

# In Loving Memory

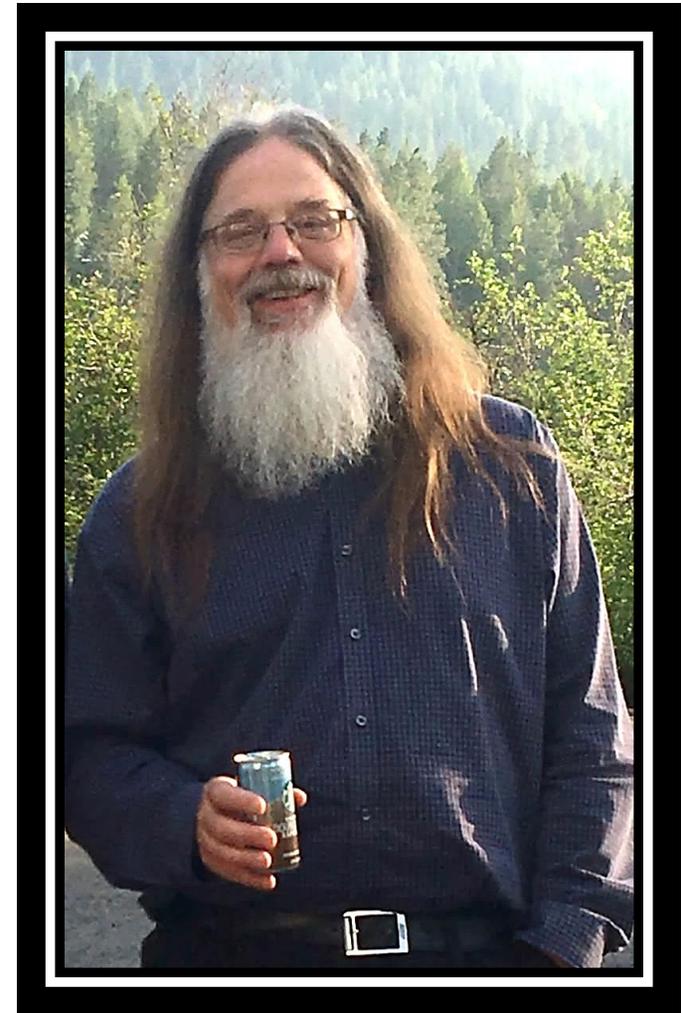


*Ron and Sheila's backyard garden in Minneapolis*

"The word will end most any day  
Well if it does, then that's okay  
'Cause I don't live here anyway  
I live down deep inside my head  
Where long ago I made my bed"  
from *Lonesome Friends of Science*, John Prine

"I think I'm an alright guy  
I just wanna live until I've gotta die  
I know I ain't perfect but God knows I try  
I think I'm an alright guy"  
from *Alright Guy*, Todd Snider

"I don't know if a little music ain't about  
the nicest thing a fellow can have."  
from *As I Lay Dying*, William Falukner



## Ronald Goeken

August 11, 1958 ~ February 10, 2026

In Loving Memory  
Ronald Goeken  
1958 ~ 2026

**Memorial Service**

10:00 a.m.

Saturday, February 21, 2026  
Goglin Funeral Home  
Scotland, South Dakota

**Gathering and Prelude Music**

“Memories of You”

“Round Midnight” by Thelonious Monk

**Processional**

**Welcome and Opening Words**

**Prayer**

**Opening Reading**

**Tribute/Life Story**

**Personal Tributes and Shared Memories**

**Moment of Quiet Reflection**

“I’ll See You in My Dreams” by Merle Travis

**Closing Words and Farewell**

**Recessional**

Ronald (Ron) Allen Goeken, 67, passed peacefully to the jazz stylings of Thelonious Monk in his home in Corsica, SD on February 10, 2026.

Ron was born on August 11, 1958 at Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton, SD to Robert (Bob) and Phyllis (Bierle) Goeken. He grew up on a farm near Scotland, SD, where he spent his time milking cows, reading a full set of encyclopedias, and practicing basketball, among other pursuits. After graduating from Scotland High School, he married Sheila (Conrad) Goeken in 1977. They moved to Brookings, SD to attend college. Soon after, their only child, daughter Laurie Marie Goeken was born in Brookings, SD.

After attaining his Bachelor of Arts degree in history from South Dakota State University, he moved with his family to Minneapolis, MN where he continued his education at the University of Minnesota, obtaining a Master of Arts degree and a PhD in History. He began working as a graduate research assistant starting in 1987. Ron spent his entire career in population research. He made significant contributions to the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) project at the University of MN, building historical census microdata used by researchers around the world. He also wrote extensively on U.S. Census data issues. As a Senior Research Scientist at the Institute for Social Research and Data Innovation (ISRDI), it was noted by his colleague and friend, Diana Magnuson, that he “was the guy who knew the data inside and out and was respected for his grasp of the thorny issues that made the data both vexing and glorious.” In an interview she did with Ron in 2016, Ron said this: “Numbers in general interest me ... I was always naturally inclined to either count things or identify discrepancies, inconsistencies, stuff like that. That’s just my personality.”

Beyond his career, Ron had many passions. He loved baseball, football, and other sports. He knew the stats as well as personal biographies of myriads of sports players and teams and was a fan of the South Dakota State Jackrabbits. He also had a love of gardening, growing varieties of tomatoes and peppers and making his own salsa. He loved visiting nurseries, especially Bergeson's in northern MN near brother Wayne Goeken's home. He also loved animals and had many pets over the years. His recent cat Merle will be rehomed with his granddaughter Rose Erenberg who also loves animals. Finally, he thoroughly enjoyed reading books and was an avid music lover and collector of records and CDs with over 3000 albums/CDs. He knew not only the music but the history behind each artist and song. He enjoyed going to live shows and listening to music of all genres including blues, jazz, country, hip-hop, funk, ska, and reggae.

In 2022, he moved from Minneapolis to Corsica, SD where he would regularly visit his mother Phyllis Goeken in Scotland, helping her with any chores, cooking steaks on the grill or watching a Jackrabbits game on TV. People say they always enjoyed talking with Ron, noting his wit, genuine nature and kindness.

Ron is survived by wife Sheila Goeken, daughter Laurie Goeken, granddaughter Rose Erenberg, mother Phyllis Goeken, sister Karen Brazelton, brother Wayne Goeken, sister Donna (Michael) Kirkpatrick, sister Joyce (Kerry) Frey and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his father Robert Goeken (and numerous pets).