



## David Edward Ellefsen

February 3, 1947 - July 28, 2024

David Edward Ellefsen, 77, passed away on July 28th at 7:02 pm at the University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City. He was born on February 3rd, 1947, in Salt Lake City to Frank and Katherine (Winwood) Ellefsen.

David graduated from East High School, then obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from the University of Utah, a Master of Library Science degree from Emporia State University which resulted in his professional life as a librarian. He began his career as a page at the Salt Lake City Public Library and continued to work in many libraries across the United States, retiring from Great Basin College in Elko, NV where he loved interacting with the students. David also served in The National Guard for 6 years, where he made lifelong friends and special memories.

Everyone who spent time with David knew what he was passionate about. He was a talented basketball player-- a member of East High School's state championship basketball team in 1964. He had a lifelong passion for the wilderness, including backpacking, camping and white water rafting. Edward Abbey's "Desert Solitaire" was David's bible. Bob Dylan was David's musical north star. Golf became one of his loves in retirement as he shared this passion with his East High pals of 60 years.

He valued quality time with friends and family, meeting for lunch or just

stopping by. He traveled often to nearby destinations like his cabin in the Uinta mountains or San Diego to see his beloved daughter Sage, or Phoenix to see nephews and friends. Southern Utah was a favorite place for his entire life, where he hiked and explored canyons and took his visitors to see Delicate Arch. He drove across the USA many times to see others he cherished. David always went out of his way to show how much he cared about and loved the people in his life. He was such a personable guy to everyone he interacted with, from the hospital workers at the end of his life, to the Smith's Starbucks baristas for his white chocolate mocha every Sunday.

David loved to watch the nightly news with his signature cocktail duo, a Gin and Tonic and a Budweiser. He expanded into international travel after first seeing much of the USA, and hoped to go back to Japan, his most favorite spot with Sage someday. His legacy will forever live on, and he will continue to make all who loved him smile as they pass on stories about his one-of-a-kind self.

He is survived by Sage Ellefsen (daughter), Katie E. (Tom) Leech (Sister), Maureen Ellefsen (sister-in-law), Steven and Robert Ellefsen, Eric E. Leech (Nephews) and Kalyn (Grandniece), and many beloved friends and relatives.

He is preceded in death by Frank Ellefsen (father), Katherine Winwood Ellefsen (mother), and John Ellefsen (brother).

A memorial service will be scheduled for some time in 2025.

Thank you to all the medical professionals and staff at the University of Utah hospital and Huntsman Cancer Institute who gave him excellent care, and support to the family over many months. Each person who took the time to get to know him, laugh with him, and care for him will be remembered in our hearts forever.



# Tribute Wall

CO

“ To Dave’s family and friends, I’d like to let you know about the immense impact Dave had on my life and on my commitment to protecting wilderness and wildlife. I met Dave at Emporia State. I was a sophomore; Dave was the photography lab tech for my photography class. I was a total rookie. He was kind, encouraging and funny. Of course, the students and Dave chatted while waiting for the film (remember that?) to develop in the trays. At some point, the topic turned to the importance of nature. As a Kansas girl, I hadn’t yet encountered anyone with a deep love of wilderness like mine. I shared that my dream was to move to the mountains and protect Western wilderness. It won’t surprise any of you that Dave gave me a copy of Edward Abbey’s “Desert Solitaire.” I was blown away. I found a copy of “The Monkey Wrench Gang” and any Abbey works I could find. Abbey’s writing, conviction and intolerance for environmental degradation became my North Star. Fast forward a few years: I became a water rights lawyer, still in Kansas. My career focused mainly on trying to save the Ogallala Aquifer that underlies western Kansas. I am now the Director of the Kansas Water Office, the state agency in charge of water planning and policy. I still fight against relentless politics and greed, but Abbey drives me. Dave’s influence drives me. I often quote Abbey in presentations, which means Dave’s calm steady and determined presence is there, too. I’ve thought of him many times over the years. We were never more than friends, but I felt a deep kinship with Dave. (We also shared a love of Dylan music, which he seemed to find surprising as I was 12 years younger than him.) I just found out about Dave’s passing because I am now (June 10, 2025) in Salt Lake City for a conference and I entered his name on an internet search. His obituary hit me hard. Although I hadn’t seen him in many years, it was always a comfort, and a bit of a grounding, to know that he was in the world. He was a true gift. —Connie Crittenden Owen, Overland Park, KS (soon to retire and move to the West)

---

Connie Crittenden Owen - June 10, 2025 at 08:58 AM