

# Stephen Braun Bergren

June 20, 1944 - August 12, 2013



## Traveling On...

A Memorial Celebration  
October 24, 2013  
Stanford Memorial Church



"I can't think of a more wonderful thanksgiving for the life I have had than that everyone should be jolly at my funeral."

Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten



"Death smiles at us all. All a man can do is smile back."

Russell Crowe as Maximus in *The Gladiator*

"I have lived; I have completed now the course that fortune long ago allotted me."

Virgil, *The Aeneid Book IV*: 653

"You know, the ancient Egyptians had a beautiful belief about death. When their souls got to the entrance to heaven, the guards asked two questions... 'Have you found joy in your life?' 'Has your life brought joy to others?'"

Morgan Freeman in *The Bucket List*

"I sympathize afresh with the mighty Voltaire, who, when badgered on his deathbed and urged to renounce the devil, murmured that this was no time to be making enemies."

Christopher Hitchens



"Start by admitting from cradle to tomb,  
It isn't that long a stay.  
Life is a cabaret, old chum,  
Only a cabaret..."

Kander and Ebb, *Cabaret*

"You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough."

Mae West

"I've never been lost, but I was mighty turned around for three days once."

Daniel Boone



"There's only us. There's only this.  
Forget regret, or life is yours to miss.  
No other road. No other way.  
No day but today."

Jonathan Larson, *Rent*



"The way you hold your knife.  
The way we danced until three.  
The way you've changed my life.  
No, no - they can't take that away from me.  
No, they can't take that away from me."

The Gershwins

Steve was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, near the Braun family farm, to a Marine Corps family while his father was still serving in the Pacific Theatre, after surviving the sinking of the West Virginia at Pearl Harbor. Like most military families, they moved often, and Steve ended up graduating from Nicolet High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, after arriving in his junior year. He was elected Senior Class Vice President, President of the National Honor Society, was in the top 10% of the class academically, and was on the varsity basketball and swim teams. When the recruiter from Stanford arrived in the dead of winter, his slideshow featured Palm Drive in bright sunlight. Steve asked when the photo was taken. With the answer of “February,” he immediately asked for an application.

Steve was an Industrial Engineering major at Stanford, graduating in 1966, after spending a semester abroad at the Florence campus. This inspired his life-long love of Italy. Upon graduation, he joined the Peace Corps and was assigned to teach engineering at the Technological University of Pereira, Colombia, where they are still using the textbook he authored. He was fluent in Spanish and nearly flawless in Italian, adding immensely to his natural charm.

While in South America, rather than being drafted into the Army, he joined the Navy. He went to Officer Candidate School, served first at the Naval War College, and then on a patrol gunboat based in Guam and Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam. He returned to receive his Stanford MBA with the class of 1973.

His formal business career started with McKinsey & Co., where he spent almost four years on the road doing studies in Japan, Australia and Hot Springs, Arkansas. He then joined a McKinsey client, Four Phase Systems, and later moved to ITEL Container.

By this time, he had met Cristina on a blind date on January 16, 1978. They were married in San Francisco on January 17, 1981. As coincidence would have it, she was born in Florence, Italy, of an Italian American mother and a career Air Force father. They pooled their resources, quit their jobs and took an eight-month sabbatical in Europe, spending a majority of the time in their beloved Italy. Upon their return, Steve embarked on a career in commercial real estate, first with CPS, a full-service brokerage. In 1985, he started his own company, Real Estate Strategies (RES), where he advised tenants exclusively. He enjoyed ten years of owning his own business and working with great clients. In 1995, at the age of 51, Steve decided to take a break and see what other adventures life had to offer.

He had always loved motorcycles, but had a special place in his heart for his two Harley Davidsons. A great joy was the journey; he was an elaborate and precise planner of trips and was variously accompanied by a large number and range of companions — often the “Rolex Riders” — on tours of America, Australia, New Zealand, Morocco, Sicily, Italy, and the balance of Europe.

As the years flew by, Cristina’s work became her hobby and Steve’s hobbies became his work, and he found that the business of living large took up a lot of time. Whitewater kayaking the Salmon and Deschutes rivers, marathon running, marathon biking, traveling back to Colombia in 2008, and multiple trips with Cristina to Italy, France, Hawaii, Argentina, New York, Malibu, Las Vegas, New Orleans, Sydney, Switzerland... the list goes on. They were often accompanied on their travels by George, their happy and perfect dog, who is the 4<sup>th</sup> member of the Maltese dog chain of Corky, Ginger, and Freddy, all of whom brought them so much joy over their 35 years together.

Steve is survived by his wife, Cristina, and their precious dog, George; his beloved mother, Caroline “Carrie” Braun Bergren; his brother, Scott (Bama Rucker); his loving sister, Sue (Tim Budorick); Cristina’s brother, Ralph Morgan (Kelly) and their son Michael; Cristina’s sister, Gina Morgan; and his brother-in-law, Doug Kroft. He leaves Scott’s three daughters: Christine (James Orr) and their two sons; Casey (Dana White) and their three children; and Diana (Matt Fink) and their two children. He also leaves Sue and Tim’s children, John, Lauren, Kate, and Abby; his Aunt D.J. Turner; and many cousins.

## Order of Service

*Organist: Rodney Gehrke*

Welcome

Reverend Joanne Sanders  
Associate Dean for Religious Life, Stanford University

Family Memories

Scott Bergren, Brother and Lifelong Pal

Stanford Undergrad Years

Bob Larson, Friend since 1962

Navy Gunboat Days

Wade MacFie, Friend since 1970

“America the Beautiful”

*(sung by all, led by some...)*

Harley Davidson Adventures

Bill Mitchell, Friend since 1972

Fellow Problem Solver

Greg Young, Friend since 1979

Traveling the World

David Cruse, Friend since 2000

The Journey

Ralph Morgan, Brother-in-Law and Pal since 1978

Blessing and Dismissal

Reverend Joanne Sanders

## Interment and Scholarship

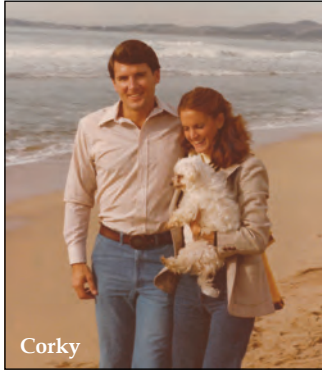
Steve passed away peacefully at home in the early hours of August 12<sup>th</sup>. He had been diagnosed 11 months earlier with advanced prostate cancer. We are grateful to all of the doctors, nurses, and staff at Stanford and UCSF for their excellent care, especially Drs. George A. Fisher, Eric J. Small, Steven L. Hancock, and Eric L. Weiss. Steve never lost his patriotic affection for America’s Armed Forces and will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery, joining his father, Col. Orville V. Bergren; his father’s best friend, Gen. Louis H. Wilson; and Cristina’s father and mother, Ralph and Frances Morgan— all World War II veterans.

Inspired by his Peace Corps experience and with the assistance of fellow Colombia Peace Corps volunteer Maureen Orth, we have established an engineering scholarship for a Colombian student at the leading technological university in Medellin, Colombia. Donations can be made by visiting [www.MarinaOrthFoundation.org](http://www.MarinaOrthFoundation.org) and clicking on the Donate Here for Steve Bergren Colombia Scholarship button, or by writing a check to the Marina Orth Foundation, 5185 MacArthur Blvd. NW #619, Washington D.C., 20016, specifying Bergren Scholarship.



## Rainbow Bridge

Just this side of Heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge.



When a dog dies that has been especially close to someone here, that dog goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of the dogs so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and they are warm and comfortable.

All the dogs who had been ill or old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The dogs are happy and content, except for one small thing – they each miss someone very special to them, who had to be left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one of them suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent, and his eager body begins to quiver. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, legs going faster and faster.



You have been spotted, and when you and your dog finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be separated again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress that beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your dog, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together...

See you on the other side... Love, George



## "I'll Be Seeing You"

Fain and Kahal



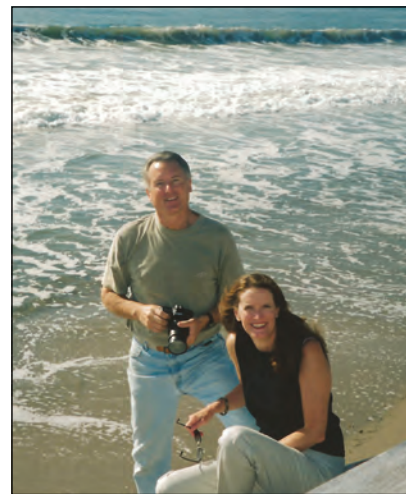
I'll be seeing you  
In all the old, familiar places  
That this heart of mine embraces  
All day through.

In that small cafe  
The park across the way  
The children's carousel  
The chestnut tree  
The wishing well.



I'll be seeing you  
In every lovely, summer's day  
And everything that's light and gay  
I'll always think of you that way.

I'll find you in the morning sun  
And when the night is new  
I'll be looking at the moon  
But I'll be seeing you.





Before another sunrise wakes me  
Before another night is gone  
I'll find out where this highway takes me  
You know I gotta travel on.

Left my troubles all behind me  
Back there when I climbed on board  
Jordan river's where you'll find me  
It's wide, but not too wide to ford.



And as I'm going along  
I carry with me  
Promises that can't go wrong  
As I travel on...  
My way

"On My Way"  
from the  
musical *Violet*



Steve was one of a kind. He was a good friend who wished his friends well and, as a result, he had a lot of them. He was always the best looking guy in the room and stunningly unaware of it. All of us who loved him will miss him every day of our lives, but know well that he was remarkably free of sentiment and self-pity. He would bid us to remember him happily and think of him enjoying the ultimate open road.

Travel on, my love.