



Sam David Fullerton

March 10, 1949 - January 29, 2025

Sammy “Sam” Fullerton, age 75, of Plymouth, passed away on January 29, 2025. Born on March 10, 1949, in Steele, Missouri, to Frances Sue Fullerton, Sam’s life was one of passion, curiosity, and dedication to both his profession and the people he loved.

Sam attended Eastern High School in Memphis, Tennessee, before proudly enlisting in the United States Army in 1966. During his service, he earned his GED and later achieved a Bachelor’s in Business Administration and a Master’s in Science from Memphis State University. He continued his academic pursuits at Michigan State University, where he studied for his Ph.D. Sam served his country with honor from 1966 to 1975, reaching the rank of Specialist 4.

Following his military service, Sam built a distinguished career in academia, becoming a respected Professor of Sports Marketing at Eastern Michigan University until his retirement in 2019. His expertise and enthusiasm for research were unparalleled—he authored over 200 marketing publications and earned 22 Best Paper awards. He was also the author of the Gold Standard sports marketing textbooks. Sam had an innate ability to generate research ideas from casual conversations, always thinking ahead to the next great project. He organized more than 50 sports marketing trips, bringing students and colleagues to Detroit Red Wings, Tigers, and Cleveland

Cavaliers games, sharing his love for sports in an engaging and educational way.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Sam lived life with boundless enthusiasm. A true sports fan, he relished watching great teams and rivalries. He was equally passionate about theater, always joking about securing front-row center seats for the best experience. An avid bowler, he proudly achieved three perfect 300 games. His love of travel took him across the globe, with Australia holding a special place in his heart—he visited 15 times, along with trips to New Zealand and South Africa. Everywhere he went, he made lifelong friends, forming connections that spanned continents.

Sam also had a deep devotion to animals, particularly his beloved cats. He never gave up on them, even famously rescuing his cat, Beamer, after he had been missing for 54 days.

Sam will be dearly missed by his beloved life companion, Sandra “Sandy” Edwards; his children, Christina (Dan) Adam, Cortney (Erik) Stancato, and Nicholas Edwards. He was a proud and loving grandfather to Jacob, Logan, Connor, Ellie, and Luke. He is also survived by his sibling, Rodney Fullerton (Jeri Edge); his nephew and niece, Greg (Michiyo) Fullerton, Trish (Brett) Allison, and great nephew Mark Fullerton; as well as many cherished cousins, friends and ex-wife, Cynthia Fullerton. He was preceded in death by his mother, Frances Sue, and his sister-in-law, Kathleen.

In honor of Sam’s love for animals, memorial contributions in lieu of flowers may be made to Happy Hearts Feline Rescue, 10905 East Pleasant Lake Road, Manchester, MI 48158.

Visitation will take place on Monday, February 3, from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, 46401 Ann Arbor Road West (between

Sheldon and Beck) in Plymouth. A funeral service will be held at the same location on Tuesday, February 4, at 10:00 AM.

Sam's legacy will live on through his family, his contributions to sports marketing, and the many lives he touched. As he often said, "That would make a good paper."

To share a memory, please use the share a memory tab on this webpage.

Cemetery Details

St. Hedwig Cemetery

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 3. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenh.com

Funeral Service

FEB 4. 10:00 AM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenh.com

Tribute Wall

LW

“ *Happy times University of Michigan Yost Arena !*



Lisa Warren - May 19, 2025 at 11:58 PM

SD

“ *I'm so sorry to hear of Sam's passing. He was a true friend to my parents, especially my father. Sam and my father were business partners and travel buddies. My mother has told me stories about how how Sam would always know when my father needed his insulin and looked out for him when they traveled together for business. The world has lost a good man. Let's follow in his footsteps.*

Stacy Doney - March 07, 2025 at 12:32 PM

“ Hello Friends and Family of Sam Fullerton...

Let me begin by saying how deeply saddened I am by Sam's passing for many, many reasons.

I first met Sam when we started our Ph.D. program together in 1979 at MSU. We labored together through the doctoral course work and also taught very large lectures as GAs during that time. In our informal moments we spent many fun times, recovering from the drama of our Ph.D. programs, at Coral Gables and Harrison Roadhouse in East Lansing.

We both joined the EMU marketing department in September 1982 where we were referred to as "Mutt and Jeff" (I was Mutt) by the senior faculty in the department. We shared an office in Pray-Harrold until the COB moved to the Owen building in 1991, where we finally acquired our own offices.

Throughout our time as colleagues in the department we collaborated on consulting work, and on several research and publishing projects, One of Sam's favorites was an article we published in the Sports Marketing Quarterly (SMQ) entitled the Four Domains of Sports Marketing. Since its publishing, it has been widely cited, and Sam was fond of keeping track of the latest citation, intercepting me on the way to class, or sending me email messages to let me know about the ever growing list of citations.

If there was ever a professorial exemplar, Sam was it. He developed the sports marketing program at EMU and authored the leading text in the field. His classes were always packed with eager students and his lectures were filled with the latest sports anecdotes to provide the color commentary that kept the students engaged and wanting more. His sports knowledge, along with his accommodating personality and generous nature were fundamental to the development of the many contacts he nurtured in the sports marketing world. These he successfully leveraged into trips and

internships for many students over the years creating lasting educational value and vivid memories for all involved.

Beyond our academic careers, Sam and I shared many interests including muscle cars, theater, "Oldies but Goodies" music and occasionally a golf or bowling outing. I don't think I ever knew anybody else with a similar encyclopedic memory of song lyrics like Sam. He literally knew the lyrics to all the songs from the 60's and 70's. And, I will never forget the golf game when there was a "cloud burst" right as we reached the ninth hole. The rain came down so hard that the green was submerged under several inches of water-- but that didn't keep us from putting in, even though the ball only moved half a foot or so with each whack. Needless to say we bogeyed by way more than one stroke. Naturally we retired to the club house to diagnose the situation.

I will truly miss this wonderful man, colleague and friend in so many ways. He brightened my life with his humor, comradeship and humanity. Rest in peace my dear friend.

*Russ Merz
Professor of Marketing
Eastern Michigan University*

Russ Merz - February 03, 2025 at 08:01 PM

JH

“*I only met Sam a handful of times; he would come to Tigers games with Ray Dong, and I would catch up with them when they came together. Sam joined Ray and I for a meal every once in a while as well. He was a man of strength and kindness, and he was kind enough to give me one of his books. I keep it on my desk in memory of him. May his memory be a blessing to all that knew him.*”

Jonah Hirsch - February 03, 2025 at 04:31 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sam David Fullerton.

February 03, 2025 at 05:53 AM



“ Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sam David Fullerton.



February 03, 2025 at 05:53 AM



“ We always enjoyed Sam’s visits to New Zealand (University of Waikato).
It was always fun to run into him at academic conferences. He must have been exhausted from being enthusiastic with everyone who loved him.
Sam is the epitome of “a gentleman and a scholar” and also “a friend”.

Carolyn Costley - February 03, 2025 at 02:38 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Sam David Fullerton.

February 02, 2025 at 03:12 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Sam David Fullerton.



February 02, 2025 at 03:12 PM



“ *Alain and Celine* planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sam David Fullerton.

Alain and Celine - February 01, 2025 at 09:23 PM



“ *Alain and Celine* purchased the *Beautiful Dreams* for the family of Sam David Fullerton.



Alain and Celine - February 01, 2025 at 09:23 PM



“ *Sam,*
You were one of a kind..a gentle giant with a heart of gold..we enjoyed spending time with you and Sandy, and all the memories we made.. you made the world a better place, by being in it...always such a positive person, who fought so hard to win the battle..you will be truly missed by whoever's life you touched...may you rest in peace....
Always
George and Shirley

George and Shirley - February 01, 2025 at 07:42 PM

RB

“Gonna miss you in so many ways Sam, not the least of which will be your uniquely laconic sense of humour on the golf course. But don't worry, I'm well placed to finish that book we discussed: the one that'll provide golfers everywhere with the ultimate collection of unlikely (yet vaguely believable) "ready-made" excuses for not having hit the perfect shot! RIP bud. (From Roger Brooksbank...and posted by me on behalf of all your New Zealand friends, University of Waikato colleagues, and all your NZ golfing buddies).

Roger Brooksbank - February 01, 2025 at 06:26 PM

MA

“Mike, Debi, Ali, and Nick Adam purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Sam David Fullerton.



Mike, Debi, Ali, and Nick Adam - February 01, 2025 at 05:34 PM