

Amazing Ferret Friend Passes

Norm Stilson, who worked at the Greater Chicago Ferret Association for many years, died in early July.

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Earlier this month, the ferret community lost one of its members. Norm Stilson, 79, died from heart failure on July 5, 2008. His funeral took place on July 12 at the Zion Lutheran Church in Lyons, Ill. He is survived by his wife, Mary; three children, Jay, Jacqui and Jeffry; four grandchildren, Ben, Becky, Joey and Jenni; and two great-grandchildren, Scott and Carissa.

"Norm will be remembered as the director of the Greater Chicago Ferret Association for the majority of the 21 years it has been in existence," said Norine Barnes, current president of the GCFA. "He was known for his patience and compassion." Barnes said approximately 5,000 ferrets have passed through the GCFA, and Stilson took care of them all. "He had a special gift when it came to the ferrets," she said. "They would calm down when he held them. The ferrets could sense they were now in a safe place. His special skill was turning a scared biter ferret into one that trusted people. He was an amazing man."

Stilson was vice-president of the GCFA at the time of his death and held the title of president for many years, according to Barnes. He was retired from Brook Electric in Chicago, "But his other 'profession' was being the loving shelter 'dad' to all the ferrets in his charge and a great friend and mentor to all the volunteers at the shelter," Barnes said.

Ferrets Magazine honored Stilson as a Ferret Friend in its Nov/Dec 2007 issue.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made in Stilson's name to the Greater Chicago Ferret Association, P.O. Box 7093, Westchester, IL 60154-7093

Stilson touched many lives, and when Kim Sheldon of Alaska heard about his death, she sent us the following poem in his honor.

The Ferrets' Tale
Ferrets have a story to tell,
And if they could speak,
Would tell it quite well,
About a man who is their hero,
Works dusk 'til dawn and gets paid zero.
He's nursed their weak and fed their strong,
Created homes for those who couldn't belong,
Stopped death from knocking on some doors,
With healing love and meds and more.
He whispers secrets into their ears,
Stopping their biting and calming their fears,
And as Legend has the story go,
There aren't many ferrets that Norm doesn't know.