

Steve “Gundy” Gunderson was a beloved husband, father, brother, uncle, grandfather, coach, teacher, mentor, volunteer, and friend. He passed away at Ava’s House on August 12, 2026, surrounded by the love of his family. Steve was born on August 30, 1951 in Sioux Falls, SD. He was raised in Baltic by his amazing parents, Orill and Mae, whose unwavering faith, kindness, and love became the foundation of the life he would live. Alongside his sister, Joan, their example shaped the man who would go on to touch countless lives with compassion, humility, humor, and an unwavering commitment to serving others. His faith wasn’t something he needed to talk about because he lived it every day. Inspired by the example of his parents, Steve quietly demonstrated God’s love through the way he treated people.

There was no greater joy in Steve’s life than his family. Being a husband, Dad and grandfather was his greatest purpose and proudest accomplishment. Nothing brought him more happiness than his family. He loved wholeheartedly, showed up faithfully and made each member of his family feel deeply valued and unconditionally loved. Whether offering wisdom, encouragement, a well-timed joke, or simply his presence, Steve was the steady foundation they could always count on. His family will forever cherish the laughter, traditions, stories, and unwavering love he shared so freely. The lessons he taught, the values he lived, and the example he set will continue to guide generations of his family.

While Steve was known for his accolades as a teacher, coach, and athletic director, those titles only tell part of his story. Long after the final buzzer sounded or the school year ended, former students and athletes still called him “Coach.” It wasn’t because of the classes or the games; it was because of the lives he touched. Steve also believed in giving back to his community. As a proud volunteer with the Baltic Fire Department and Baltic Lutheran Church, serving others wasn’t something he did but simply who he was.

Steve never forgot a name. Years, even decades later, he could still remember the people whose lives crossed his path. He celebrated their successes, stood beside them through life’s challenges, and never missed an opportunity to celebrate their milestones because he genuinely cared. He also never met a stranger. It became a running joke in the family that Deb never knew exactly when Steve would make it home. A quick trip to the post office, gas station or anywhere in town often turned into an hour because he had run into someone he knew or someone who simply needed a conversation. Steve never hurried those moments. If someone wanted to talk, he made time. He wasn’t just a good listener, he made people feel heard, valued and loved.

Some of Steve’s happiest moments were spent around a card table with lifelong friends or with new friends. The cards mattered far less than the conversations, laughter, and friendships that surrounded them. Steve also loved football. In fact, little did most people know he learned to type because it gave him an edge in managing his fantasy football team. Deb jokingly became the league commissioner, keeping trades in line and everyone honest while Steve always looked for his next winning move.

During Steve’s cancer journey, he and the family were humbled and overwhelmed by the countless prayers, messages, stories and photographs shared by so many people whose lives he had touched. Every memory served as a reminder that relationships are one of life’s greatest blessings.

Steve lived an extraordinary life marked by faith, kindness, humility, and service. Although our hearts are broken, we find peace in knowing that his influence will continue through every student he encouraged, every athlete he inspired, every friend he supported, every stranger he welcomed, and every member of his family whom he loved so deeply. Steve was truly one of a kind, and everyone fortunate enough to know him is better because of him.

To honor Steve’s memory, the family invites others to live as he did: be available for people, offer a helping hand, listen with compassion, and never miss an opportunity to tell those you love that you love them. These simple acts were the essence of Steve’s life and the gift he leaves behind.

Steve is survived by his wife, Deb Gunderson; daughters, Angie (Jon) Bosma and Joy (Cory) Mohling; sister, Joan (Paul) Lerdal; grandchildren, Cale, Cade, Logan and Brooke Mohling; nephews and niece, Tom (Janova) Lerdal, Keli (Bill) Lerdal and Jay (Morgan) Lerdal; and the family of Gary Thompson.

He was preceded in death by his father, Orill Gunderson; his mother, Mae Gunderson; his father-in-law, Charlie Berge; his mother-in-law, Jean Berge; and his special cousin, Gary Thompson.

If Steve had one final message for us, it would be the words of Jimmy V: “Don’t give up. Don’t ever give up.”



In Memory Of **Steve “Gundy” Gunderson**

August 30, 1951 ✠ August 12, 2026

Memorial Service

1:00 PM

Saturday, August 22, 2026

Baltic Lutheran Church
Baltic, South Dakota

Officiating

Rev. Randall Questad

A Message from Coach

Matt Burkhart

Reading of the Obituary

Bob Sittig

Organist

TBD

Congregational Hymns

“Amazing Grace”

“Borning Cry”

“How Great Thou Art”

Private Interment

East Nidaros
Lutheran Cemetery
Baltic, South Dakota



You can shed tears that he is gone

Or you can smile because he has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back

Or you can open your eyes and see all that he has left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see him

Or you can be full of what you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday

Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember him and only that he is gone

Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back

Or you can do what he would want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

There really are no words to adequately thank everyone for the love you've shown our family.

The calls, prayers, hugs, food, flowers, memorials, kind words, and stories about "Gundy" have meant more than you could ever know. Hearing how he touched your lives, and remembering the laughter, friendships, games, and good times has brought us so much comfort.

Thank you for loving him, for remembering him, and for being here to celebrate a life that meant so much to so many.

Rather than sending individual thank you cards, we hope you will accept this message as our personal thank you for every kindness shown to Steve and our family.

With all our love and gratitude,

The Family of Steve "Gundy" Gunderson



A Life Remembered

Steve "Gundy" Gunderson

August 30, 1951 ✠ August 12, 2026