceptance in leading schools, masters degrees ad much life success- with much credit due to his expertise, insights and kindness. Your family should be proud and I am truly sorry for your loss. Richard Gershon

Richard Gershon - September 09, 2022 at 03:18 PM



“ Steven George Zecker

September 01, 2022 at 07:49 PM

MC

“ I was responding to a post on the Northwestern Alum FB Group asking who were your favorite professors. I had to google because I'd forgotten Steve's last name, & I am so saddened to learn of his death. I learned so much from Dr. Zecker -- about LD assessments, about ADHD, child development (Gaby - he used to tell stories about you all of the time & I think he even brought you to class once to demonstrate 1-1 counting correspondence! Would've been in '92-'94 ish). But I also learned about being a good person from him . Dr. Zecker didn't shy away from letting his students get to know him. He spoke so lovingly of Liliana & his children. He conveyed to every student that we mattered to him, as people. I used to occasionally run into him at conferences and was so impressed that he remembered me (a masters, not PhD student). I'm so sorry for your loss. May his memory be for a blessing for us all.

Michelle Cades - October 05, 2021 at 06:12 PM

RN

“ I am so terribly saddened to hear of the passing of Dr. Zecker. As a member of my dissertation committee, Dr. Zecker was a calming presence who always had his door open for his students and colleagues. He was also the source of one of my favorite statistical quotes that I carry with me to this day: "The lottery is for people who never took my class!". My very deepest condolences to his family and all who mourn his loss. May his memory be a blessing and may everyone's memories bring comfort, now and always.

~Robyn Newman, CSD Alum

Robyn Newman - December 17, 2020 at 06:15 PM

LM

“ My heart is so broken by this news. I'm sending thoughts and prayers to Dr. Zecker's friends and family. Dr. Zecker was my favorite (and most influential) professor of my three years of undergrad at NU so far. Dr. Zecker was a passionate, engaging, encouraging, and supportive professor for the classes I had with him. He helped me invaluablely as I worked towards exploring my career options outside of class, and even gave me books off of his own bookshelf that related to my interests. My favorite memories of Dr. Zecker are our conversations during office hours where we bonded over being Michiganders and ice hockey lovers (as well as retired players!). I wish I could have told him how much he made me feel cared for as a student at Northwestern and how much I appreciated all of his support. Thank you, Dr. Zecker.

Lauren Masse - December 15, 2020 at 11:47 PM

AW

“ Dr. Zecker was a wonderful professor. My sophomore Fall quarter was a tough time for me, but I was always looking forward to going to his class, knowing that he would brighten my day and always have an interesting story to share. Sending condolences and prayers to his family.

Aleksandra Wicko - December 11, 2020 at 11:44 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Steven George Zecker.



December 11, 2020 at 05:13 PM

ML

“ Dr. Zecker was such a kind and caring soul. His office door was always open, and he was always there to listen and help me and other students in whatever way he could. Sending condolences and care to his family.

McKenna Lanter - December 10, 2020 at 09:00 PM

CC

“ Steve had an easy laugh and was often very silly. But he was also serious when it was warranted. I believe that he looked for the good in everyone he knew. His office door was open to anyone needing to talk (and I was that person on several occasions). I'm grateful to have known him. I pray for comfort for his family.

Cindy Coy, CSD Department

Cindy Coy - December 10, 2020 at 02:25 AM

JH

“ My heartfelt condolences to Steve’s family. Steve was a wonderful source of academic and emotional support throughout my Ph.D. program. I will miss him most for his humor and kindness. But here’s a fun story: I was 8 months pregnant when I defended my dissertation. To avoid the inevitable exhaustion at the end of the day, I scheduled my dissertation defense for the morning (10 am, I think). Steve assumed that the defense was in the afternoon like usual. Because he was on my committee, we had to call him at home to get him to come in. He was eating breakfast, but hopped on his bike and got there as soon as he could. I wasn’t upset, but was full of nervous energy, so I walked a few laps through the Frances Searle labyrinthine halls. Steve was quite apologetic but, in the end, it just makes for a great memory.

Julia Huyck - December 08, 2020 at 02:31 PM

DA

“ I am so saddened by this news. Steve was such an important part of my academic and professional career. I first met him as an undergraduate student, and eventually, he became my dissertation chair. He was a wonderful mentor, always supportive and encouraging, throughout many phases of my life. Steve carried himself with integrity and was always up for a thoughtful and cheerful discussion. He will be sorely missed. Much love to his family in this difficult time.

Daphne - December 08, 2020 at 11:53 AM

DM

“ Dr. Zecker was also my primary dissertation advisor. He was a man of high integrity who was willing to stand up for what/who he believed in. He was always quick to help, offer kindness, and provide a giggle. I have remained, and will remain, ever-grateful for his support. He will be dearly missed! To his family: may beautiful memories bring you comfort & ease your pain.

Diane Morean - December 07, 2020 at 08:56 PM

DK

“ This is very sad news! He was my advisor during my PhD at Northwestern University and a strong supporter. He will be missed! he wasn't important part of my success and a great example of how to be both a person and a professional



Daniella Karidi - December 07, 2020 at 05:55 PM

LN

“ Steve was one of my advisors for my PhD dissertation. I relied on him so often to keep me calm. Thank you Steve. I will never forget you. Lynn



Lynn Neils - December 07, 2020 at 12:17 PM

MB

“ Steve and I worked for many years together as consultants for the NBME. I enjoyed his sharp mind, decency, deep knowledge of Motown artists and music, quick sense of humor, and commitment to running regardless the weather. I will miss him. May he rest in peace.

Marla Brassard

Marla Brassard - December 06, 2020 at 11:41 AM

KW

“ Dear Liliana, Gabriela, Camilla, Lucas, So sorry for your loss, as a friend I mourn and hope we are comforted by the words Jesus said, God comforts us who Mourn. Steve gave friendship and good times with friends. Love, Kerry

Kerry Wittbracht - December 05, 2020 at 01:50 AM

SW

“ Dearest cousin Steven even though we didn't know each other as well as I would have liked; I'd admire you for giving the time to dedicate to instruct or teach
College and also the time you and my husband would talk about computer technology at our rare get togethers. My condolences to your family and your sister Dorothy Zecker. Rest In Peace Steven



Suzanne Wagner - December 03, 2020 at 03:31 PM

IM

“ Steve was a terrific friend and great source of support to me in this challenging year. I was blessed to have so much time with this cheery man who shared my love for many wonderful things: The Woverines, the UP, IPAs, power trios, and, above all, our own awesome kids. Someday I will find Steve again to renew that fierce croquet rivalry. Until then, I'll cherish the laughter he inspired in me, and the kindness and sense of fun he inspired in my sons.

Ian

Ian Mitchell - December 02, 2020 at 10:13 PM

PK

Beautifully said Ian

Pega Kennedy - December 03, 2020 at 08:19 AM

ES

“ Dearest Liliانا, I am so sorry to hear this horrible news. Karen Wixson let me know and I let Kiran know. And when so few people can come hug and hold you and the children because of the pandemic. I will write you a proper letter but I wanted to get in touch right away. I am picturing us standing in your dining room during that snowfall and your showing me your beautiful silk works. I love you so much. Elizabeth

Elizabeth Sulzby - December 02, 2020 at 05:28 PM

GS

“ Such sad news. It is still hard to believe that he is gone. Through Grad school at Wayne State and softball with the Fungoe Roche's, you have always been a good friend and a very special person, We will miss you dearly. RIP my friend.

George Schneedecker - December 02, 2020 at 03:22 PM

GU

“ Don't have the correct words to say what I feel in this hard moments. Mucha fuerza para Liliana, Cami, Lucas y Bela. Fly high my dear Steve...

Guille - December 02, 2020 at 01:55 PM

MG

“ Un fuerte abrazo para Lili, Gaby, Camila y Lucas. Buen viaje Steve! Gracias por tu hospitalidad en Evanston. Siempre te recordaremos con afecto. Mónica

Mónica Gogna - December 02, 2020 at 01:42 PM

RG

“ How's Bou you? Mosie was a continuous source of happiness, lightness and good cheer. From the days in the Couzens Dorm, when Mos changed his major from engineering to psychology. We all thought that was crazy, but what a great decision for him.

He will be missed, even tho I only saw him rarely

Robert GARBE - December 02, 2020 at 01:06 PM

SP

This news was perhaps the most shocking I received this year featuring shockingly bad news year. As old men retirees, we'd spent on our motorcycles this summer and planned to resume this spring. But that was not to be.

I just counted 53 years we had been doing things together. From first year of High School until this fall. We will miss him, his wit, and his wisdom. Adios mi amigo

steve pitzer - December 04, 2020 at 05:45 PM

JK

“ Rest In Peace my dear friend. My sincere condolences and sympathy for your wife, children, sister and all of your many friends in life. We will miss your presence amongst us. May God rest your soul until we may meet again.

Jak Kozma - December 02, 2020 at 12:38 PM

DP

“ Rest in peace Mosie. We will miss you.

David Peterson - December 02, 2020 at 10:52 AM

DK

“ To the family of of Steve,
I am so sorry for your loss. Prayers are offered up by my church and myself for Steve and the entire family. May he Rest In Peace. He was a good brother, husband and father.

Denise Klug - December 02, 2020 at 10:44 AM

SP

53 years ago in high school we met. It's difficult and very sad to realize that he's now gone. I am going to seriously miss him when summer reappears as it became easy for two old retired gents to get together on one side of the Bridge or other.

Lilliana and family. May you find peace in this loss

steve pitzer - December 03, 2020 at 02:33 PM

BK

*Dear Liliana,
I am so shocked to get this news. It seems unbelievable to me that Steve is no more. To lose your loved ones during this time is especially hard when friends can't come and give you hugs and be with you through this difficult time of horrible loss. I have so many fond memories of the two of you getting together all those years ago. You and your children are in my heart and prayers. May you find strength and solace in your memories of him! May he rest in peace!*
Love,
Baljit

Baljit Kaur - December 03, 2020 at 11:29 PM

FS

Steve had a great sense of humor and was always the calmest person in the room. In 20+ years, I think I saw him angry twice – both times in defense of someone. I know his students and colleagues loved him. I'm really going to miss discussing bad evaluation reports with him, losing at golf to him, and trying to answer new IQ test questions with him. Steve was a great friend and mentor to me, and I'm going to miss him terribly.

Frank Van Santen - December 06, 2020 at 09:54 AM

MG

Steve and I were amongst a group of consultants who, for many years, have met yearly in Philadelphia for the National Board of Medical Examiners. He was a smart, thoughtful and thoroughly delightful member of our group. We will miss him no end.

Michael Gordon - December 06, 2020 at 11:17 AM



I've already said the kinds of things to Steve, I could now write in this message as though I were communicating to him - - except for my profound sadness in hearing of his death. We had plans to get together again this summer - - and now I will only hold memories of him as I drive through. Mostly to Liliana, Gabriela, Camilla, and Lucas, I want to extend my condolences and to let you know he often updated me on your life journeys, loved you dearly, and towards the end of his time on earth, yearned for opportunity to be with you despite circumstances that kept you apart. I was not aware of his death until today - - although said to Bev yesterday that I am increasingly puzzled that I could not reach him by email, text or phone and contemplated driving out to make sure things were fine. It took me some time to realize I'm living in the 21st century and can just google him. He's been a dear friend for 40 years and our last time together in Cleveland where we had to exit the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame because it was being closed due to the COVID will be a cherished memory as we relived the music of our time. May his skates, his motorcycle, his hybrid, and his long walks at midnight, along with his smile, curiosity and intellect continue to create energy waves in the cosmos.

Ian Birky - January 06, 2021 at 08:40 AM