



Curtis Albert Cramer

March 21, 1939 - April 13, 2021

On the morning of Tuesday, April 13th, 2021 Curtis Albert Cramer died peacefully in his sleep at Lemay Avenue Health and Rehabilitation Center in Fort Collins. He was 82 years old.

Curt was born in Lander, WY in 1939. His parents moved the family to Chicago, IL during World War II and then later to Arlington, VA along with his older siblings Ray and Susan. He attended Gonzaga College High School and later the University of Maryland where he earned his bachelor's and PhD in economics in 1960 and 1966 respectively. Those who knew and loved the irreverent and unapologetically atheist Professor Cramer may be amused to learn that his highest grades during his formative years were in religion classes. During and after his college years he served as a Boy Scout troop leader and conducted wilderness camping trips all over the Eastern Seaboard.

Curt took a faculty position at the University of Wyoming in Laramie in 1966 after a brief stint as an assistant professor at the University of Houston. There he met and married Pam Molina in 1969 and later legally adopted her son Anthony. It was by all accounts an attraction based on mutual respect. Pam worked as an office manager at UW and describes Curt as the only professor in the department who diligently picked up after himself and did not expect the secretarial staff to do his cleaning for him. Curt was impressed by Pam's astounding intellect and her skill in preparing fried chicken. Young Tony was

confused and a little concerned by this newcomer into his family and remembers asking him, “Are you my pal?” to which Curt gruffly replied, “I’m not your pal. I am your father.” While not the answer young Tony was hoping for, in retrospect it showed his deep love and lifelong commitment to his son who would flourish under Curt’s calm and steady parenting. The family lived in Arlington, VA for a spell when Curt served as an Industrial Economist with the U.S. Federal Power Commission. In 1974, Curt’s son Ian Cramer was born in Laramie. In a comedy of errors involving a doctor out to dinner, and a nurse with a broken arm, Curt physically assisted with the delivery. The Cramer family moved to Fort Collins shortly thereafter where Curt “scandalized” the neighborhood with the addition of an unconventional and beautifully designed sunroom where he could enjoy his love of growing plants. He continued to make the long commute to UW each day for many long years enduring wind, snow storms, and the desolation of the lonely but beautiful landscape of US Hwy 287. Although the marriage of Curt and Pam ended in divorce, the pair remained amicable as they coparented their children. For many decades, Curt and Pam hosted Christmas and other holidays together so that their sons and their partners could experience the warmth of family celebrations.

Curt had a long and distinguished career at UW as a professor, Director of the Graduate Regulatory Economics Program since 1981, Director of Undergraduate Studies for Economics, and Chairman of the Economics Department. He succeeded in developing numerous student internships, scholarships, and an informal career placement program. During this time he worked as a consultant, traveling across the country serving as an expert witness in many court cases involving personal injury, medical malpractice, and public utility regulation. He also acted as managing editor of the professional journal *The American Economist* during the early 1970’s. He received the John P. Ellbogen Meritorious Classroom Teaching Award in 2004. Curt loved being a classroom teacher and received many glowing reviews from students whom he inspired. He was devoted to building a state of the art

economics program and was gratified to watch the programs he built grow in enrollment over the years. Outspoken about matters of conscience, Curt vocally opposed US involvement in the Vietnam War, leading marches and speaking at rallies. Curt retired from UW in 2010 - after a failed attempt at retirement in 2007 that resulted in his promotion as the Associate Dean of the College of Business - to pursue his prodigious talents as an avid gardener and master bridge teacher.

Curt was a quiet, private person. His home is a monument to the nature, light, and art that he loved from his sunroom full of exotic flowers to the garden beds in his backyard where he once militantly maintained a monoculture of well manicured tomatoes. He was kind and generous with his students as well as his family and had a wry sense of wit underneath a veneer of intense introversion. In his twilight years, Curt enjoyed drinking scotch and craft vodka by the fireplace while talking about how proud he was of his children. Ruthlessly pragmatic, he greeted old age and death with a stoicism and humor we all respected him for. In a twist of irony he would appreciate, he survived a global pandemic long enough to get his vaccine, but not long enough to enjoy his world opening up. Dying in one's sleep is by far not the worst way to go, but there had been hope against all odds that he would die like Don Vito in the Godfather: at home in his garden playing with his grandchild in a field of tomatoes.

He was loved and will be missed.

Curt is preceded in death by

Parents Ray Cramer Sr and Helen White Cramer

Brother Ray Cramer Jr and sister Susan Cramer who died the same day in

2014 and whose remains both reside in Arlington National Cemetery.

Curt is survived by the following loved ones:

Son Anthony Cramer and his wife Caitlin Cramer of Fort Collins, CO

Son Ian Cramer and his partner Alexandra Taylor of Manhattan, NY

Nephews Ray "Chip" Cramer of Bainbridge Island, WA and Paul Cramer of New Orleans, LA

Granddaughter Josephine Cramer of Fort Collins, CO

Friend and former spouse Pamela Cramer of Loveland, CO

A viewing will be held on Sunday, April 25th at Bohlender Funeral Chapel in Fort Collins. A public memorial event will be held this summer at Vedauwoo Campground in Buford, WY. Details will be announced on this website as they materialize.

A memorial picnic for Professor Curtis Cramer will be held at noon on Sunday, September 26th at the Vedauwoo Picnic Site. Family, friends, colleagues, and students are welcome to attend. For more information, please contact Caitlin Cramer at 970-980-8517 or cgrabarek@gmail.com.

From Laramie, WY take Interstate 80 east 15.8 miles to Vedauwoo Road/ exit 329. Exit and go to stop sign; turn left onto Vedauwoo Rd. and go 1.2 miles. Turn left at sign and go 0.6 miles, veering right to enter picnic area.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR **25**. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (MT)

Bohlender Funeral Chapel
121 W. Olive Street
Fort Collins, CO 80524

Tribute Wall



“ *Bohlander Funeral Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Curtis Albert Cramer*



Bohlander Funeral Chapel - April 25, 2021 at 03:49 PM

BK

“ *Condolences to the Cramer family from Troop 111, Arlington, Virginia. Curt was the Troop's first Eagle Scout, earning that honor on February 24th, 1958. He also served for several years as an Assistant Scoutmaster. I exchanged some memories with him in 1989-1990, for the Troop's 50th Anniversary. RIP. - Bob Klein, Ph.D., current Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 111.*

Bob Klein - February 20, 2022 at 07:42 PM