



## Ward C. Degler

May 4, 1935 - November 23, 2024

Ward C. Degler, 89, of Zionsville, passed away November 23, 2024. He was born May 4, 1935 in Phillips, WI, to the late Roy H. and Marion B. (Shaw) Degler. Ward graduated in 1953 from Jeff City High School, Jefferson City, MO, receiving a scholarship to the Kansas City Art Institute. He attended 1 ½ years before entering the U.S. Army. Using the GI Bill, he attended the University of Missouri School of Journalism, graduating in 1962. We encourage you to read more about Ward's life, including his time in the Navy, at [journalism.missouri.edu](http://journalism.missouri.edu).

Ward used his writing skills in marketing for corporations and advertising agencies. He was Creative Director for the American Legion the last few years of his career, retiring in February 2001.

Ward started writing a weekly column in the 1990's for the Zionsville Times Sentinel, titled "I Was Just Thinking." In 2011, he published a book of 151 of these columns, "The Dark Ages of My Youth and Times More Recent." He later wrote a weekly column for the Current in Zionsville. Ward's newest book, "The Golden Osprey", is a novel about a Viet Nam Vet who lost his faith in mankind and in God and how he found it again. It is expected to be in circulation by mid-December.

While Ward made a living writing, his first love was art. His greatest love was connecting his art with his faith. He is known for letting the Holy Spirit guide him with his paintings, gifting them to leaders of Cursillo weekends.

During Ward's flight training, he and instructor Kirk Forbes shared Christ together, followed by attending Bible Study Fellowship. They later shared a sailboat in Key West. His faith continued to grow through Cursillo and Holy Family Community. The relationships he built with his brothers in Christ have continued to be an integral part of his daily life until his passing.

Many called Ward the "Renaissance Man" because he excelled in many areas. In addition to his careers, love of art and writing, he also enjoyed playing the guitar and harmonica and singing with family and friends. He loved the outdoors, especially sailing. Ward was an excellent carpenter and could do almost anything. He was witty and a fun storyteller and his smile could light up a room.

Ward married Jeanne Hodge Degler on November 23, 1980. He worshiped at St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church where he was a member of Knights of Columbus Council #12510. He was a member of the American Legion, Cursillo in Christianity, a writer's group, past member of the Rotary Club and on the Board of Directors for Seeds of Hope.

Visitation will be Sunday, December 1, 2024 from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. at Shirley Brothers Fishers-Castleton Chapel, 9900 Allisonville Road, Fishers, and one hour prior to mass. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held Monday, December 2, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. at St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church, 1870 West Oak Street, Zionsville.

Ward is survived by his loving wife of 44 years, Jeanne Hodge Degler; sister, Shelley E.J. Dillmore; brother, Roger L. Degler (Paula); children, Anika J. Rudloff (Steve), Heidi A. Morton (Kenny), Dietricha L. Degler, Gretchen K. Williams (Seth), Mark A. Hodge (Christine), Kathleen M. Phipps (Randal), Robert J. Hodge (Lisa Rae), Kelly J. DeSchryver (Robert), and David J. Hodge (Maria); grandchildren, Jennifer Kasper (Dan), Nikea Hernandez (Mark), Bethany Wills, Michael Sweeney, Shaun Sweeney, Jessica, Natasha, Ailey Williams, Kiera Williams, Christopher Hodge, Robert Hodge, Jacob Hodge (Janel), Christian Phipps (Heather), Victoria Hand (Linc), Dylan Plummer, Holly Renton (Josh), Stephanie Hodge (Joe Loeffel), Claire Hodge

(Andrew Harding), Candace Kavanaugh (Steve), Stephen DeSchryver, Charlie DeSchryver, Jane Patterson (Weifan Liu), Christina Miller (Eric), Erika Plummer, John Plummer (Leah), James Hodge, Michael Hodge, and Luke Hodge; great-grandchildren, Carter Nancy, Ava Kasper, Mackenzie Hodge, Maxon Hodge, Hannah Hodge, Hayden Hodge, Henry Hodge, Zay Plummer, Niya Plummer, Carwyn Loeffel, Ainsley Loeffel, Jacoby Walker, Carly Walker, Bella Anastasio, Elijah Miller, Ezra Miller, Link Plummer, Ariya Brettin, Payton Padgett, Tommy Plummer, and Nirvana Liu; and great-great-granddaughter, Layla Christianson.

Ward was preceded in death by his parents, Roy H. and Marion B. (Shaw) Degler; brother, Jerry Degler; and grandchildren, Chris J. Nancy, Sara R. Bowman, and Heather M. (Shedivy) Hodge.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Ward's memory may be made to Seeds of Hope Inc., 1425 S. Mickley Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46241 or online at <https://seedsofhopeindy.org> and/or Central Indiana Cursillo Center, c/o Marty Van Der Burgt, Treasurer, 3280 Waverly Drive, Richmond, IN 47374 or online at <https://cursillo-cicc.org>

# Cemetery Details

## Oaklawn Memorial Gardens

9700 Allisonville Rd.  
Indianapolis, IN

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 1. 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Shirley Brothers Fishers-Castleton Chapel  
9900 N. Allisonville Road  
Fishers, IN 46038  
(317) 841-7878  
[info@shirleybrothers.com](mailto:info@shirleybrothers.com)  
<https://www.shirleybrothers.com>

## Visitation

DEC 2. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Alphonsus Liguori Roman Catholic Church  
1870 West Oak Street  
Zionsville, IN 46077

## Mass of Christian Burial

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DEC 2. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Alphonsus Liguori Roman Catholic Church  
1870 West Oak Street  
Zionsville, IN 46077

# Tribute Wall

CS

“Ward and his wife were always the face of Christ in everything they did. When we would come with the youth to rake their leaves, they were always there with hot chocolate and kind words. He would tell the youth about how much hope it gave him to see their smiling faces and sacrificial love to be raking on a cold Saturday morn. He even drew the most beautiful artwork to commemorate our outings and sent them as thank you cards. We all still have them hanging in our offices. I aspire to be like the Deglers. They embody what is to be Christ in the world. Ward will be missed, but I have no doubt he is singing in heaven! Joyfully, Christina



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**Christina Steele** - December 02, 2024 at 10:48 AM

CS

“My Mothers older brother was Bob Pierce and he was married to Christine. She was the sister of Ward's Father so we shared an aunt and uncle and first cousins. I loved reading his book and I am anxious to read his new book. My Mom was 4 years older than Ward and he always claimed she was one of his biggest crushes of his life. The 81st birthday video is an absolute masterpiece. I wish I could have one more conversation with Ward after viewing that. Love and best wishes to Jeanne and all of the family from Kristi and Craig Severns and the Pierce and the Loman families.

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**Craig Severns** - December 01, 2024 at 12:43 PM

KJ

“ Kelly J. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ward C. Degler.

Kelly J. - December 01, 2024 at 09:49 AM

DH

“ 1 file added to the album Videos



David Hodge - November 29, 2024 at 09:11 PM

SP

Thank you for this! So much about Ward I never knew. He is a very loved man. Love, his cousin Rita

Sophia Parker - December 02, 2024 at 01:02 AM

RM

“ Robert M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ward C. Degler.

Robert M. - November 29, 2024 at 06:35 PM

SP

“ Dear Cuz,

*Though we didn't keep closely in touch, I've always had the best memories of you, your smile and extremely engaging personality shining through my thoughts. How well I remember being a little girl and seeing your photo in Grandma's house, how proud I was that this handsome man was my cousin. I idolized you long before I ever met you.*

*I'll miss your being here with us.*

*Love, Rita*

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**Sophia Parker** - November 29, 2024 at 01:08 PM

AC

“ Archer Ready Mix Concrete purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Ward C. Degler.



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**Archer Ready Mix Concrete** - November 28, 2024 at 01:08 PM

KF

“ 4 files added to the album *Sailing*



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**Kirk Forbes** - November 28, 2024 at 08:05 AM

KD

*I love these! Thank you for sharing, Kirk! I know you had a lot of memories and a wonderful friendship.*

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**Kelly DeSchryver** - November 29, 2024 at 09:26 PM

VK

“ Will miss you Ward! Thank you for your dedication to the *Cursillo* community! Praying for you on your 5th day. 🙏🙏🙏



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**Von Keech** - November 27, 2024 at 11:17 PM

MC

“ *Movimiento de Cursillos de Cristiandad purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Ward C. Degler.*



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**Movimiento de Cursillos de Cristiandad** - November 27, 2024  
at 02:06 PM

KF

“ My thoughts about Ward....

*What do you say when you lose a best friend? Who you loved for decades and played a major role in your life.*

*When Ward decided to learn to fly, I got my flight instructor certification renewed just to help him get his pilot's license. What I didn't expect was that during this training we would share Christ with each other and that would change our lives and draw us closer.*

*We both were sailors and sailed together in the Bahamas, rebuilt a sailboat in Key West and sailed to the Dry Tortugas. Sailing became an important part of our friendship.*

*Ward and I spent several years attending Bible Study Fellowship, a nationwide in-depth bible study program. We sang together, prayed together and studied together. This led us to regular luncheons and breakfasts that would continue for years.*

*He lent his artistic and writing talents to me when I wrote my book, Love Kristen. He drew the front cover and spent days helping me write and edit the final copy. Most of all, he was there to support me when I relived the loss of my daughter while writing the book. He was a valued advisor to the board of my Kristen Forbes EVE Foundation.*

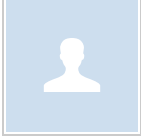
*When I was going through a couple of major crises in my life, Ward was always there for me. He was always willing to offer encouragement. He was more than a friend, he was my brother in Christ and a source of laughter and wisdom. His smile, quick wit and kind heart made him a best friend and he has left me with a life full of wonderful memories and experiences.*

*Like Kristen, I know Ward stands at Heaven's Gate awaiting my arrival.*

*Kirk Forbes*

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**Kirk Forbes** - November 27, 2024 at 01:05 PM



“ *Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Ward C. Degler.*



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November 27, 2024 at 10:41 AM