

Jersey County Coroner/Funeral Home Director Larry Alexander Will Be Remembered For His Grace and Professionalism

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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JERSEY COUNTY - Jersey County Coroner Larry Alexander died unexpectedly Monday night, and he is a man who will not be forgotten for his professionalism, compassion, and kindness in some of life's toughest possible situations. Larry was the owner of Alexander-Gubser Funeral Home in Jerseyville.

Jersey County State's Attorney Ben Goetten described Larry as "above all, just a good human being."

This is Goetten's statement about Larry: "Being a coroner carries with it some unique responsibilities, moments an ordinary person may not be able to bear. Like telling a family member their loved one has passed. But Larry was far from ordinary, and in those moments he excelled. That human connection Larry had, that inherent grace and empathy that's absolutely necessary to carry folks through a moment like that. You can't

t teach it or be trained to do it. You have it or you don't, and Mr. Alexander had it in spades. "Larry also transcended politics. He could have run as a candidate in the Whig Party and been elected overwhelmingly. He had an excellent sense of humor and a deep love for his family. We're truly going to miss him.

"Larry served as coroner for nearly 30 years, having been elected in 1992."

Carl Crawford of Crawford Funeral Home wrote a beautiful tribute to Larry on his Crawford Funeral Home Facebook page. These were Carl's words about Larry:

"Our community had been dealt a huge loss in the unexpected death of Larry Joe Alexander. He was a loyal friend, a professional and dedicated funeral director, and coroner, a devout Christian, and most importantly a loving husband and Dad. He and his wife, Julie, had a relationship like no other and they both adored their two girls, Alyssa and Kari Jo. His pride for all three of them was evident (even in his sarcasm) anytime you would talk to him.

"Like so many of us, Larry and I have been friends for many years. Shortly after moving to Jerseyville and graduating from Jersey Community High School, I decided to pursue the mortuary profession - mainly because Larry made it seem so 'cool.' He helped get me enrolled in mortuary school and attempted to find me living quarters, since school started in two weeks, and somehow I hadn't found the time to arrange for such trivial matters. He helped me get squared away. We became friends, and just like he did with everyone else, he remained a friend.

"My first date with Shawna was at Larry and Julie's wedding and most recently when Shawna's Dad passed away, Larry and Kari Jo were the first ones to come to the visitation.

"I will always be thankful for Larry's friendship and professionalism. Although we both had funeral homes in the same town and were competitors, first and foremost, we remained friends. I can't begin to tell you how many times Larry 'bailed me out' of binds - whether it was loaning me his hearse, because I somehow managed to schedule two funerals at the same time (Zach and Collin would get mad at me for that), offering me a casket he had on hand when I'd forget to order one, or be there as a sounding board when one of us would have a daunting situation and would need to be "talked down from the ledge".

"Larry Alexander, never once, was not willing to help out if he possibly could and I know that is a story that could be repeated for many of you. He and Julie were both made in the same mold of being there for others. I just hope, in some way, I was able to repay those favors, even halfway.

"I am thankful for his friendship, his advice, his wicked sense of humor, and thankful that God placed him and his family here in Jerseyville. We were and are blessed to have them as a part of our community.

These were some tribute comments to Larry after Carl's Facebook statements:

Roger Kirby agreed with Carl Crawford's assessment of Larry Alexander: "Larry Joe was a good friend to many of us. Many times in my career I had to give the horrible news of a loss and it was always better when Larry was there to help. RIP Larry. Prayers and thoughts to the girls and family."

Kim Fessler Wittman echoed those statements and said: "Larry will truly be missed. He was a good person and will be missed by the community."

Amanda Hall extended her thoughts and prayers to Alyssa and Kari Jo and said: "I'm so sorry for your loss."

Judi Poppe agreed: "Larry will certainly be missed by many. Prayers for his girls!"

Dianna Green-Hearold said he had laid a lot of her family to rest and always showed such professionalism.

"He was such a great man. Rest in peace Larry," she said.

Trish Witt-Randolph said Larry was "a sweet and compassionate man. He did an excellent job."

Carl Crawford summed Larry up the best with this closing statement: "I will never forget you and I will always be thankful to have worked alongside you, with respect, in a profession we both loved.

"Rest in Peace good friend, you have certainly earned your place in Heaven."

EDITOR'S NOTE by Dan Brannan: *"I have worked with Larry Alexander for years and always found him to be the constant professional and available to me to offer insight into some highly tragic events. Larry always had empathy for people and the many tragic situations he had to deal with in the coroner's position and as a funeral home director. I offer my sincere condolences to Larry's family. He will be greatly missed by many who knew and loved him."*