



Gary Walter Kupfer

October 16, 1957 - July 11, 2021

Gary Walter Kupfer (October 16, 1957 - July 11, 2021) passed away suddenly on Sunday, July 11th, 2021.

Gary was a beloved husband, son, brother, uncle, co-worker, and friend, but most importantly, a believer in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Loving husband to Susanne Baer-Kupfer for 37 years; he was the son of Walter H. and Leni P. Kupfer who both predeceased him in 2015; brother to Ava (Dale) Gutwein; and uncle to numerous nieces and nephews.

Gary had a passion for improving the lives of others. His 36 years of service with the Tulare County Department of Human Services gave him many opportunities to make a difference. Starting out his career as an Emergency Response Social Worker, he moved up to his final position of Child Welfare Services (CWS) Manager overseeing the Policy and Program Specialist Unit. Highlights of his career include building a strong relationship with the Tule River Tribe, which resulted in improvements in the relational process between Tulare County and the Tribe; becoming a Tulare County Liaison to the Fresno State Department of Social Work Education where he also served as an adjunct faculty member teaching undergraduate and graduate students social work practice, human behavior and child welfare. Gary also provided years of service to the CWS Adoptions Unit knowing the importance of identification of a forever home for many children; and recently became a lead expert in

continuous quality improvement efforts for CWS which focused heavily on improving outcomes for foster children.

Beyond Gary's professional contributions, he was also the loving husband of Susanne. Their long marriage was founded on a shared love for God and spending time together. He was Susanne's partner in their small farm where they enjoyed working the land to produce cut flowers and mulberries to sell at Visalia's Farmer's Market. Gary found the "farmer's life" his therapy to unwind and counterbalance his busy work life. His habit was to get up early, start the day taking care of his dogs, and, on days off, prepping and maintaining the fields for Susanne. His support allowed Susanne to succeed in her own right as a floral designer and encouraged her passion and dream to have her own business. This again, demonstrated Gary's priorities, being a servant to others and helping others to succeed.

We are comforted knowing that Gary is safe in the arms of Jesus now. How sweet it was to have known Gary and his example of service, kindness, compassion, and love for others. We look forward to the day when we will be reunited with him in heaven.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, August 14th, 2021 at 11:00AM at Neighborhood Church, 5505 W. Riggan Ave., Visalia, CA 93291.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Neighborhood Church Building Fund, Neighborhood Church, Visalia.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

AUG **14**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Neighborhood Church
5505 W Riggin Ave
Visalia, CA 93291-9084
(559) 732-9107

Tribute Wall

RR

“ I had met Gary through my friend Max as Gary would host basketball followed by bible studies. I really enjoyed that! A few years later I met up with him as I was doing a Title IV-E internship at Tulare County and I had reached out to him to see if he had any helpful tips. Gary was very responsive and set up a time and place where we could meet. He treated me to coffee when we met and he gave me helpful insights into theoretical frameworks and expectations for field instruction. I was amazed at his wealth of knowledge for child welfare and I could clearly see his passion and dedication as he spoke. From time to time, i still review the theoretical framework handout that you shared with me Thank you Gary, I am thankful for that core memory which took place in January 2015. Rest in Paradise!

Roman

Roman R. - December 29, 2025 at 05:44 PM

MR

“ I was fortunate to know Gary in both his professional life and also his non work life too. In both settings I admired and respected Gary's view of the world. He was kind toward all and unassuming toward self. He was dedicated to both his work and his family. He was fun, generous and accomplished.
I feel a better person for having known him.
Susanne, I am so sorry for your loss. Please know that Gary was held in high esteem by many and we all grieve his passing.
Marilyn Rankin

marilyn rankin - August 13, 2021 at 06:01 PM



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Gary Walter Kupfer.*



July 31, 2021 at 03:57 PM



“ *Gary made it possible to do my international internship at Child welfare many years ago... our discussions and his perspective on things surely shaped who I am today... not just that... Susanne and Gary just took me in, opened their home to me and I just got to meet two wonderful people... I remember their stories as a couple and so much more... Susanne, the gift you two shared with each other is and was incredible. You are in my thoughts constantly. Please come visit me when u are in Germany! My home will be open for you just how u welcomed me to yours.*

Gary touched so many lives in a positive way, he will be so missed!

bianca - July 24, 2021 at 03:11 PM



“ *I am in disbelief of the tragic news. I have nothing but great memories of Gary. I am blessed to have had him as a professor. I always remember his passion for the field of Child Welfare and how he desired to get us future social workers to be the best we could be with the children and families we would one day work with. I am so thankful with Gary, he was a key piece in me obtaining my MSW and completing my thesis. I will always be truly grateful. My deepest condolences to his family.*

Yanira Eufrazio - July 22, 2021 at 11:34 AM

CH

“ I will forever cherish the wealth of knowledge you shared with me and many other aspiring CWS social workers. Your enthusiasm and eagerness to teach will never be forgotten. You helped prepare myself to enter this profession. You will be greatly missed Gary. My deepest condolences to the Kupfer family.

Carina Hernandez - July 21, 2021 at 09:10 PM

CE

“ Sweetest Gary,

I am so thankful that the Lord put you in my path. You are the epitome of best practice. Your social work theories will forever impact my life and the way that I do social work. You always went above and beyond to teach those who wanted to learn. I appreciate your countless hours devoted to the profession. I pray that the Lord brings comfort and peace to the Kupfer Family.

Crystal Escalante - July 21, 2021 at 04:42 PM

OL

“ I had the privilege of being supervised by Gary during my field internship. I will forever cherish our meaningful discussions related to theories and practice. He was the definition of a true Social Worker, and what we should aspire to be. He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered. My condolences to his family.

Ofelia Longino - July 21, 2021 at 01:02 PM

ES

“ It was an honor and a blessing to have worked with Gary at CWS. He was kind, reflective, patient, and thoughtful to all. He is and will continue to be greatly missed. I hold Susanne and all of Gary’s family in loving prayer. God bless you, Gary. And God bless you, Susanne.

Eddie Savage-Weeks - July 21, 2021 at 12:21 PM

ER

“ I had the privilege of working with Gary for several years and admired his wealth of knowledge in Child Welfare and the field of Social Work. He was very encouraging to those of us who wanted to further our career and education. Gary had a positive impact on many, more than he may have known! My condolences to the family.

Emily Ropes - July 21, 2021 at 02:06 AM

SD

“ My heartfelt condolences to the Kupfer Family. I had the pleasure of meeting Gary while attending Fresno State. He had such an impact on the students he worked with and his vast experience and knowledge certainly helped shape the numerous social workers he taught over the years. May my condolences bring you comfort, and may my prayers ease the pain of this loss.

sharon diaz - July 20, 2021 at 11:58 AM

JG

“ Sending condolences to Gary’s family. I was lucky enough to get to know Gary as my graduate professor. He truly was passionate about serving children and families and I will never forget how amazing he was... may he rest..

Jaclyn Garcia - July 20, 2021 at 11:36 AM