



Steven Eugene Den

December 31, 1948 - June 27, 2025

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Steven Eugene Den (aka Steve/Mr. Den/Birdman), who departed this life on June 27, 2025, at the age of 76 after suffering several medical issues. Steve was a beloved dad, grandpa, brother, teacher, uncle, and friend to many throughout the Ft. Collins, Poudre Park, and LaPorte, Colorado communities. If you knew him, your memories of him will bring an immediate smile to your face. He was one of a kind and his humor and warmth were contagious.

Born on December 31, 1948, in Bellevue, Nebraska, Steve spent as much time as possible outdoors his entire life, hunting, fishing, and canoeing on the Missouri River with his dad and boyhood friends. He was also an avid Nebraska Cornhusker fan from birth and attended many games in Lincoln. After graduating from Bellevue High School, Steve attended Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas where he discovered he had a talent for teaching and graduated with a degree in Elementary Education in 1971. He developed his lifelong passion for birds after taking an ornithology course at K-State. While in college, he became a federally licensed bird bander and over his lifetime banded over 10,000 birds from hummingbirds to great horned owls. He later earned a master's degree in education at Colorado State University and was just 15 hours short of a PhD.

Steve married Linda Schwab of Manhattan in December 1971. They moved to

San Juan, Puerto Rico in August 1972 where Steve held his first teaching job at Antilles Elementary School at Fort Buchanan, teaching first graders. He was immediately a favorite teacher among his students, inspiring a passion for learning, reading, and math by bringing nature, sports, and real-world examples into the classroom (including an occasional live snake). While in Puerto Rico, he expanded his interest in ornithology and traveled the island, adding birds of the Caribbean to his lifelist. He assisted renowned ornithologists Drs. Noel and Helen Snyder with their project to save the critically endangered Puerto Rican parrot from extinction, spending many hours in El Yunque Rain Forest.

Upon returning to the United States, Steve and Linda made their home in Ft. Collins, Colorado in June 1974. Steve landed a teaching job at Putnam Elementary where he taught for 31 years until retiring in 2006. They welcomed son Timothy Jason in 1975 and son Joshua Ryan in 1977, moving to LaPorte, CO in 1976. Steve and Linda were divorced in 1982 and at that time Steve moved to Bellvue, CO. His little home in the Poudre Park community beside the river became a haven for birds and critters of all kinds and a place anyone felt welcome to stop and sit on his deck and swap stories. He was well-respected for his vast expertise on birds and was known as Birdman throughout Poudre Canyon. He often enjoyed taking Tim and Josh camping, fishing, hunting, and to CSU Rams and Nebraska Cornhusker games. He regularly took his sons and countless numbers of students on field trips to view owl nests, mountain bluebirds and other wildlife. Steve was also an avid big game hunter and spent many hunting seasons at the Powderhorn Cabins in Gould with his sons, grandson and friends and buddy Richard Clark.

He took great pride in the accomplishments of both sons and his three grandkids. The walls of his home are plastered with pictures as a tribute to their precious times together.

Steve spent many of his happiest years with long-time girlfriend and best friend, Kate Driscoll. They enjoyed their mountain life together, often sitting on the deck relaxing by the river, dancing to classic rock and roll at the Mish, riding Harleys to annual Sturgis Rallies, and throwing Parties on the Poudre at their home for their many friends and family. Sadly, Kate passed away suddenly in February of 2011.

Just a few of his many teaching accomplishments included the Colorado's Outstanding Conservation Teacher of the Year award, appearing in Who's Who in America's Teachers, two Presidential Science Teaching awards, and being named Teacher of the Year multiple times.

Steve's work to conserve and protect wildlife will have lasting impact in Poudre Canyon and northern Colorado. He created and maintained the Cherokee Park Bluebird Trail for many years, building and installing nestboxes in Cherokee Park as the bluebird habitat was dwindling. Over 3,000 mountain bluebirds were hatched successfully as a result of his nestbox program.

When the Poudre School District's ECO-week was in danger of losing funding at one time, Steve campaigned to preserve it and as a result, it has remained a valuable annual experience for thousands of 5th and 6th grade students in Larimer County.

In 2018, Steve worked with well-known photographer and conservationist Michael Forsberg on the American Dipper project in the Poudre River, appearing in Forsberg's nature video, "A Trout With Feathers: Filming Dippers Underwater."

In addition to his work as an elementary school teacher, he spent countless hours educating others about all forms of wildlife, writing wildlife articles for

several publications including the Platte Basin Timelapse, North Forty News, and a group email “Mountain Messages” with a widespread following.

Steve is survived by sons Timothy (DeeDee) of Ft. Collins, Joshua (Cristina) of Ft. Collins, grandchildren Cameron, Hailey and Ethan Den of Ft. Collins, sisters Marsha Berens of Colby, KS, Melinda Scott (Dave) of Bellvue, CO, and Melanie Stephens of Columbia, TN, three nieces, multiple grand-nieces and -nephews, and ex-wife Linda (Greg) Messmer. He was predeceased by his parents Ralph and Helen, nephews Justin and Nathan Emmons, brother-in-law Gary Berens, girlfriend and companion Katie Driscoll, and many beloved pets, most recently his dog Bear.

A Celebration of Life will be held on July 11, 2025 at 3:00 pm at the Poudre Park Community Center, 10234 Poudre Canyon Rd/Hwy 14, Bellvue CO 80512.

If attending his Celebration, you are encouraged (not required) to wear red in honor of Steve. But whatever you wear, the family welcomes you to celebrate with them, listen to some rock and roll, and share your stories and favorite memories of Steve.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations be made to the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program at www.rmrp.org in Steve’s memory. They can also be found on their Facebook page, Rocky Mountain Raptor Program.

Though we mourn this incredible ole’ mountain man’s loss, we also celebrate his amazing life, cherishing the memories, humor and love he shared with all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Rest in peace and Rock On, Steve. Your family, friends, and all of nature’s critters will greatly miss you but will remember you forever.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL 11. 3:00 PM - 3:00 PM (MT)

Poudre Park Community Center
10234 Poudre Canyon Highway
Bellvue, CO 80512

Celebration of Life

JUL 11. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (MT)

Poudre Park Community Center
10234 Poudre Canyon Highway
Bellvue, CO 80512

Tribute Wall

AE

“ Steve Den was my fourth grade teacher.

I am now 51 years old.

I still think of you Mr Den.

Be well in your journey. In a past life you could have been an Alaskan. Who knows about the next.

Andrew Eberhard - May 10 at 06:22 PM

AE

Correction. Fifth grade. I'm 51. It all blurs after a point. LOL.

That he got to teach for 31 years. Wow. That's how real impact is measured.

Andrew Eberhard - May 10 at 06:25 PM

AK

“ *It is with gratitude that we remember Steve, whose legacy lives on, not just in the beauty of nature, but in the wonder he sparked in young hearts. Thank you for your time and your teachings, Steve. You helped raise a new generation of nature lovers, and we will honor you by continuing to look up, listen closely, and walk gently.*

Old Teacher Friend, Al Kuehnast

Al Kuehnast - July 19, 2025 at 04:16 PM

A(

“ I came back to write a little more about this sweet man, who is so deeply missed.

Some cannot.

Mr. Den was the kind of teacher who didn't just teach-he changed how you see the world. He taught me in 5th and 6th grade ('95/'96 I believe), and I've carried his words, his wisdom, and his wild love for nature ever since.

Teaching didn't happen between four walls, it happened in the woods, under open skies. He didn't teach facts-he taught us how to see.

Ask him about a bug, a bird, a tree-and he'd tell you it's whole story like it was an old friend.

We built bluebird houses with him and hung them in the Colorado mountains-and he'd keep us updated on the birds for years after.

They were his birds.

Our birds.

That's the kind of teacher he was.

The kind who never really left your life.

He knew everything about wildlife.

Everything.

A true Cornhusker, mountain man, wildlife encyclopedia, and soul deeply rooted in the Earth.

He lived simply, loved deeply, and never stopped teaching.

"There are some who can live without wild things and some who cannot"-Aldo Leopold

He couldn't.

And because of him, I can't either.

A life devoted to knowledge. A heart devoted to children.

He didn't just teach us-he cherished us.

To cherish a child is to change the world. And he did exactly that.

"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."-Henry Adams.

Rest high on that mountain top, Mr. Den and ROCK ON!

Love,

Alicia Herndon

Alicia Herndon (Hernandez) - July 18, 2025 at 10:31 AM

AH

“ I just learned of the passing of Mr. Den. He will forever hold a special place in my childhood memories. He was my teacher in both 5th and 6th grade and we kept in touch every year since. We would email, talk on the phone or I could catch up with him on his wildlife emails. He was the kindest, most fun and best people/teacher to ever walk this earth. I feel blessed to have known this great man. He has taught me many things in and outside the classroom that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. May you rest high on the most beautiful mountain with the most beautiful view.
-Alicia Herndon

Alicia Herndon - July 16, 2025 at 02:25 PM

LD

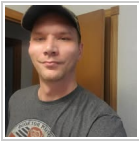
“ Sheena and I just got the word about Steve we had some great evenings together when we lived across the road in the canyon. We knew nobody in the area when we moved there from Denver and Steve took us under his wing and introduced us to a lot of people that we would have never met without him. He was a good kind-hearted man that will be missed. It is pretty ironic when I was out walking this morning that I needed to get up there to say hi and then in the afternoon get the bad news. We would have definitely been to his celebration of life. I could keep going on with stories but I will end with that. Larry & Sheena Duwa

Larry Duwa - July 13, 2025 at 03:52 PM

BP

“ I had the pleasure of meeting Steve Den when our daughter and her friends had an extra-curricular opportunity to look for owls and owl pellets with him--in the dark! What an adventure!! Thanks again, Mr. Den, for being willing to to go the extra mile for kids (and parents!) to enjoy learning about science.

Betsy Perna - July 12, 2025 at 07:38 PM



“ He was such a great teacher that touched so many lives! He always made learning fun! I'll always remember his snake and dissecting owl pellets!

Josh Vlach - July 10, 2025 at 06:15 PM

JB

“ Remembering Mr.Den he was my 3rd grade and 6th grade teacher such beautiful memories he taught us a lot . He showed us how to hold his snake, how to tell what bird is what and all different kinds of animals how they live. Mr Den was an eye opener to a lot of us he even had us do plays etc I'm gonna miss you Mr.Den rest in paradise!!

janet Buckendorf - July 10, 2025 at 04:33 PM



“ I’m saddened to hear this news. Like so many here, including classmates of mine, I had the good fortune of having Mr. Den as a teacher at Putnam (Go Panthers!) for my 6th Grade year ’82-83. Mr. Den is one un-forgettable teacher who left a life time lasting impression upon me. Beyond the classroom, he taught me some life lessons that I still carry to this day.

As strange as it sounds, with Mr. Den I actually looked forward to going to school. He challenged you and he made the learning environment fun and memorable. There was never a dull moment in his classroom and he was such a great story teller!

As a few of my Classmates have pointed out, the memories of Eco-week, learning about the Colorado Bluebird trail, the bulletin board themes, talking sports, the candy bar days and just life in general and trying to prepare students for life moving forward to Jr. High. And yes, our “Putt-Mann” production of E.T. was truly Epic!

The snake I recall we had in our 6th Grade class was named “Julius” – could be wrong, but that is what I remember. Having to come back to class after lunch recess and told to get out your math books and finding Julius was put into your desk was quite the post-lunch rush!

My favorite, the music! AC/DC, Boston and many others!! Not only the classic Rock, but he exposed us all to a variety of other music as well. He knew what he was doing and I’ll forever be grateful for the wonderful and warm memories of Mr. Den! My condolences to his family and may you Rest & Rock in Peace Mr. Den!!



Dave Marsh - July 10, 2025 at 11:59 AM

WV

“ Like others here Mr. Den was a pivotal figure in my elementary days. He has stuck with me all these years. I had him for 3rd and 6th grades at Putnam (like others on here that were classmates).

AC/DC and Heart along with Billy Squire played on the library issue record player were an early introduction to rock'n'roll for us during “reading time”. I still cannot hear “For Those About To Rock” without a grin at the memories.

Birding has been a big part of my life and that is a direct influence of Mr. Den.

I ran into him a couple of times over the years. He always remembered me. He was a happy man. And I am glad that I had him as a part of my life in that pivotal time.

RIP sir. And thank you. Thank you for giving so much of yourself to all of us children and helping us see a bigger world.

Wade Vail - July 10, 2025 at 01:31 AM

ER

“ Mr Den. So many things to say about this guy. He was my favorite person, talking fishing and hunting after school. He got upset when my dad would take me ice fishing instead of going to school 😂. I loved when he would prank us and put his snakes in a random desk while we went out for art or recess ha ha ha... You always made those days great....

Eric - July 08, 2025 at 07:18 PM

RS

“ I was just looking him up the other day to see how he was doing he was an amazing teacher always fun and enjoyed his teaching technique the outdoors was always his favorite place most definitely he will be missed by soo many people 💔 he was my teacher at fullana elementary school in fort Collins Co I laugh because he would always tell me hey Rae how's Ann lol because my name is Raeann hahaha he would always make things less stressful in school always joking and making learning fun and enjoyable I had the pleasure of going to echo week with him and he was the best scary story teller of all the teachers we hunted at night with flashlights he will forever have a place in my memories and my heart and I know that he was sick so all I can say is I hope he's resting now because he deserves it more than many I know sorry for your loss ☐ he was just one of a kind never forgotten 🙏💔😭

Raeann Sanchez - July 08, 2025 at 01:11 AM

CT

“ After reading so many touching tributes, it's clear how deeply Steve (affectionately known as Birdman) impacted those around him. I'm proud to have called him both a friend and neighbor. Steve's kind spirit, unique character, and warm presence left a lasting impression on everyone he met. He was always eager to share stories of his adventures and speak with great pride about his sons, while showing a genuine interest in the lives of others. Poudre Park won't be the same without him—his absence will be deeply felt.

Cameron Taylor - July 07, 2025 at 07:06 PM



“ My 6th grade year at Putnam was one of my favorite school years, thank to Mr. Den and the community he built in our classroom. Reading through these memories from other students, it reminded me of many other fun activities and memories. I was a talkative student and had many good friends in that classroom. I'd often get reprimanded for talking during class. I'd have to stay in during recess tho write a very long sentence 100 times in perfect cursive penmanship. If that didn't work, I'd get my desk moved to sit by the snake, which I remember being a bull snake. My most favorite memories of Mr. Den: his friendly and funny interactions with our janitor, Mr. Wagner, a daily visitor to our classroom; creating and performing E.T. - the play; Boston and Kansas albums in the background while we worked; candy bar days; Eco Week and 'snipe' hunting; bluebird houses and their importance; holiday cookbook of all of our favorite family recipes; and RAP time. He is one teacher that my childhood friends and I still talk about. Unfortunately, I only saw him a few times after 6th grade, on a few visits back to Putnam. Few teachers will ever have such a positive and lasting impact on their students. Cue, 'Peace of Mind" by Boston in honor of Mr. Den. Rest in Peace.

Laurel Whitaker - July 07, 2025 at 06:53 PM

MS

“ Mr Den was my 5th and 6th grade teacher at Putnam. I fondly remember Snipe hunting during eco week; to bluebird house construction and placing them in Red Feather Park. Going into caves in Owl Canyon to look for Quartz crystals. Candy bar days and swiping that Reese's King size from the stuck up pretty girl in front of me. Sitting under sports pennants during playoff series of every sport. I am 50 years old and still vividly remember his enthusiasm, authentic teaching style and smile! (PS the first one was a rough draft that i didnt mean to send)

Matt

Matt Schierenberg

Matt S Schierenberg - July 07, 2025 at 03:50 PM

MS

“ Mr Den was my 5th and 6th grade teacher at Putnam. I fondly remember Snipe hunting during eco week, bluebird house construction and placing them in Red Feather, to going into caves in Owl Canyon to look for Quartz crystals. Candy bar days to sitting under sports pendants during playoff series. I am 50 years old and still vividly remember his enthusiasm and smile!

Matt Schierenberg

Matt S Schierenberg - July 07, 2025 at 03:32 PM

AR

“ *Mr. Den was my 6th grade teacher in the mid-nineties. He was a legend.*

I mentioned Mr. Den to someone just a few days ago. We were hiking up a ridge and the subject of rattlesnakes came up. That will always take me back to Mr. Den bringing one into our classroom inside a terrarium to show all of his science classes. He did it once a year and he would tell about how he used to show them to his classes without the terrarium, placing it on an overhead projector cart and handling it with a snake hook! But over the years as word got out he was urged to take more and more safety measures until the school district banned venomous animals of any kind from being brought into the schools.

He's another teacher who I look back on and realize he had a compassionate way of looking out for his at-risk students. I remember how we had RAP time where we all took a moment and took turns saying how our day was going or telling about something fun or interesting we did the day before. There was one kid who would always say whether it was a good day or a bad day and based it on whether his cereal was crunchy or soggy that morning. I thought it weird then and he always made the rest of us laugh a little, but now I'm pretty sure that was a secret code between them to make sure this kid was getting the support and help that he needed.

Amber Rodriguez - July 07, 2025 at 02:51 PM

JK

“ *Mr. Den was the one teacher I will never forget! I remember building bird boxes for the Bluebird trail. We would ride along the trail on the weekends putting them up and cleaning ones that were there. Even though I was a difficult student at times, he never gave up on me. He will be missed.*

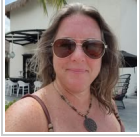
Jon Koob - July 07, 2025 at 02:06 PM

TJ

“ *Trisha Johnson lit a candle in memory of
Steven Eugene Den*



Trisha Johnson - July 07, 2025 at 01:20 PM



“ I had Mr. Den for 3rd grade (1979-80) and again for 6th grade (1982-83) at Putnam Elementary.

He would play music for us on a record player that sat in the corner of the room. I specifically remember him playing Harry Chapin's "Cat's in the Cradle" and discussing the meaning of the lyrics with us.

We had a bull snake for a classroom pet named Seymour. Every month we would circle our desks around Seymour and watch him devour a live rat. One time, Seymour didn't eat the rat for some reason, so Mr. Den saved it. He had a yellow can on his desk full of black tiles with numbers on them that corresponded to the numbers on our desks. He would pull these numbers to call on us, or in this case, to be the lucky winner of the rat! I named him Herbie and kept him in a hamster cage. I would snuggle with him and let him crawl up the sleeve of my sweatshirt.

During March Madness we picked teams to root for and put our desks together in groups with team penants hanging over them. Mr. Den would pin a big W or L on the penant after each game.

Mr. Den chewed tobacco and kept a spit can on his desk. That seemed completely normal at the time!

I learned so much about nature and the outdoors from Mr. Den. He took 6th graders to Eco Week every year. I remember learning how to identify trees and animal footprints before we went and then singing songs on the trail with him as he led us through the forest.

During my 6th grade year, we put on the play "E.T" by writing our own script and building a stage with backdrops in our classroom. We even made a big paper mache E.T. head that my friend Lynne had to wear. We strung a wire across the classroom and attached a spaceship that "flew" away at the end of the play.

I haven't seen Mr. Den since the last day of 6th grade, but I will always remember him!

Diane Wood - July 07, 2025 at 12:28 PM



Like others here Mr. Den was a pivotal figure in my elementary days. He has stuck with me all these years. I had him for 3rd and 6th grades at Putnam (like others on here that were classmates).

AC/DC and Heart along with Billy Squire played on the library issue record player were an early introduction to rock'n'roll for us during "reading time". I still cannot hear "For Those About To Rock" without a grin at the memories.

Birding has been a big part of my life and that is a direct influence of Mr. Den.

I ran into him a couple of times over the years. He always remembered me. He was a happy man. And I am glad that I had him as a part of my life in that pivotal time.

RIP sir. And thank you. Thank you for giving so much of yourself to all of us children and helping us see a bigger world.

Wade Vail - July 10, 2025 at 01:27 AM



Dang it. Didn't want a comment here. Sorry Diane! But I was probably in your class. I remember Seymour 😊

Wade Vail - July 10, 2025 at 01:31 AM



“ *There are teachers you have during your lifetime that you never forget, Mr Den was one of those teachers. Had him in elementary at Putnam School and occasionally had the pleasure of visiting with him in later years. Sending sympathy to his family and may the memories he left you sustain you during this difficult time.*

Todd Schott

Todd Schott - July 07, 2025 at 11:48 AM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Steven Eugene Den.



July 07, 2025 at 09:21 AM



“ The first time I met Steve was when I went to borrow a cup of flour from him. He said "Let's see what Miss Katie has in here." He would often sit next to the field next to my house watching the fox and her kits (I think they are called). The last time I visited with him, he gave me one of his Christmas cards. He was certainly proud of his boys. He was always bragging on them. I worried about him being on his own, but he was happy up here, and he wasn't worried at all nor did he seem alone. He always had a smile on his face. I will certainly miss you, Steve. I had hoped to visit with you more. When I did visit, the time would always go quickly. He loved to talk and I loved to listen to his stories. Love miss you already, Steve

Jennifer Stonecipher

Jennifer Stonecipher - July 07, 2025 at 08:51 AM

HG

So I was a former student of Mr. Den! Sometimes people are remembered for their hobbies however it was more than a hobby for him. He was truly passionate about birds & his students! He required a lot from his students but also did it with kindness & love. I'm glad I was one of his students that got to put up a bird box. If you ask me which teacher had the greatest influence on me was Mr. Den & maybe one other teacher! To make an indelible mark in my mind at a young age especially during those crucial times in my life. I'm sad I didn't get to visit you as an older adult. I'm sure we would've had some laughs. Mr. Den you made learning so fun, thank you for all you did. You will always be remembered & loved.

~Holly Picadura

Holly graves - July 07, 2025 at 10:31 AM

CB

“*Summer of 1968, VR Range in middle of Wyoming, a young man caught my attention and a life long friendship started. Spent hours looking for folks doing what they shouldn't by spot light, learning about the critters we were protecting and birds of all types, First airplane trip from WY to Omaha for Christmas, meeting his family loving the two little sister and Marsha who was wiser hunting squirrels in the Missouri River bottom. Then April to say good bye to his lovely MOM. Soon his dad followed and things were never the same. Fast forward to 1989 and renewing the friendship over blue bird boxes placed up the canyon with the scouts meeting Linda and the two boys. Keeping in touch even if it was just a note at Christmas, Finding Mindy and renewing that as well. Christmas cards kept us in touch but my love of birds started way back then and continue daily. A special man you will always be Steve, The canyon has lost a living soul but your spirit will always remain.*
Charlie Brown (AKA Charlene Kennaugh Brown)

Charlene K Brown - July 06, 2025 at 09:08 PM

DF

“ So very glad I got to share food with STEVE @ Whole foodsI was NOT to busy and took the time to talk, listen, Visit, Hear stories with himas everyone has said.....I learned so much from him I did not know and he Went over memories from his long life.....Bless you Steve Den.....Hey now you get to be with Katie again.....Truly a Blessed Life.....Miss you friend Already.....Poudre Park is quiet today and missing HUGE amount of her JOY!!!!!!!

Donna Marie Feigle - July 06, 2025 at 05:31 PM

BM

“ We shared many great days and evenings over 45 years with Steve as we have the neighboring cabin in Poudre Park. Steve never lost interest in learning new things about nature and gave us many photos of the birds and animals that visited us up there. Will miss him as we always chatted with him, and quite often shared a libation, on our visits to the cabin.

Rock On Steve

Bob Manuel and Linda Richter

Bob Manuel - July 06, 2025 at 03:53 PM

WM

“ Steve was a unique and extremely, hard-working teacher who made science and Eco Week memorable for generations of kids at Putnam/Fullana Elementary School.

Condolences to his family and many students.

Bill Miles

William Miles - July 06, 2025 at 02:44 PM



“ I too have many fond memories of Mr Den. I had him for both 3rd and 6th grade. He was by far my favorite teacher. He had a fatherly way of teaching all his students. He truly cared for all the kids in his class. I remember going up to Econ week and also taking bird houses up to Cherokee Park. As I would occasionally see Mr Den as an adult, I would still call him (Mr. Den) but he would tell me it's Steve now. Steve you left an everlasting impression on my growing up that I will never forget. What a great man! My condolences and prayers to the family.

Joseph Martin - July 06, 2025 at 08:29 AM

CB

“ Mr Den, that's how I will always remember him. One of my most adored teachers I have ever had. He is the only time I enjoyed math and learned a “pregnant 2” what his pet peeve. My bird box I built with him was a major accomplishment & was fortunate to go with him to hang some with other kids. Eco Week and snipe hunting, hiking Mummy Range and him laughing at all of us dirty 6th graders having the time of our lives. The Coloradoan came to class one time to write a story about his wildlife conservation efforts and how he taught us kids about it. He brought in a wolf hybrid dog. It was my turn to go up and pet this giant animal. This beautiful wolf dog jumped up on me with his paws over my shoulders, towering over me, and began to lick my face profusely. The belly laugh that came out of that man I will never forget. The photographer snapped a picture right at that moment and I found myself on the front page the following day. He said “He must like you kiddo, he can tell you are a real one.” No Mr, Den, YOU are the real one. Peace and love to your family, you will be missed. Rest easy sir.

Carrie Blanco - July 04, 2025 at 11:21 AM