



## Rich Gunther

April 21, 1959 - February 26, 2025

Born to Richard & Diane (Rabold) Gunther on April 21st, 1959, in Peoria, Illinois. Rich Wesley Gunther, Jr was the youngest of three siblings and he joined a family rooted in the heart of Peoria. On February 26th, 2025, we said goodbye to a great man who dedicated his life to building family and blessing those around him. Rich is survived by his two sons, Tony (Jana) Gunther and Kyle (Kenzie) Gunther; four grandchildren, Max, Lincoln, Zeke, and Alice Gunther; and his sisters, Crystal (Bob) Crowe and Susie (Bryan) Yocum. He was preceded in death by his parents, Richard and Diane Gunther.

His early years were spent playing outside and exploring the woods with his sisters and their friends. Then, from 3rd grade to 8th grade the family moved to Kentwood, Michigan where they were active in their church and were on the travel Bible Quiz team.

Back in Peoria, Rich attended Peoria High School, where he built a legendary group of friends—a crew that never got into any trouble whatsoever (or so they all claim). He started hustling to earn money as soon as he was able to drive, delivering truck parts, flipping burgers, selling cars, and detailing them too. During his high school years, he wrestled, swam, and was a church camp counselor. He spent his weekends and summers on road trips with Aunt JoJo,

holidays and weeklong Springfield visits with Aunt Janet and Uncle Ron, hunting and fishing trips with Jimmie and Mark, quality time with Aunt Dot, wrenching on cars with Uncle Duke, and babysitting Greg, Gwen, and Gavin. Sundays were always for family, church, and Shakey's Pizza Parlor. He graduated in June of 1977, and let's just say the details of his glory days at The Lucky Lady and as a Peoria Piggies Rugby player are best left to the imagination.

In 1985, Rich married Nancy (Wolfe) Gunther, gaining not just a wife but an incredible extended family, the Wolfe clan truly became lifelong friends. Together, they raised two boys, built successful businesses, and created a home where everyone was welcome. Their door was always open, their land was filled with projects, bonfires, and endless "toys", and if you needed a place to be, Rich made sure you had one. He poured his energy into everything he built—his home, his businesses, his friendships—and took pride in doing things the right way.

Nothing brought Rich more joy than his family. He never missed a game, match, or race and was his boys' biggest fan from childhood through college and beyond. His presence wasn't just expected; it was a guarantee. He believed in showing up, whether it was for his kids, grandkids, siblings, employees, or friends. And if you were lucky enough to get one of his excessively sappy text messages, you knew exactly how much he loved you. He was happiest outside, working his landscaping, mowing acres of grass, fishing, or just tinkering with his collection of toys. He loved his Jeeps, Corvettes, trucks, Harleys, ATVs, tools, tractors, guns, flashlights (so many flashlights), and we can't forget the sports memorabilia. But more than any of his prized possessions, he cherished his collection of memories—the photos and stories of all the things he did with the people he loved the most.

Rich may not have been a runner, but he finished his marathon of life with a strength few could match. He faced so much adversity yet continued to give all he had to his family and friends until the very end. He rarely complained, always showed up and gave far more than he received. He leaves behind a legacy of generosity, grit, and unwavering love, and while his absence leaves a massive void, the impact he made on those he loved will last.

In lieu of flowers, we would like to honor Rich by requesting donations to the American Cancer Society. Contributions can be made at <https://raiseyourway.donordrive.com/campaign/Rich-Gunther-Tribute> or via Venmo @Anthony-Gunther. Tony will coordinate the final donation and share the love with everyone who contributes.

There will be an open house celebration of life held on Saturday, March 8th, at Kelleher's Irish Pub, 619 Southwest Water Street, Peoria, IL from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm and is open to anyone who knew him and would like to stop in to share a memory or a laugh.

# Tribute Wall

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“ Peace, Prayers and Blessings to you all. Sincerely, Steve, Amy, Tyler & Ashley Wessels

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**Wessels Family** - March 06, 2025 at 06:15 PM

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“ For my valentine and birthday buddy Rich.

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**Courtney Johnson 4surg RN** - March 03, 2025 at 11:29 AM