



Raymond James Brunner

November 17, 2020

Raymond James Brunner, 71, of East Petersburg, PA, passed away on Tuesday, November 17, 2020 surrounded by his family and after a brief battle with cancer.

Born in Lancaster, he was the son of the late Adolphus Jay and Ruth Glendora Gaskins Brunner. He was the husband of his beloved wife, Martha (Sweigart) Brunner, and the late Ruth E. (Rissmiller) Brunner who passed away in November 2003.

Raymond received his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Lehigh University in 1971. He worked for eight years with PennDot as a Civil Engineer in the Research and Development Department, where he earned his P.E., Professional Engineer. He went on to continue his lifelong career in Pipe Organ building where he was able to share his passion for fine woodworking and musical instruments. In 1981, Ray started his own Pipe Organ business, R.J. Brunner & Company (now Brunner & Associates, LLC), where he restored some of the world's finest Pipe Organs. He was a member of the American Institute of Organ Builders and the Organ Historical Society. In 1990, Raymond became a published author of "That Ingenious Business," which highlighted Pennsylvania German Organs and Organ Builders.

Ray attended Holy Spirit Lutheran Church for 35 years. He enjoyed classic

cars, trains, and was a member of the Studebaker Driver's Club of America, and the Studebaker Drivers Club-Keystone Region. Reading was a true passion of his as he enjoyed early American history and genealogy. His grandmother, the late Hattie Klapp Brunner, an antique dealer and Folk-Art painter based in Reinholds, PA, influenced Ray for his love of antiques, while Ray influenced Hattie to start painting in the late 1950's. During his retirement, Ray could be found on his family's island along the Susquehanna River where he enjoyed boating, camping, and swimming with his family. Along with his wife, Martha, he enjoyed traveling the world.

Raymond is survived by his loving wife, Martha, his children: Owen J. Brunner (Jaimie) of Bel Air, MD; Amy E. Moore (Jeffrey) of Columbia, PA, and Amelia R. Brunner (fiancé of Nicholas), Rochester, N.Y.

Ray will be remembered for the kindness and love he shared with his wife, children, family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Ruth, the mother of his three children, and his brothers, William Knight and Lancelot Knight.

A public memorial service will be planned for a later date with The Rev. Clifton D. Eshbach officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Ray's name to the Studebaker Drivers Club – Keystone Region. Checks can be mailed to the attention of Ronda White, 2706 Hoffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17103.

Tribute Wall



“ *Raymond James Brunner*

October 22, 2023 at 11:34 PM



“ *I first met Ray in 1980 while at an OHS convention and later I was his first employee in 1983 just out of college. Later I met (and married) my wife Les who was Ruth's maid of honor. Ray had a profound effect on the direction of my career as I started my own organ building business and found Ray to be a kindred spirit when it came to pipe organs and steam locomotives. His deep knowledge on many subjects was only exceeded by his humor and sense of all things fun. I recall spending an evening riding a merry-go-round with him one evening where we were the only two riders. He will always hold a special place in my heart for the rest of my life.*

Patrick Murphy - April 17, 2022 at 09:00 AM



“ *It was so good to have Ray Brunner on the Historic Organ Study Tour in 2019. Often sitting with him and Martha on the bus, I had many good and informative conversations with him. Many years earlier, his first wife Ruth drove me to my performance venue, hand-pumped the organ for my practice, and invited me for dinner with the family. Ray extended to me the privilege of practicing at his shop. I fondly remember both of them. May their souls rest in peace.*
Rosalind Mohnsen

Rosalind Mohnsen - February 06, 2021 at 09:56 AM

LD

“Marty, I was so shocked and saddened to hear of Ray's passing, we will miss his visits to the Wolf House. All of us at EPHS send our sincerest condolences, and hope you are doing well under the circumstances. We hope to see you again soon!

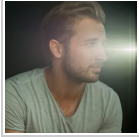
Love,
Lynn Dull
East Petersburg Historical Society

Lynn Dull - December 18, 2020 at 10:06 AM

MK

“Growing up, Raymond (as we called him then) lived in Lyndon West; and I lived in Lyndon East. As a result, we went the whole way through school together, grades 1 to 12, maybe even kindergarten! Raymond was quiet and so was I, and girls and boys always sat separately on the bus and in the cafeteria; so unfortunately, I never felt like I knew Raymond very well. But I certainly did follow his career as he excelled in building pipe organs. In recent years, I have developed an interest in antiques as a result of my brother Martin; I periodically go to local auctions. At those auctions, I learned about the paintings of Hattie K. Brunner; but of course I never knew she was Raymond's grandmother or that Raymond encouraged her start painting. How interesting and just like Raymond to do that! My brother also informed me that he believes Raymond's great grandmother, Hattie Sweigart Brunner was a well-known antique dealer and sold pieces to the Du Ponts that are now displayed at Winterthur. I am sorry I only learned these things as a result of Raymond's death, but I will now always remember the connection and think of Raymond when I go to more auctions. I know he will be remembered by many. My sincerest condolences to all of you. Hopefully all your wonderful memories will be of comfort to you. Clearly, Raymond's life was a life well lived.
Mary Frances Keen, Lancaster, PA

Mary Frances Keen - November 28, 2020 at 07:24 PM



“ *Ray’s kind spirit and welcoming personality was a light to everyone around him. I’m grateful to have spent time with him and lucky to have been able to call him family. These are a few shots from our time spent in Alaska 2018.*



Matthew Schmidt - November 24, 2020 at 01:01 PM

FS

“ *His twinkling eyes, his mischievous smile, that’s the Ray I came to know and love as my brother-in-law. We shared many family gatherings, trips to Topsail Island and Alaska, and a love of history. However, I did not share their love of playing Scrabble, of which Martha and Ray were champions. Martha, Owen, Amy and Amelia, my heart hurts for you, may you take solace in the years you had with him and those precious times you spent together. I just can help hearing the melody and words from the James Taylor song Fire and Rain in my mind when I think of your father:*

I’ve seen fire and I’ve seen rain

I’ve seen sunny days that I thought would never end

I’ve seen lonely times when I could not find a friend

But I always thought that I’d see you again

Love,

Frieda



Frieda Schmidt - November 24, 2020 at 07:23 AM

KD

“ I was so sad to hear of Ray's death. I am the great grandson of Philip Dieffenbacher, who built the walnut pump organ which Ray so lovingly restored and which, I hope ,is still in your home. Ray was kind enough to show the organ to my father (who worked with Ray's dad at Armstrong) and to my aunt, who played that same organ during her childhood visits to the Dieffenbacher home in Turbotville.

Please accept my condolences.

*Kameron Dunn
Refton, Pa*

Kameron Dunn - November 22, 2020 at 10:23 PM



Hey Kameron, yes we still have the organ safe and sound and of course proudly displayed. Can you PM me on Facebook? Thank you for your kind words.

Owen Brunner - January 16, 2021 at 10:44 PM

MR

“ I am saddened to hear of Ray's passing. I knew Ray from Lampeter Strasburg HS; grades 7 thru 12. I seem to recall he was also a member of Boy Scout Troop 58, Willow Street. Ray was a good friend; a very intelligent and nice person. I'm glad to see his life in retirement was so full. My sincere condolences and best wishes to his family. Michael Rodda; Syracuse NY; L-S Class of 1967

Michael Rodda - November 22, 2020 at 07:46 PM

SB

“ Marty, Owen, Amy and Amelia, we will miss Ray, his gentle nature, incredible organ knowledge, organ building skills, wonderful father and husband to Ruthie and Marty. We grieve with you. If you want to chat we are available. If you need our help in anyway please call. Our love, Uncle Paul and Aunt Susan

Susan Bittler - November 22, 2020 at 06:59 PM

JC

“ So sorry to hear about Ray. My thoughts and prayers are with your entire family. Marty you need to talk, feel free to call me anytime. Love, Judy

Judy Cauler - November 22, 2020 at 03:06 PM

AM

“ Raymond was my best friend in grade school. He was a gentle boy (who grew into a gentle man) who supported his friends, and we visited each others' homes and enjoyed each others' company immensely. When I left Lancaster with my family to live in Montreal for sixth grade, he wrote me simple and loving letters that I still have. I send condolences to his wife and children, knowing they will miss him terribly, but trusting that they have wonderful memories to comfort them through this difficult time. Ann Metcalf

Ann Metcalf - November 22, 2020 at 02:35 PM



Hi Ann,

Thanks for reaching out. This is Owen Brunner, Rays son. Do you use social media? We'd love to hear some stories.

Thanks for your words.

Owen Brunner - January 16, 2021 at 10:41 PM



“ *European Sympathy Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Raymond James Brunner.*



November 22, 2020 at 12:46 PM



“ *PJ & Mike lit a candle in memory of Raymond James Brunner*



PJ & Mike - November 22, 2020 at 10:53 AM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Lisa Groff - November 20, 2020 at 12:50 PM