



Donald Cerv

October 25, 1952 - November 21, 2020

Costco lost a loyal customer on November 21, 2020. Donald Stuart Cerv Jr., 68, passed peacefully after a brief illness with his family at his side.

Don is sorely missed and survived by his wife Cris Cerv, children Becky Jelinek (Drew), Amanda Cerv, and Tim Cerv, siblings Nancy Koren (Mike) and Alan Cerv, Uncle Walter Buchwald (Darlene Buchwald), and numerous cousins. Don is predeceased by his parents, Norma Buchwald Cerv and Donald Cerv.

Don was born in Chicago where he grew up among his extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. After he completed medical school and a residency program in Emergency Medicine at Northwestern University, he moved to California and met his wife, Cris. They moved to Chicago where he completed a residency in Radiology at University of Illinois, followed by a fellowship in Trauma Radiology at University of Maryland. Whew, and he still talked about his desire to attend Veterinary School! Don's passion was teaching, so he accepted academic appointments at LSU, followed by Yale. His family then settled in the DC suburbs of Northern Virginia where he practiced Emergency Radiology for 20 years. Don enjoyed his work life and traumatizing his family with gory medical tales. He was planning to retire in January 2021.

While you might not guess it from his enjoyment of the elderly minutiae (e.g. snagging the IHOP senior discount and taking inventory of who ate the second to last Hostess cake), Don led an active and adventuresome life. He completed marathons, triathlons, a half Ironman, and dive aboard photo trips in Palau.

Don was an avid cheerleader for his children in their various academic and athletic pursuits, and dabbled in coaching in his spare time. He enjoyed his vacation home in Rehoboth Beach, in addition to heading south to Fort Myers in the winter. His hobbies included boasting about his expansive iTunes library, wildlife photography, surfing Amazon, the idea of learning to play new instruments (ukulele, steel drums), and exasperating his family during long car rides with a harmonica he kept in the glovebox of his car.

Don will be fondly remembered for his diligence in providing for his family, his witty (sometimes off-kilter) humor, and being the foundation of a household built with laughter. May he rest in peace.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Smithsonian Zoo. <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/support/donate>

This service is private and may be viewed via livestreaming due to COVID-19 restrictions. To view the service livestream and recording please come back to this obituary website. We will be streaming directly to this obituary's tribute wall. The video will display as a post on the tribute wall when we start the service. Please click play when the video is posted and available. If you are having technical difficulty you can view this service later as the video is recorded and will remain on this page. We appreciate your understanding during these extremely difficult times.

Tribute Wall



“ Jefferson Funeral Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Donald Cerva



Jefferson Funeral Chapel - November 28, 2020 at 08:53 AM



“ Donald Cerva

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



“ I knew Don when he lived in Oak Park, Illinois. He had salt water aquariums inhabited by an octopus and a huma huma. He had decided to become an emergency room doctor since he insisted that he had poor bedside manners. I disagreed then and now looking back. He was a kind and gentle man. I am so sorry for your loss.

Jayne Phillips - December 19, 2020 at 03:18 AM



My sincere condolences to the family of Don Cerva. I knew Don as a childhood friend when he lived in the city. Nancy and I were about the same age and the 3 of us palled around. He made up some of my best childhood memories. I will never forget them, especially their grandparents, Emma and Otto Buchwald.
Janet Angarola Macik

Janet Angarola Macik - April 09, 2021 at 01:05 AM

HG

“ I worked at INOVA Fairfax (nights) with Dr. Cerva many, many years ago. He was my, by far, favorite radiologist. I was 20 when I started. He was hard to read at first but after some time, I could tell he was interested in helping me learn. He always challenged me and quizzed me. He would call me into this dark reading office just to show me something interesting he found on an image. Then he would tell me to buzz off. He was hilariously dry and would roll his eyes whenever anyone was in a panic or making demands. He never rushed. He was always calm and straightforward. He gave some of the staff bottles of wine for Christmas one year but carded me before giving me mine. He was proactive and detailed in caring for our patients. I truly admired him.

He had pictures of his family on his desk. A great physician and family man.

Sending his friends and family a lot warm wishes and love.

Heather

Heather Gildon - December 10, 2020 at 02:00 PM

BD

“ I remember when my sister, Cris, first told me about the interesting ER doctor she met at the hospital where she worked. She talked about his sense of humor and how much she enjoyed talking to him, but she was not sure about dating someone who worked in the same hospital. Don was different. I think she knew there was something special about him... and there was.

Don was smart with a quirky sense of humor and an easy-going personality. He was a loving husband and father. We will always remember Don as a proud and loyal family man who was hard working, generous and caring. Don never complained. He was unflappable. We enjoyed celebrating holidays together. Don was a gracious host and an equally welcome guest.

Don actively supported his children's interests in music, sports, photography, and many other activities. If something was important to his family he was there participating, providing support and cheering them on. He was always ready with his camera taking thousands of beautiful pictures and sharing them with friends and extended family. He was so proud of his family.

In the last few months, we saw what a courageous fighter Don was. He worked so hard to regain his health and rejoin his family who stood by him during this most difficult time providing love and encouragement. We will miss Don for so many reasons. A part of him will always be with us in our hearts and minds.

-Betty and Michael Davlin

Betty and Michael Davlin - December 06, 2020 at 05:02 PM

LS

“ Don was a pillar of Fairfax Radiology. He was revered by all. He will be sorely missed. Deepest condolences to his family.

Lily Sicard - December 05, 2020 at 10:52 AM

KJ

“ I worked with Dr. Cerva for many years on nights. He was an excellent radiologist, so knowledgeable and helpful to us at technologists. I will always remember our great conversations and humorous stories! I am so sorry for his passing, just way too soon. He loved his family so much. We always enjoyed his stories of all the softball games and travels with his kids. I loved his stories about his dogs, and the time that he and the new pup had a run in with a bat. I will always remember his kindness, and his professionalism. He truly cared for our patients and the care we were providing them. I always respected how he would advocate for them. We have lost a good man. I will be praying for blessings of comfort for his family. I will never forget him.

Karen Joe - December 03, 2020 at 02:30 PM

JM

“ I was one of Don's college classmates. He was a remarkable person, brilliant, gifted, and passionate. I was deeply sorry to hear of his passing. I send my condolences to his entire family.

Joseph A Miller - November 30, 2020 at 08:10 PM

CR

Thank you so much for sharing your memories of Don.

cris - December 02, 2020 at 09:55 AM

CB

Cris and family, we send our thoughts & prayers. Reading all the posts was terrific. Being my older cousin, I didn't hang or play with him as a kid cuz of 13 year difference. Then as adults all of you were out east and we were in the midwest. Sadly, I don't feel I knew him like friends and colleagues. Their stories and memories made me smile. I'll always remember his quirky humor and holidays at our grandparents. As the pain and grief passes, I hope the happy memories bring lotsa joy celebrating a life well lived and loved. Carole Buchwald Ozark

Carole Buchwald - December 05, 2020 at 12:26 PM

EL

“ I worked with Dr. Cerva on nights at Inova Fairfax. I totally enjoy my time before retiring because of Dr. Cerva. I gave him the nickname “Flash” and he gave me a retirement gift of FLASH. A wonderful man that talked highly of his family and will be missed.

Estelle Hext Locklear - November 29, 2020 at 06:06 PM

 Jim
Witt

“ I am so very sorry for your loss. I met Don in 1966 at Prospect High School in Mt. Prospect, Il and was a member of the gymnastics team and tennis team with him. He and I both attended Illinois State University and roomed together for 3 semesters. Unfortunately the last time I saw him was at our 20th high school reunion. He was probably the most intelligent person that I have ever known but who never flaunted it. He did indeed possess an unique sense of humor.
He will be missed.

Jim Witt - November 27, 2020 at 08:30 PM

KR

“ *Cris, Tim, Becky and Amanda, What an amazing memory of Your dad. We share with your fond memories, your love and your sorrow. Don was such a highlight to all of our lives and we are better for having known his beautiful heart, wit and love of animals and photography. Our kids were always so excited to see the latest additions to the Cerva's household to include the digs, puppies and wonderful birds! Don was loving and selfless and gave to everyone. We loved his uke playing!!! We cannot imagine your tremendous loss and sorrow and know that these days are the hardest to bear. We are praying that God holds you all close during the coming weeks and months and surrounds you with the love of a family which Don was so much a part of fostering. We love you and are here for anything you may need in the coming days. Much love, Kathy, Mike, Maryann and Louis*

Kathy Rigo - November 26, 2020 at 02:27 PM

MA

“ *I will most miss the Don, Hammy, teacake mornings on the porch!*

Love to you all.

Marie

Marie - November 26, 2020 at 11:53 AM

FF

“ *Our Don, our friend, our neighbor, Just the Best! Precious days spent with Don and Cris on the porch. So grateful they became a part of our lives. So grateful to have known him. His ever present strength will help us all through this.*

Our hearts are saddened. He will be so missed.

Foreman family - November 26, 2020 at 11:05 AM

TA

“ All of us on the "Porch Crew" at the beach always enjoyed starting our summer mornings with Don and Cris (and Hammy) joining everyone to share stories about the kids and the dogs and all that matters in life. It is always quite entertaining. What a terrific man and terrific family! Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.

Tim and Aimee - November 26, 2020 at 11:01 AM

CC

We still love to share everything that matters (and may not matter) on the porch. Don really enjoyed being your neighbor and friend.

Christine Cerva - September 21, 2022 at 01:19 PM

NK

“ Wow . Cris you and the kids surely did a great job of describing Don. All who knew him had to appreciate his quirky sense of humor. That's what made him so special . My love to you guys.

Nancy Koren - November 26, 2020 at 10:47 AM

CC

Thank you, and you know that is what they do well...and learned the humor from the best! They are very fortunate to have had a great dad as the leader and a wonderful extended family. We miss him so much, and know he watches over us.

Christine Cerva - September 21, 2022 at 01:21 PM

KM

“ In high school, Don wanted to eat dinner with my family so badly that he brought his own chicken (my dad was cheap). My father threw it on the grill and Don ate with us.

Kevin McIntosh - November 26, 2020 at 10:39 AM

CC

This was one of the richest stories he ever shared with us, and he shared it numerous times to us and others! You and he had a special childhood bond. He was grateful for your lifelong friendship.

Christine Cerva - September 21, 2022 at 01:22 PM

SC

“ *We enjoyed spending time talking with Chris and Don on our neighbors front porch. We can't even count the hours we spent doing that. We will miss him.*

Sandy and Steve Curson - November 26, 2020 at 09:46 AM

CC

Thank you, he enjoyed those days as well! He came to love Rehoboth and was looking forward to his retirement years!

Christine Cerva - September 21, 2022 at 01:23 PM