



Gregg Lee Miller

April 11, 1955 - June 12, 2020

On Friday, June 12, 2020, Gregg Miller, loving husband and father of two children, passed away at age 65.

Gregg was born April 11, 1955 in Columbus, OH to Keith and Joann Miller. After graduating from Eastmoor High School, he received his bachelor's degree from Miami University in 1976. On June 13, 1981, Gregg married Sabrina Marie Burgess before later raising his two sons, Brent and Ryan.

Aside from his outdoor passions for fishing and golf, Gregg is best known for the tremendous impacts he had on the Columbus community as a teacher, coach, and mentor for over three and a half decades. He never met a student he couldn't reach, a player he couldn't coach, or a person he couldn't befriend. His purpose in life was to improve the lives of those he could, and he accomplished this through discipline, structure, and unwavering support and guidance for his student-athletes.

While he was a former Miami basketball player and then high school basketball coach, Gregg was tapped in the mid-80's as the successor to Brookhaven's head football coach, Gary Carter. His initial response to Coach Carter was, "...but I'm a basketball guy...?" The tone changed quickly as Gregg built one of the all-time perennial powerhouses, averaging nearly 8 wins a season for the next 17 years. With a 130-58 record (69.1) and 10 league championships, Gregg often said the only tarnish on his record was not eclipsing the 70 win percentage. As he put it, and always thinking beyond the obvious, "if you don't win it all, you always end the year with a loss." Seven of his fifty-eight losses came as a result of deep runs into the Ohio State Football Playoffs, threatening or outright decimating some of the best teams in the state.

Following his many years at Brookhaven, and later shorter stints at Independence, Walnut Ridge, and Gahanna, Gregg was able to strike a second time on the east side by taking over the reins at Mifflin. An often overlooked opponent, Coach turned the 1-9 Punchers into legitimate heavyweights by his third year, again reaching premier status with an 8-2 record. The playbook on the field had changed with the times, but the playbook off the

field remained the same. Discipline, structure, trust, respect, guidance, mentorship, brotherhood, and resilience were his go-to plays and the results spoke for themselves. In a recent Columbus Dispatch article, former players and opponents talk about his selflessness in promoting and helping uplift young men from all over the city, not just those with 'Bearcats' or 'Punchers' embroidered on their chests. Coach loved the city league, he loved football, and he loved watching his thousands of kids band together and succeed. His love for the city was rewarded in 2019 with his induction into the Central District Hall of Fame.

"If you take care of me, I'll take care of you!"

Maybe, the greatest quid-pro-quo agreement in the history of man. Gregg taught his players from day-one that they were required to buy-in to the program, respect each other, themselves, and their parents and teachers. He taught them that discipline, routine, and hard work was rewarded. For those that submitted to the process... whether they liked it, agreed with it, or could handle it... they were handed opportunities to leave their mark on a storied program. In exchange for their commitment, Coach promised his players unwavering support and guidance. He was their coach, their teacher, their mentor, their friend, and in many cases their father-figure. He taught them to be strong, resilient young men. He picked them up before practice, he dropped them off at night. He gave them beds in his home when they had no place else to go. He found state funding to feed them the meals they were missing when not at school or practice. He celebrated with them when they won and prayed with them when they lost. He travelled with them to college visits and spent years of his life hunched over a VCR tape-dubbing machine to hand-compile game clips for recruiters. He watched the successes of those that escaped their hardships, and mourned inconsolably with the families of those who passed before their time.

"Is it broken or bleeding? Then why are you crying."

It wasn't a question, it was a statement. Rhetorical. At first it sounds barbaric, insensitive, neglectful... but the message is there. Gregg didn't believe in self-pity or succumbing to adversity. His two sons Brent and Ryan were connected at his hip for every practice, game, or event that had anything to do with football or the Bearcats and learned at a young age what it would take to make it in this world. He let his lessons on the field, translate to life off it. Ryan, born early in October, attended his first home football game at 2 weeks old. His older son Brent, just three years old the next summer, would blow the whistle for Gregg to start sprints during two-a-days. Whether it was the climb toward 40 40's, or after-practice "Millers" for those caught wearing jewelry during practice or leaving their lockers unlocked, Brent and Ryan were always there watching (and learning) from the discipline Gregg was building in his players. And while Coach was working on scout

tapes in the office, or lining his gamefield by hand, Brent and Ryan had 65 big brothers and babysitters watching them run rampant between Karl and Maize roads. Gregg asked those around him to trust his process and to never give up; in exchange, he promised to never give up on them.

The unsung hero of Gregg's incredible journey was his wonderful wife, Sabrina. While you may not know it at first, Sabrina can spot a hold or block in the back faster than the line judge can get his flag out of his belt. Maybe it was the fact that she was required to watch Gregg, Brent, and / or Ryan coach, play, attend, or watch football on Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday every week for 35 years, but her selflessness and kind heart meant she never uttered a single complaint. Sabrina is a football mom, was a football wife, and made sure her sons and hundreds of 'adopted' sons felt her support day in and day out. For all the amazing things Gregg was able to accomplish, his loving wife was the foundation for all of it.

Gregg was preceded in death by his father Keith, and is survived by his mother Joann, brother Chris, wife Sabrina, sons Brent and Ryan, and the thousands of lives he touched as a coach, teacher, and friend. A private memorial service will be held on Friday June 19th, followed by an open celebration of his life at his local, Cornerstone Pub in Gahanna, throughout the evening. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Gregg's memory to the Simba Program, an affiliate of the Franklin County Child Services Agency which, for the past 32 years, has built character and provided critical guidance and mentorship for at-risk children and young men in the Columbus community. Please visit <https://childrenservices.franklincountyohio.gov/how-to-help/donor-opportunities.cfm> and click on the 'Children's Fund' donation link. Please add 'Simba Program' to the comment line when filling out the donor information.

Gregg and Sabrina would have celebrated their 39th anniversary the day after his passing.

Comments



“ This is Jean Garman, and I would like to extend my sincere sympathy to Sabrina and the boys. As a woman who just lost her husband, I know the emptiness and heartbreak that goes with that. Sabrina, as you remember, my Greg was in your wedding, and I have a distinct memory of that night. The police stopped us as we were driving home, and when Greg stepped out wearing that Mr. Clean tuxedo, the policeman told him that if I could drive home, he was not going to ruin the night for us. I got behind the wheel of Greg's stick shift truck, and immediately stalled it out. Thankfully, we got home OK. Your Gregg hung out at our house before he met you, Sabrina, and he watched us struggle with our first two sons, and I bet that he learned a lot from us of what not to do. Finally, as a true message from God, two days ago, I was cleaning out a drawer of Greg's, and he saved the thank you note that you sent us from your wedding.

Jean Garman - June 23, 2020 at 12:52 PM



“ Gregg was one of the greatest, honest, nicest & most sincere Man that I have ever met. I met him not long after he retired from coaching at Brookhaven. He left the coaching job of his life to be close to his Son's at Gahanna HS. He knew what was most important. The lives he has touched is in the thousands. Players, coaches, students and friends, he never had an enemy. Always promoting everyone for their next adventure in life. He was a Father to a lot of his players and he loved every one of them. We talked many nights about all of the relationships that he had with his players and how proud he was that they had succeeded. I am personally crushed with this loss. Becca and I both loved him deeply!!
Randy Maxwell

Randy Maxwell - June 18, 2020 at 09:00 PM



“ Mr. Miller, Gregg, pretty much taught me everything I know about math. Unfortunately, I don't remember much about that... but I do remember getting to talk to him and reminisce a little bit when he would visit me at my work, the emergency department. I would always start the conversation with "Do you remember me"? And he would always say "yes".

Alisa Urban - June 18, 2020 at 08:13 PM



“ Coaching football under Gregg , he taught me three fundamental values that every player needed in order to have a chance to succeed in life. Those were STRUCTURE, DIRECTION and RESPONSIBILITY! Gregg talked all the time about team building , setting aside your differences with other players for the betterment of the team. Showing them how to have organization in there life , setting aside time for family, study and practice in that order and sticking to it, that was how you build for the future. Gregg always had a team meeting at the beginning of the year giving direction on what the players were there to accomplish. League championship first, playoffs second. Gregg showed the players how to achieve these goals and what it would take to get there. Gregg always talked about responsibility for your actions and there were consequences for making the wrong decisions. At the same time if he felt a player could handle it, he let them act independently and make decisions for the team.

As coaches grow older, we pause for a moment and think back, we ask ourselves this question : DID WE DO ENOUGH! do enough to help our players succeed , to help them live distinguish lives and help others not as fortunate as themselves. Did we instill STRUCTURE, DIRECTION and RESPONSIBILITY in there lives.

Sabrina, Brent, Ryan and relatives and friends of Gregg : GREGG DID ENOUGH! He changed young lives forever, young lives who only had the street life to look forward to until Gregg came along and touched their lives.

Gary Evans

GARY EVANS - June 18, 2020 at 02:18 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jeremy Warren - June 18, 2020 at 09:43 AM



“ The Miller family and the Burch family have had a bond for all of our lives. Time and distance can never shake our care or our many fond memories of shared times and mutual support.

Jeremy Warren - June 18, 2020 at 09:49 AM



“ I will miss him at track meets or just around a stadium. I met him at Brookhaven in the early 80s. I also saw him at Mifflin HS when I was subbing there after my “retirement”. I don’t get it.

carl volpe - June 27, 2020 at 12:07 AM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Gregg Lee Miller.



June 18, 2020 at 09:40 AM



“ I haven't seen Gregg since we shared carefree days at Miami. I'm so sad our paths never crossed again. Reading of all the people he touched and his long list of accomplishments doesn't surprise me all these years later. You can tell a truly good person if you're lucky enough to meet one. My sincere sympathy.

Carol Miller Smith - June 17, 2020 at 07:01 PM



“ he was like a little brother to me - loved and respected by everyone - a guard on our league-winning johnson park bluedevils basketball team who went on to be the coach at brookhaven high school, sending many boys to the ohio state football program. never had a bad word for anyone and i can't recall anything ever said that was negative about him either. he always called me "O" and i loved that - hey "O", what's up "O", like that. i remember hanging out at the "F" (burger boy food-o-rama) with him after eastmoor high school football and basketball games - he was a nice guy and the ultimate "wing man" - who else would you rather have by your side than gregg miller? i also remember his parties at his parents house in his basement - everyone wanted to be there - and where everyone learned how to make-out, spin-the-bottle, pass-the-orange and most of all acey-deucey card games, high-pot-low-pot. kraker always won them, but we had a great time watching the cards flip over and everyone yelling when an ace showed up. the last time saw him was when we hung out at the oktoberfest in german village - i can only wish the we had hung out more in our later years. rest in peace, my man, you don't have to deal with the B.S. in life anymore!

Rick Ohanian - June 17, 2020 at 07:01 PM



“ Dear Sabrina & Family,
I knew Gregg best from 7th grade at Johnson Park thru Eastmoor Sr, participating in Vocal Music and sports. In ninth grade JP won the City Championship in basketball, and "cheer-led him thru all the wins and celebration parties hosted by Mr & Mrs Miller's at their home, they loved being part of it all. I see now where he was raised so beautifully!
I have many photos of Gregg "photobombing" lol.
He left us much too early but is in sports heaven. Memory Eternal!



Andrea Andrioff - June 17, 2020 at 06:43 PM



“ To Sabrina and family, so sorry to hear of your loss. May it help to know others are sending our heartfelt thoughts and prayers to you.
God bless you and your sons.

Remembering you from a time past, your coworker,
Barbara Davids

Barbara Davids - June 17, 2020 at 06:15 PM



“ Gregg was was a true role model for coaches and players alike. He always went the extra mile to help, to listen, to advise, and to encourage others. He will be missed by the coaching fraternity and the student athletes he mentored over the years. Gregg was completely unselfish and a friend to everyone. When it came to values such as dedication, discipline, teamwork, or commitment, Gregg more than taught them, he lived them. A great man that will be sorely missed.

Bill Conley

Bill Conley - June 17, 2020 at 01:16 PM



“ Sabrina, Brent and Ryan, we are so sorry for your loss. We have many fond memories of Greg from family events over the years. Love to you all, Eamonn, Natalie, Declan & Finn Rooney

Natalie Rooney - June 17, 2020 at 11:20 AM



“ I had a wonderful 5 years coaching for Gregg at Brookhaven. We had a great staff with Gregg, Steve Ayers, Gary Evans, Dave Anthony, Gerald Johnson, Chuck Andrick, Steve Sheets and of course a Great Defensive Coordinator Marv Whiting. Gregg was so dedicated the the students and players from Brookhaven and always pushing them to not just be better players but to be better people. In an environment where sports were underfunded and most of the players had many needs Gregg built a first class program and treated the players as family. He worked tirelessly to try to get his players recognized by colleges so they might get an education to help them succeed in life. Gregg certainly belongs in the OSHAA football coaching Hall of fame! Rest in Peace Gregg.

My deepest sympathy to Sabrina, Brent and Ryan!

James Dupriest - June 17, 2020 at 10:12 AM



“ Jim Boling lit a candle in memory of Gregg Lee Miller



Jim Boling - June 17, 2020 at 06:25 AM



“ Gregg will be sorely missed not only because he was such a great friend, coach, and teacher ... but the values he stood for in life. Godspeed Coach!

Jim Boling - June 17, 2020 at 06:29 AM



“ Pamela Golatt lit a candle in memory of Gregg Lee Miller



Pamela Golatt - June 17, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Derrick Pope #12 Mifflin Puncher, sends his sincerest condolences to Coach Miller and his family. When I told Derrick that Coach Miller passed, he got silent but wanted me to be sure to let his sons and wife know that you all were in his thoughts and prayers. Respectfully in love, Angela Pope, Derrick Pope and family. Mifflin Punchers C/O 2013

p.s. Mom was at every game and their girlfriends too.

Angela Pope - June 16, 2020 at 11:42 PM



“ Sharon Abraham lit a candle in memory of Gregg Lee Miller



sharon Abraham - June 16, 2020 at 09:40 PM



“ Derrick Pope #12 Mifflin Puncher, sends his sincerest condolences to Coach Miller and his family. When I told Derrick that Coach Miller passed, he got silent but wanted me to be sure to let his sons and wife know that you all were in his thoughts and prayers. Respectfully in love, Angela Pope, Derrick Pope and family. Mifflin Punchers C/O 2013

p.s. Mom was at every game and their girlfriends too.

Angela Pope - June 16, 2020 at 11:37 PM



“ Thank you, Coach Miller for standing up for me. Supporting, guiding, and willing to encourage me on to brighter days. I have passed on the knowledge to my players and youth I serve each day. My Family's condolences go to the Miller's as they love each other through this trying time. - Joe Dixon II

Joe L. Dixon II - June 16, 2020 at 09:26 PM



“ John Skip Jones lit a candle in memory of Gregg Lee Miller



John Skip Jones - June 16, 2020 at 08:51 PM



“ Greg was by all accounts a wonderful son, father, husband and friend. He gave of himself to all of us even in difficult times. Although his health began to change several years ago, he never felt sorry for himself and vowed more than once to get better.

He was an inspiration to those of us who walked with him during this period. He will be sadly missed.

My condolences to his wonderful wife Sabrina and his loving family.

Jim Soldano

Jim Soldano - June 16, 2020 at 08:12 PM



“ It was indeed an honor in knowing Gregg during my childhood years. His parents were like our second parents to me and my brothers. My fondest memory was accompanying Gregg on the piano while he sang “He” at Christ United Methodist church in Baltimore. He will be missed by family and friends.

Vicki Harkless Thomas - June 16, 2020 at 06:38 PM



“ Aunt Sabrina, Brent, Ryan, Your Dad, my uncle, lived a full life, leading and inspiring hundreds of young men and raising two incredible boys. Uncle Gregg was always around when I was growing up. I will always remember sitting in the box at Clipper's Stadium during the City Playoffs watching him Coach, swapping stories about ole Miami and all of his incredible stories (some which may be slightly exaggerated), from football to fishing to proper consumption of Jack Daniels.

Uncle Gregg we will miss you and wish we could be there with the rest of the family as we honor his life. - Love, Jeremiah, Christi, Beck, Mary Brynn, Briar and Bennett

Jeremiah Burgess - June 16, 2020 at 06:06 PM



“ It was an honor to know Gregg and be included in the Miller family. They all took me in and made me one of their own - we had so many wonderful dinners, holidays and birthday celebrations. Sabrina, JoAnn, Brent, Ryan and Chris - I love you all. I am hurting along with you and praying for your hearts to heal. Gregg, I will see you again.

Sue Tinstman - June 16, 2020 at 05:02 PM



“ What an adventure, my dear friend! You impacted the lives of hundreds of players, coaches and friends from everyday life. A Hall of Fame football coach, but even more. You lived life with such an extreme passion for your family, your players, your coaches and your friends. Even though you left us way too soon, your legacy lives through your wonderful family -- and those you coached; many of whom have played professionally and are now coaching and mentoring the next generation. Your role on earth was to make a difference. And that you did. We talked last Wednesday night. You were upbeat and hopeful you'd soon have therapy for walking and getting around with ease. Less than 48 hours later, you are called home. Rest in peace, my dear friend. While we grieve for ourselves, you are in a much better place with no pain and no suffering, reunited with those loved ones who have preceded us to Heaven. You didn't get to enjoy retirement much, Gregg, but, we're sure your eternal life is fantastic!! God Bless....

George Lehner (and Leslie)

George Lehner - June 16, 2020 at 01:23 PM



“ Mr.Miller was my Algebra Teacher at Eastmoor.He was and will be one of my Favorite teachers.We are also related by marriage of my extended family.Prayers and Hugs for his entire family..RIP Mr.Miller...

Robin Urban Smith - June 16, 2020 at 01:21 PM



“ To the extended Miller family

On behalf of the students, faculty, administration and alumni of Saint Francis DeSales High School please accept our deepest condolences on the loss of this incredible man.

One of the greatest measures of a man is the impact that they have on the world through the love they have shared with their family and friends. In this regard Coach Miller was blessed beyond measure. Coach Miller was the true definition of a Servant-Leader, his life lessons extended well beyond the Football field. The young people that he Coached and Taught continue to use his lessons to make our community and world a better place.

Thank you his wife and children for sharing Coach Miller to the thousands of young people he worked with. Please know that the Saint Francis DeSales High School community holds the Miller Family and who considered Coach Miller a friend and mentor in our prayers.

May the Angels lead him to paradise and may perpetual light shine upon him

Peace and God's Blessings
Dan Garrick
Principal
Saint Francis DeSales High School

Dan Garrick - June 16, 2020 at 08:46 AM



“ Members of the Miller Family,
Gregg was a great mentor to hundreds of high school boys in
Central Ohio. We are all indebted to him. Rev. Ron & Mary Frances Hooker
He was an outstanding coach....



Ronald Hooker - June 16, 2020 at 08:15 AM



“ Ronald Hooker lit a candle in memory of Gregg Lee Miller



Ronald Hooker - June 16, 2020 at 08:11 AM



“ Robin Yuenger lit a candle in memory of Gregg Lee Miller



Robin Yuenger - June 15, 2020 at 10:52 PM



“ Selena Mattison lit a candle in memory of Gregg Lee Miller



Selena Mattison - June 15, 2020 at 10:00 PM



“ When Head Football Coach Gary Carter left Brookhaven HS to coach at his alma mater Walnut Ridge HS Principal Russ Friend named Gregg as his replacement. And a dynasty was born! From 1986 to 2002 Gregg lead “The Haven” to 10 Columbus City League champions and multiple Ohio District and Regional Championships as well as 2 Ohio HS State Semifinals appearances. Gregg influenced and touched the lives of scores of young men and young coaches and was respected across the state of Ohio. He will go down in Ohio HS Football history as a great coach and mentor to many.

God’s blessings upon Gregg and his family.
Marv Whiting and family

Marv Whiting - June 15, 2020 at 08:49 PM



“ Gregg was such a sweet and caring man. I knew him at eastmoor and he was always quiet but had a great sense of humor. My maiden name was Miller. Our family knew Gregg’s family very nice people. I was so sad to hear of his passing and please know you are all in my prayers Debbie Devlin

Debbie Devlin - June 15, 2020 at 05:01 PM



“ So many great memories of our youth. Our families were in Euchre Club and had many outings together.
Wonderful family, wonderful memories.
Deepest sympathy and love to Gregg's family and friends.

Lynette Fenstermaker Walter - June 15, 2020 at 10:23 AM