



David L. Spalding

May 23, 1946 - March 4, 2026

Obituary for David Lee Spalding

Generous, kind, and loyal are just a few words used to describe David Lee Spalding, who left us on March 4, 2026. A lifelong resident of Argentine, Kansas, David was an avid sports fan and a cherished husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He leaves behind a legacy of service, friendship, and a bit of orneriness. David was born in 1946. After the 1951 flood, his parents, Gene and Nadine, purchased their home in Argentine where he and his two brothers, Gene and Eddie, grew up. Around the age of five, David contracted polio and was hospitalized. For a time, his right arm and left leg were paralyzed. Thankfully, he eventually recovered, allowing him to fully explore his mischievous side. David and his big brother Gene, whom he often called “the best big brother ever,” were known to roughhouse and prank one another. Never one to be outdone, David once sneaked into the bathroom and tossed the family cat on Gene while showering. His rowdy spirit followed him into adulthood. He married his first wife, Ella, and together they were blessed with their beautiful daughter, Lynn Marie. David said the marriage didn’t last because he was “too wild.” David loved sports, including the Chiefs and the Royals, but his deepest loyalty was to the Kansas Jayhawks. He was able to be there for the game against Cincinnati a few weeks ago. He also was able to see a game at the new David Booth Kansas Memorial football stadium this past fall. Believing he might enjoy gambling, while always wanting the odds in his favor, he did what he thought was the

sensible thing: he became a part-time bookie, running parlay cards for college and professional football. David enjoyed the lifestyle and did well financially, even though gambling was illegal in Wyandotte County (though rarely enforced at the time). As with many adventures, however, this one eventually came to an end. When the FBI arrived in Kansas City to investigate Mafia activity, they accidentally uncovered some of David's runners. David was indicted and prosecuted. Refusing to implicate anyone else in his gambling activities, he was only fined and placed on probation for five years. His record was eventually expunged. Professionally, David was a proud Teamster. In 1985 he moved into management, working at Consolidated Freightways for 37 years and later at Con-Way for another 12 years. In 1976, David married Janice Shaw, a divorced mother of five. Together they raised her incredible children: Bill, Daniel, Becky, Scott, and Mark. While he was a beloved husband and stepfather, he struggled with alcohol addiction. On December 13, 1977, David had his last drink and joined Alcoholics Anonymous, which he later described as "one of the best things I've done in my life." He served in many roles within the organization and sponsored numerous people over the years. Jan joined Al-Anon, and David credited her and the program just as much as AA for his sobriety. Together they traveled to meetings, sharing their stories and supporting others. Sadly, Janice passed away in 1997. David married Pamela Vaccaro Rank. Once again, he became a stepfather to her daughters, Phyllis ("Phyll") and Allison ("Ali"). David loved Pam's intelligence and their shared interest in community and political issues. Their family also included their feisty Yorkie dog, Ladybug. David lost his beloved Pam just three weeks before his own passing, on February 11, 2026. They were married 28 years. While he had been battling health issues, his daughters think he died of a broken heart. History was one of Dave's great passions. One of his favorite vacations was a trip with his brother Gene and his stepson Bill, during which they visited eight Civil War battlefields across four states in five days. He also maintained a strong interest in politics throughout his life. David's love of sports led him to collect memorabilia for more than 30 years.

Among his prized pieces were autographed photos of Wilt Chamberlain, Muhammad Ali, Mickey Mantle, and Ted Williams. One of his favorites was a photograph of Joe DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle standing at home plate with their bats, signed by both and titled "Changing of the Guard." He also owned a six-foot-long photograph featuring members of the 3,000-hit club, signed by every living member at the time. Yet David found even greater joy in giving the pieces of his collection to family members in the months leading up to his passing. It excited him to share those treasures and leave a piece of himself with the people he loved. David was a member of the Potawatomi tribe through his grandmother, Hattie Prudence. He was fond of saying, "He who sees the white buffalo will listen to the happy hunting grounds." The white buffalo symbolized hope and renewal. David hoped to find himself in those happy hunting grounds, reunited with three lifelong friends: Dr. Joh ("Dr. Z") Zwadyk (70 years of friendship), Harold "Budd" Norton (60 years), and Chuck "Daddy Wags" Wagner (60 years). He also looked forward to reuniting with those who preceded him in death, including his brothers Gene and Eddie, his parents, and his former wives, Janice & Pamela. David is survived by his children: Lynn Marie Spalding; Bill Shaw (Liz); Becky Shaw; Scott Shaw (Holly); Mark Shaw; Phyllis Melendez (Jose); and Allison Rank Dummermuth (Derek). He also leaves behind ten grandchildren: Brooke, Danny, Tiffany, Kaitlyn, Rachel, Alexis, Shea, Lui, Evie, and Theo and ten great-grandchildren: Kaci, Robert, Parker, Conner, Charlie, Mallory, Elliott, Remington, Analiz, and Lui. He is also survived by his sister-in-law, JoAnn "Charlie" Spalding, and his nephews Gene Spalding (Andrea) of Woodbury, Minnesota, and David Spalding (who holds his name) of Des Moines, Iowa. David wished to express his appreciation for the many friends who stood beside him throughout his life, including Jade Howard, CNA; Bette and Smokey McGill; Bob and Sandy Cheney; TJ Reardon; Joe Miller; Joe Santoyo; Linda Pendleton; and Marti Owens. He held a special place in his heart for his grandson, Jordan Shaw, a nurse practitioner at KU Medical

Center. The two shared a love of barbecue, sports talk and attending games together. Jordan also helped David manage his medications and coordinate with his healthcare team during his final years. In his final days, David was surrounded by the family who loved him and cared for him. His passing was quick and very peaceful. If you knew David, you probably shared a laugh with him, talked sports, heard one of his stories, or received a piece of wisdom earned the hard way. He lived fully, loved fiercely, and never lost his sense of humor. His family takes comfort knowing he is reunited with those who went before him and that somewhere, David is still telling stories and keeping score. A Celebration of Life will be held at The Cigar Lounge in Strawberry Hill (407 N. 6th St., Kansas City, Kansas) Sunday, March 29th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR **29**. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

The Cigar Lounge
407 N. 6th St.
Kansas City, KS 66101

Tribute Wall

JJ

“ I just recently found out of David's passing. I and my father Jesse enjoyed David walking Ladybug thru the neighborhood. My parents lived up the street from them. My parents been there since 1970, I would cut my parents grass and that's when I first met David after my brother's passing in 2014. We talked about sports, politics and if it wasn't for him letting me know of a recent hail storm thru the neighborhood, my parents wouldn't of gotten a new roof. I hadn't known of David's life, or we would've talked longer. He's some individual guy, really going to miss him. Our parents since passed as well, and sold the house to a wonderful family. Rest in peace my friend Jesse Ibarra Jr and family. Jesse Sr, Margie and Gary.

Jesse Ibarra Jr. - May 31 at 05:06 PM

JV

“ Sorry we missed the celebration. We had the wrong time. David was a beloved friend. We always enjoyed meeting up with him and sharing his wit and unique memory. Rest in peace, David.

Jerry & Jodie VanMeter - March 29 at 02:04 PM

TF

“ We were very saddened to hear of Dave's passing. He was such a sweet man and best neighbor anyone could ask for for over 46 years. We will miss talking with him when he was out walking "Lady Bug". May he rest easy now as he is reunited with his loved ones in heaven. We extend our deepest condolences and send prayers to his family. With sympathy, the Rangel family. 💔🙏❤️



The Rangel family - March 29 at 10:46 AM

VM

“ Condolences to all family and friends. I serviced his trash on Thursdays. It was always nice to see him and talk to him.

Vincent Myers - March 06 at 08:50 PM

AD

“ The celebration will take place on March 29th

Allison Dummermuth - March 06 at 08:12 PM

AD

“ The date for the celebration is Sunday, March 29th.

Allison Dummermuth - March 06 at 06:51 PM

TR

“ David Lee, also known as Spadillac, drove a Cadillac when young and it was a big one. Us kids would get rides when we could and Dave was willing. He will be missed by all he ever touched in life!

TJ Reardon - March 06 at 04:36 PM

AD

I've never heard this story before. Made me smile! I remember his Lincoln town car though. Thanks for sharing :)

Allison Dummermuth - March 06 at 06:52 PM

MO

David was my lifelong friend and I will miss him so much. After I had to start using a cane for balance he always walked me to my car and checked on me. He was a loyal friend, kind, caring and I deeply respected him. He was so proud of his family and loved them deeply. He blessed my life with his friendship and I am so grateful for that

marla (Marti) Owens - March 07 at 12:35 AM

JN

Dave was a great guy always looked after a younger guy and I'm proud to be his friends he will definitely be missed rest in peace my friend

Jim Nallia - March 07 at 01:22 AM

DC

David was one of our best friends. He would come to the barber shop four days a week and we would discuss the world...we never figured it out. Pam and I have known Dave and Jan then Dave and Pam for over forty years. We have had countless Tripoly games and New Year's Eves spent together. We tried numerous times to get Dave to go camping and we failed each time. Just the Thursday before Dave passed, we were sitting in my garage discussing the world. Pam and I are heart-broken losing Dave and Pam so soon.

Rest easy my friend. Till we meet again Davey Boy!

Love Pam and Denny

Denny and Pam Cansler - March 10 at 10:56 AM

FF

Frank & I always enjoyed time with David & Pam. He was kind & funny and so caring of Pam. The stories of his life are so great! We had no idea he was such a colorful guy and really enjoyed reading about his life before we knew him. We will miss David & Pam.

Frank & Susan Furstenberg

Frank Furstenberg - March 20 at 06:20 PM