



Mr. Dean Norman Essig

March 13, 1961 - March 24, 2024

Dean Norman Essig, 63, of Homer, Illinois, died March 24, 2024, in Mobile, Alabama. He was born March 13, 1961, in Elgin, Illinois, to the late Alice (nee Rainey) and Norman Essig.

Dean was preceded in death by his wife, Sara; brother, Phillip Essig; sister, Nancie Marchetti; and by his parents.

He is survived by his children Rosalind Essig Fields (Kyle), Joseph Essig (Audra), and John Essig (Kendall); and two grandchildren, Arlow Essig and Cillian Essig.

Dean graduated from James B. Conant High School and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He served in the U.S. Army and in the Illinois National Guard.

A passionate military historian and designer, Dean built a successful wargame publishing business from the ground up with Sara. He created multiple game series with dozens of popular titles based on his meticulous research, design, rules and editing. The Gamers was based in Homer, Illinois, until its sale to Multi-Man Publishing in 2001.

Dean enjoyed spending time with family and pets, weightlifting, traveling to

Civil War battlefields, and taking walks in Homer. Over the years, he also helped to coach baseball pitchers, became a licensed pilot, was a Civil War reenactor, ran marathons, earned a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and built telescopes.

A celebration of life will be held from 9-11 a.m. April 20 at the Essig home in Homer, Illinois. His ashes will be interred in a private service.

Tribute Wall

GC

“ I was saddened to hear of Dean's passing. We were friends in high school, sharing a bench in Electronics class at Conant High School in Hoffman Estates. We both shared a love for the "Honeymooner's" TV show, and I can still see Dean's comment in my yearbook that used Jackie Gleason's line "How sweet it is!" RIP, my friend!

Gary Cannalte - May 29, 2024 at 12:10 AM

GS

“ I want to send deepest sympathy for your loss from the Stump Family. It has not been easy for you to lose your father so few years after your mother passing. But share the fond memories of your time with your dad and mom, so that you keep them alive in your hearts. My the good Lord Bless all of you, Joe John, and Rosiland and your families with his love and strength at this time.

God Bless

Aunt Gail and family

GAIL A STUMP - April 23, 2024 at 02:48 PM

JB

“ It was my privilege to work with Dean for over 25 years as a playtester. I worked on many of The Gamers early SCS and OCS designs. It was amazing to witness Dean’s incredibly quicksilver mind at work in the game design process, a process at which he was obviously a complete master. Just for example, he was able to see how changing a given rule in one part of the sequence of play could affect the game play several phases later in the play sequence. He was also a great guy and a wonderful ambassador for wargames. Often, when Dean and I were playtesting a design in the “hut” in Homer, the phone would ring and it would be a gamer who had a fairly routine question, one that could be answered relatively easily in the rulebook. It soon became clear what the caller really wanted, namely a chance to have an actual conversation with Dean Essig. My sympathies go out to his children. Dean will be mourned and deeply missed by many.

John Best - April 16, 2024 at 05:57 PM

CR

“ I used to get a kick out of Dean when he would answer his phone. "You rang?" in your best Lurch imitation. I have to admit I cannot recall customer service that ever reached the level of his company The Gamers (before the MMP days). I remember calling one time at 11pm (10 for him) asking him a question about Enemy at the Gates. Halfway through the 30 minute conversation I realized it was very late and apologized. He said, "Apologize for what?" A Veteran and maybe my favorite designer. I know he designed my favorite game, DAK. Dude, I will miss you. I hope they have "Burritos The Size Of Your Head" in Heaven.

Clinton Ray - April 08, 2024 at 09:21 AM

PK

“ I remember having spent a few days in Germany when Dean was visiting us at the Hexagon in Braunfels in the 2000s. He told a funny story about his thumbs which he had lost in an accident in his service, and we had a great time playing one of his games. I do not quite remember which one it was. It must've been an operational combat serious game. I miss him and I thank him for the fantastic time we had with his games and designs.

Philipp Klarmann - April 06, 2024 at 05:03 PM

JF

“ Some of my happiest gaming moments have been playing Dean's designs. He was an outstanding talent. My deepest condolences to his family who have been through so much recently. Jim F.

Jim Falkus - April 06, 2024 at 03:18 AM

GP

“ From the Homer-Cons, through the Collate Parties and LaBamba to giving him and Rosalind a place to lay their heads when Sara was here in the hospital it has been my pleasure to know Dean. Like so many of us in this 'niche hobby', I can't help but respect his expertise and his vision for advancing and enhancing our leisure time as he did for over 35 years. He's now with Sara where he has always wanted to be.

Gerry Palmer - April 05, 2024 at 08:44 PM

JP

“ I've met my best friends playing Mr. Esing games. My condolences to his family.

JOSE ISRAEL RODRIGUEZ PLANA - April 05, 2024 at 06:11 PM

JF

“ *Joan Fortuny lit a candle in memory of Mr. Dean Norman Essig*



Joan Fortuny - April 05, 2024 at 05:58 PM

MI

“ *His games were gateway for me into the world of wargaming and I remember how welcoming he was when I first entered online wargaming community.*

Michal - April 05, 2024 at 05:21 PM

JB

“ *Dean was a giant presence in the field of wargames. He had a warm presence in person I enjoyed.*

Jeff Beeler - April 05, 2024 at 05:08 PM

TT

“ *Very sincere condolences to John, Joe, and Rosalind. I thought I saw him walking in Homer about a week before. Your parents (and you kids) were very thoughtful to mine and sent me some much needed words of encouragement when I was deployed. I remember him coaching his sons. I especially respect his service as a fellow officer in the Guard. God bless you*

Tommy Tyler - April 05, 2024 at 03:31 PM

RL

“ Sorry to hear that Dean has passed. He was one of the best game designers out there and gave me tips when I contacted him for advice on a design I had been working on. I have all the Napoleonic and Civil War games he designed when he still ran the Gamers. I got to meet him in person once when he came to my hobby store to do a demo of the reissue of the Shiloh game. Great guy and great person.

Russ Lance - April 05, 2024 at 03:26 PM

LK

“ I am so sorry John, Rosalind, and Joe. Your parents were the best people. They were so positive and always willing to help,

Lynette Kohlbecker - April 05, 2024 at 12:56 PM



“ Dean was a giant among game designers, and it has been my pleasure and privilege to have interacted with him on several occasions, albeit online. He will be greatly missed. All the best to his friends and family.

Gregory Sapara - April 05, 2024 at 12:30 PM

PB

“ I had started playing and enjoying Dean's games in 2004 when I restarted in the hobby began purchasing his designs from MMP. When I read about his wife's cancer diagnosis, I started giving to the GoFund campaign, with my wife's approval. After our 3rd donation, he wrote me an email to thank me and ask me why the multiple donations - he was grateful and humble when I told him: his brilliance in game design was a gift and how else to say thank you? I never met him, but I was grateful for our small exchange and feel lucky to have chatted with him. A giant among men.

Philippe Bruneau - April 05, 2024 at 11:31 AM

PB

“ I am greatly saddened at Dean's passing. He was such a great friend, a super nice guy, and I always looked forward to seeing him when we were both able to attend conventions. I will miss him dearly. My condolences to all his family and friends. RIP my friend.

Peter Bartlett - April 05, 2024 at 10:02 AM

JM

“ Please accept my most sincere condolences. I never met your father, but was familiar with him thru the games he made and his online presence. While he certainly seemed like a nice, intelligent and friendly person, personally, I enjoyed countless hours of fun playing his fine, indeed award winning, games. For this alone he was special, being the great guy that made the fantastic games. And it easy to forget that he was as mortal as all of us; I expected him to make great games forever! So, you are left with memories and we all left with his games, ensuring he will not soon be forgotten. Thank you very much.

John Mundie - March 27, 2024 at 02:49 PM

CS

“ Dean was a truly original mind, and able to slice through a thicket of details to the essence of a matter. It wasn't always diplomatic, but you knew where you stood and what he thought of things. I knew him from the wargame world and similar backgrounds (we were both in the military). There is a large gaming community around the world who honor his memory and extend condolences to his family.

Chip Saltsmb - March 26, 2024 at 07:25 PM

DB

“ Dean and his passion and contributions to the wargame community were the nexus for many friendships formed by people all around the world. I cannot think of a more wonderful contribution than have brought so many strangers together in long lasting friendship.

Douglas Brunton - March 26, 2024 at 06:58 PM



“ Dean has been my model and inspiration in all the designs I have made till now and he will remain being my guide in the future. A great man, a great buddy and a better designer. Thanks for all you gave us. I will miss you. My prays are with you and Sarah, now you both will remain together forever. With love from Spain.

Oldfritz Bellica - March 26, 2024 at 06:11 PM

AM

“ Dean was a remarkable man, always available & ready to assist with any inquiry. I met Dean in Baltimore 1988, just as his line of fine GAMERS products were initially being released. Visited his home and met his wife Sarah in 1996. My love and prayers go out to the Essig Family.

Alan Murphy - March 26, 2024 at 05:21 PM