



## Mr. Stephen P. Dessereau

December 9, 1954 - December 17, 2020

Mr. Stephen P. Dessereau, of Albany, NY, passed away on Thursday, December 17, 2020, just days after his 66th birthday. Born in Pittsfield, MA, on December 9, 1954, the son of the late John Dessereau and Dolores Holmberg Dessereau, he graduated from Pittsfield High School in 1972. Stephen later attended Berkshire Community College, where he earned his associate degree in Fine Arts. He was also a graduate of the Arthur Murray School of Dance.

Steve bravely followed his dreams and passion for dance through teaching. He opened his own dance studio and for nearly 25 years inspired his hundreds of students to dance with as much joy and passion as he did. Steve was the proud owner of Steve's School of Dance in Albany and was a member of the Berkshire Chapter of USA Dance.

Among many things, Steve very much enjoyed art, traveling, spending time with family and friends and was a voracious reader. Steve was noted by his students for the music that they had often never heard before, but which quickly became favorites. Steve always had a smile on hand and was quick to laugh. He had a generous, loving and kind spirit that inspired those who knew him to love life as much as he did. Steve touched many lives, which was evident in the outpouring of love and support his students gave to him when he became too ill to teach.

Steve's family would like to express their deepest gratitude for his students and others in the dance community for their exceptional love and support over

the past year.

Steve was preceded in death by his father, the late John "Jack" Dessereau. He is survived by his beloved mother, Dolores as well as his brothers, Edward Dessereau (Ann), Michael Dessereau and James Dessereau, his niece Carrie (Chris), and his nephews Matthew (Alicia), Cole, Ray, and Jack and his great nieces, Cameron, Maisie, and Alabama.

Funeral Notice: Funeral services for Mr. Stephen P. Dessereau will be private. However, the family will hold a memorial for Steve later in the upcoming year.

# Cemetery Details

## **St. Joseph Cemetery**

222 Peck's Rd.  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

# Tribute Wall



“ I'm sorry, I just saw Steve's obituary. I had contacted him some years back to see how he was doing and he told me about his dance studio. He and I went steady in the mid-1970s. We went dancing most nights and he invited me to Christmas dinner with his family and Midnight Mass. His family was aghast when his grandmother gave me a gift of homemade Christmas cookies in a ham tin. I was thrilled at receiving my own container of cookies, but his family was embarrassed because I am Jewish and the cookies were in the ham tin. It didn't bother me at all! I'm so sorry about his passing and if someone can contact me and let me know what happened, I'd appreciate it. Sincerely, Lois Kitmacher Karhinen: lois roselyn1@yahoo.com

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**Lois Roselyn** - December 27, 2023 at 08:18 PM

FA

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*Dear Desserau Family,*

*I only met Steve during his last few years of teaching dance unfortunately and will be forever grateful for having the privilege of getting to know him a little and being one of his many students. Learning how to dance was not easy for me, but the fact that Steve never gave up on me resulted in me not giving up on myself. I loved his sense of humor and his underlying kindness, and what a wonderful dancer (and dresser) he was-it was a pleasure to dance with him.*

*He didn't live far from me and I asked him more than once if I could do anything for him, but he always told me that he was covered. I have been worrying and wondering about him for a number of months, and now I know. I am so sorry for your loss and the loss to two dance communities. I miss him and will never forget him.*

*Florence (Renzie) Abrams*

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**Florence Abrams** - February 18, 2021 at 04:55 PM

FF

“ *In remembering Steve, we recall the devotion he brought to every one of our classes. He took teaching very seriously, keeping a careful record of what dance moves he had taught us and helping us to build on what we knew, all the while sharing his love of ballroom dancing. And he always lightened the mood with a humorous story or two to put us at ease. We also remember Steve as truly talented, natural-born dancer. He was in a class of his own, and we grieve his loss.*

*Louise and Frank Farkas, Pittsfield*

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**Frank and Louise Farkas** - January 07, 2021 at 08:35 PM

TP

“ It hurts right now, realizing the loss of this kind, spirited, humorous, gentle soul. Remembering him floating around a dance floor, or struggling to lead the strongest of men through a lesson ... makes us smile. We can still hear him remind us/ quiz us on his “3 rules” and his voice in our heads is now comforting. And picture him telling his jokes, and always laughing louder than us! Steve could shatter the macho in any man ... his male students LOVED dancing and learning from him! He wanted us to appreciate dancing and advance our skills over time - and no question we all did - but he stressed the importance to having it be fun. Steve made sure we were having fun. We will miss all this and more about this gifted man, and he would certainly want us to never stop dancing, so every dance step we take will forever be a tribute to Steve. Wishing Steve eternal peace, and comfort to his family knowing how loved he is by so many.  
Very sincerely,  
Susan and Bruce Pivero

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the Piveros - January 05, 2021 at 05:16 PM

LM

“ Leta and I are so thankful to have known and been students of Steve for all these years. We first started taking lessons from Steve in 1998 when he gave introductory Ballroom lessons in Dalton. I figured that I would appease Leta by attending one lesson, I had already tried line dancing and didn't like it. Once that first lesson got going, Steve had us all laughing with his wit, humor and jokes. At that point we were both hooked and Leta and I were determined to learn how to dance. Steve always made it fun, stressing the importance of 'social' dancing versus training for competition. He was also a proponent of the "leading and following" technique as opposed to choreography. He encouraged us all to attend the Pittsfield and Albany dances that were held often. Between the group lessons themselves and the dances, we made many life long friends. As others have said, it was also a perfect thing for us to do as a couple. No matter what mood we were in before a dance lesson, we always ended up smiling and laughing together because of Steve. Many people can do different things to have an influence on society and others; but the positivity and joy that Steve created in the community through Ballroom dancing, over these decades, has radiated outward and will continue to have an effect for years to come. Thank you, Steve, for bringing joy and dance into all of our lives. You were taken from us much too soon but we will always be grateful to have been your friend.

*Mike and Leta Majchrowski*

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**Leta and Mike Majchrowski** - January 03, 2021 at 11:23 AM

RS

“ *To the Dessereau Family  
Stan and I truly miss Steve. He taught us ballroom for 14 years and we seldom missed our weekly lessons as he was knowledgable, fun, and a terrific dancer. Each lesson began with a fun-loving remark or two followed by comments on how we did with a new step , "not bad" He had the best collection of tee shirts and we added to his collection from our trips to S. America or wherever. We will think fondly of Steve now and when we are able to go dancing again post pandemic. We loved our time together,  
Stan and Ruth Shapshay*

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**ruth shapshay** - December 30, 2020 at 02:59 PM

JM

“ *Steve and I went to BCC together - had most of our art classes together. What fun and so many giggles we had in class. A group of us would go out dancing on the weekends to area clubs, mixers, whathaveyou. He was quite the Fred Astaire of the group! What a dancer! We lost touch after graduation. . .he wrote a couple of letters to me after he moved to Albany - so happy he started his dance school and judging by the lovely tributes on this page, he was as loved now as he was in the early 70's.  
My sincere condolences to Steve's family and friends.  
Jackie Harmon Moffatt  
West Stockbridge*

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**Jackie Moffatt** - December 30, 2020 at 02:51 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mr. Stephen P. Dessereau.*



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December 28, 2020 at 04:47 PM

PG

“ *Paul & Louise Giuliano sent a virtual gift in memory of Mr. Stephen P. Dessereau*



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**Paul & Louise Giuliano** - December 28, 2020 at 03:32 PM

PA

*Our sincere condolences to Steve's blood family as well as to all his dance family. He will be missed by many.*

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**Paul** - December 28, 2020 at 03:34 PM

DW

“ *Dear Mrs Dessereau and family,  
The Tuesday afternoon dance lesson that my husband Ron and I took from Steve for over 15 years was always the highlight of our week. Our day was transformed from whatever it had previously held into a wonderful escape! We so looked forward to the pleasure of this time spent with Steve. He made us laugh, learn, forego our two left feet and most of all bond in a friendship of mutual love and respect for each other. Steve has left us with a cache of wonderful memories that we'll hold dear in our hearts and minds forever. To know him was to love him...truly!❤️*

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**Doreen Wheland** - December 28, 2020 at 11:33 AM

JC

“ *Steve was a wonderful person and a great dance instructor. He made going to dance lessons fun. We will miss him dearly. Our condolences to his mom and family.  
John and Cho Hayes*

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**John and Cho** - December 28, 2020 at 10:58 AM

JM

“ We often talk together about the times and people that make and have made a difference in our lives. Both of us often recall our conversations when we first met about what activities we might want to get involved in that we did not do in our past life. Thanks to John, the formerly shy one, for coming up with the idea of ballroom dancing! And the rest is our history together. Our early years of group dance classes were fun because we got to meet people but not enough to really help us be better dancers. As we met more people, we kept hearing Steve's name as the best teacher in the area. How lucky for us that we made the move to take lessons with him.

While the initial getting off the sofa to go to class is sometimes an issue for Sheila, once in his studio we were always awakened to romantic feelings in each other's arms, having probably been too involved with chores to think about it during the day. We were transported by the fabulous music that just made us want to dance more and more and get better at what we can do. The biggest thrill for Sheila is John's ability to navigate a dance floor around even in very crowded conditions.

We miss Steve so much and offer our condolences to Steve's family

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**John & Sheila Morrone** - December 28, 2020 at 10:31 AM

VN

“ Dear Mrs. Dessereau & family,

*My husband and I want to express our sincere condolences for your loss. Steve was one of the brightest lights ever to have illuminated my path. He was also light on his feet, and light in his heart. For several years I took private instruction from him in his Pittsfield and Albany studios. To this day, whenever I hear Sanatana's "Smooth" I remember dancing with Steve in his Pittsfield studio. He taught with compassion and humor and extraordinary talent. I don't think anyone has ever made me laugh so much. He encouraged (and trained) me to perform a solo medley of Latin dances with him at the Polish Falcon's Club in Pittsfield; it remains one of the most terrifying yet exhilarating experiences of my life. Steve was goodness personified. When I eventually met and married my husband, Tim, Steve also taught us as a couple. Tim's health made it difficult to dance but for awhile I continued my lessons. Dancing with Steve brought me great happiness and has left me with beautiful memories. The world will be noticeably dimmer without his light.*

*--Vickie Newman*

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**Vickie Newman** - December 27, 2020 at 03:08 PM

JC

“ We became part of Steve’s dance community 15 years ago when we were preparing for my daughter’s wedding. When my daughter and I went to him for the final rehearsal, he told us two things:  
“Jim, your eyes go down when you’re trying to think about the steps. You are looking at your daughter’s breasts. Hold your head up and look in her eyes!”

“A father-daughter dance alone on the floor lasts a very long time. After the first chorus, have the DJ invite all the other fathers with daughters to join you”

Both suggestions worked great and have given us a chuckle ever since - as did all the other dance lessons we had with Steve over the years. We miss him and will remember him.

Jim and Marietta Cawse  
Pittsfield

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**James Cawse** - December 26, 2020 at 01:12 PM

LB

“ Lorraine and Tom Benton purchased the Godiva Biscuit Gift Tin (46 pc) for the family of Mr. Stephen P. Dessereau.



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**Lorraine and Tom Benton** - December 26, 2020 at 12:36 PM

LB

“ We send condolences to Steve's family. We are heartbroken over his passing. As his dance students, we shared a love of dance. We also were so happy that we shared with him a love of theater, dining out, mince pie and gingerbread. We made a trip to New York City in summer of 2017 to see Bette Midler in "Hello Dolly" and have dinner at Sardi's, That day happened to be the most beautiful weather on a summer's day in the city--perfect for enjoying a long stroll. To show how thoughtful Steve was (nothing new to all who knew and loved him), the day after the trip to the city, at our class, he played "Walking in New York" to which we danced a fox trot. Steve was the ultimate class act--just a few days after giving a birthday or Christmas gift, there was a thank-you note from him in our mail. That was just one example of his high class. A truly remarkable person and we hope that your happy memories of him will sustain you in this difficult time. We were privileged to know him.  
Lorraine and Tom Benton

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**Lorraine Benton** - December 26, 2020 at 12:31 PM

LM

“ I was so sad to learn of Steve's passing. I took my first dance lessons from Steve back in the early 1990's and he was just such a fun and competent instructor. Years later, Steve and I partnered to bring dance lessons to Pittsfield High School's after school enrichment program for a few years. The students loved him, and his positive spirit and love for dance was contagious. Steve was a beautiful, loving human being and will be greatly missed. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

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**Lori Conway Murphy** - December 26, 2020 at 08:25 AM

CQ

“ *My best friend has gone to the other side, I miss him already. We've been friends so long my children & Grands are devastated too. RIP my friend, you deserve it. I ❤️ you forever*



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**Cherie Quarterman** - December 24, 2020 at 07:18 PM