



## Duane Thomas Gardner Sr.

September 16, 1982 - October 26, 2024

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr., known affectionately as DJ, who was born on September 16, 1982, in Euclid, Ohio. DJ passed away on October 26, 2024, leaving behind a legacy of love and laughter.

DJ will forever be cherished by his devoted wife of 20 years, Jennifer, his children Duane Thomas Jr. and Lizzy, his parents Duane and Cindy Gardner, sister Dana Kaufman (Tom), brothers Dane Gardner (Amber) and Dylan Gardner (Jordan), mother-in-law Debbie Oldani (Dave) father-in-law Ray DeFrancesco, sister-in-law Lisa Kosier (Kyle), nephews Owen, Wyatt, Lincoln, Bryson, and Oliver nieces Lorelai, Brooklyn and Lillian, maternal grandmother Shirley Karner and paternal grandmother Pat Gardner. He also leaves behind a host of aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. Preceded in death by his grandfathers Edward Sprague Sr., Howard Gardner Sr. and Mike Karner. He was a pillar of strength and a source of joy in their lives.

Throughout his accomplished career in sales at Sup-R-Die Inc. and as a machinist at American Punch and Delta Tech., DJ was not only a dedicated professional but also a beloved coach on the softball field. He had a fervent passion for Cleveland sports and was always ready for an adventure, especially when riding his jeep with his family and his beloved dogs by his side.

His infectious faith, energy and outgoing nature made him the life of every gathering. DJ's exuberance and ability to make fast friends with everyone he met endeared him to those around him. He was known as the loudest voice in the room, but also the kindest soul in your company.

In celebration of DJ's life, a visitation will take place at Friends Church in Willoughby Hills, 2846 SOM Ctr Rd, Willoughby Hills, on Sunday, November 3, 2024, from 3:30 - 6:30pm, where friends and family will gather to share memories and pay their respects. A Funeral Service will be held at 6:30pm also at the church

As we say goodbye to DJ, let us remember his vibrant spirit, zest for life, and unwavering love for all those he held dear. May his laughter echo through our hearts forever.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV 3. 3:30 PM - 6:30 PM (ET)

Friends Church: Willoughby Hills  
2846 Som Center Rd  
Willoughby Hills, OH 44094

## Funeral Service

NOV 3. 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM (ET)

Friends Church: Willoughby Hills  
2846 Som Center Rd  
Willoughby Hills, OH 44094

# Tribute Wall

JM

“ DJ will be deeply missed by me. The incredible love, trust, and bond I had with him is nothing less than if he were my own son. This relationship started when he was a young toddler running around in his yard wearing only shorts and cowboy boots, saying "my boots, my boots!" I had many good times with him over the years, sharing endless fun and deep conversations.

The last time I saw him was a month before he passed. We went to the Willie Nelson Outlaw Festival at Blossom Music Center. It was a whole day of fun, laughing, singing & dancing together, and good conversation!

Another thing about him is that when I would say something to him, or ask him a question, he would respond with just, "Pretty much." It always made me smile when he would say that, or even when other people said it.

DJ was a model husband & father, a very hard worker, a man of God, and a kind, gentle soul.

I will be forever grateful for the time I had with him. He will be, and is, deeply missed.



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**Jim Maffit** - December 20, 2024 at 05:55 AM

TE

“ TEKFAB purchased the Fairest of All for the family of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..



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**TEKFAB** - November 01, 2024 at 09:41 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..

October 31, 2024 at 09:30 AM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..



October 31, 2024 at 09:30 AM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..



October 30, 2024 at 08:14 PM



“ I loved seeing DJ at church, even though our conversations made me late for the sermon EVERY time. He overcame so many challenges and was the leader and rock for his family, all the while approaching life with the same upbeat, unbothered attitude. I'm envious of the man that DJ became over the years: committed to his faith, funny, boisterous, unapologetically himself.

So sorry to hear about his passing. Becca and I are praying for healing and peace for all of the Gardner family.

jason Bratten - October 30, 2024 at 12:46 PM

LL

“ Love always, Syd, Mir, Liz purchased the Sweet T enderness for the family of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..



Love always, Syd, Mir, Liz - October 29, 2024 at 05:42 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..

October 29, 2024 at 01:02 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..



October 29, 2024 at 01:02 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..



October 29, 2024 at 11:37 AM

MA

“ To Duane, Cindy, and the entire Gardner family,

*I extend my deepest condolences during this difficult time. The loss of DJ has left a void that will forever be felt. His infectious laughter and booming voice will be greatly missed at American Punch.*

*Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you all as you navigate through this sorrowful period.*

*With sympathy,  
Marlo and Ron Slusarski*



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**Marlo** - October 29, 2024 at 10:10 AM



“ Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet was purchased for the family of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..



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October 29, 2024 at 09:13 AM

JD

“ John and Alex DelNostro planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..

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**John and Alex DelNostro** - October 29, 2024 at 07:18 AM

JD

“ John and Alex DelNostro purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..



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**John and Alex DelNostro** - October 29, 2024 at 07:18 AM

TB

“ Duane accepted me as a person when I started going to the Diamondback. We would sit at the bar and play song for song just to see if the other would know the music. He always won. I will always remember singing with him even if it was to the jukebox. I will miss him dearly. My thoughts and prayers are with the whole family. Please let me know if you need anything. Jen, Lizzy has my number. If you need ANYTHING, please call. I love you all.

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**tonia bailey** - October 28, 2024 at 09:19 PM

JB

“ Thinking of all of you during this difficult time, I always loved reading his post on FB he always had something interesting going on. I do know one thing is that he loved you Jen and his kids were his world.  
RIP DJ  
My heart hurts for all of you Lv Jeff & Jan Bier

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**Jan Bier** - October 28, 2024 at 08:47 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..

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October 28, 2024 at 07:21 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Duane Thomas Gardner Sr..*



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October 28, 2024 at 07:21 PM



“ *I know with great confidence that I speak for our Shore Junior High (Middle) School family in expressing our deep sadness and condolences on the loss of D.J. Today, many of his former teachers, coaches, and administrators reached out and remembered him fondly as a young man with a great zeal for life, friends, family, and sports. He, his wife Jen, and his siblings left such a strong and lasting impression on our staff for their hard work, good humor, and dedication. He will surely live on in our collective memories!*

*Jim Trayter (retired Mentor teacher)*

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**Jim Trayter** - October 28, 2024 at 07:09 PM



“ *DJ will be greatly missed! I had the pleasure of playing ball with and against him and also his dad and brothers for 15+ years , with many great memories. We always talked baseball and he had great energy . It breaks my heart to hear this news, my sincere condolences to his entire family , he will be greatly missed!*

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**Tim preston** - October 28, 2024 at 06:52 PM

RH

“ Duane,Cindy,Jen,Duane Thomas and Litzy we are so very sorry for the loss of dj,we are here for you and will continue to be as our love for him is forever...DJ ,I've been with you since you came into this world and watched you AGE as like myself you never really grew up.as a child I would call you ELMO as you couldn't sit still and we're all over the place,as you grew and got your license and hit a parked car rite away i remember asking you did they not tell you to drive around parked cars,as you got older and married,had children and got a condo along came the worst flood in 100years and destroyed everything you worked for,when we finally were able to go in to salvage what we could and looked around at thee mess,your house was ruined,cars were ruined,all your possessions were ruined and you looked at me and said “uncle rick I just got that tv” you are one of a kind!!! I will miss your lunchtime trips to my shop when you worked next door to me(come to think about it without your cars to fix I may have to close shop) you always seemed to come by everything harder than most but never quit... anyways buddy I for one will miss the hell outta you, fly high my friend and Amber is waiting for a ride in the Barbie jeep,Uncle Rick.... Uncle Rick,Aunt Sherry and Kevin

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**rick hutchins** - October 28, 2024 at 06:32 PM

GE

So so sorry to hear the sad news of t h e passing of DJ we are saying prayers for your and his family in the sad time my God bless you all with love we are truly sorry love Gary&Susan Edmiston

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**Gary Edmiston** - October 28, 2024 at 07:00 PM

MR

Absolutely heartbreaking. To the entire family, I am so very sorry for your loss. DJ was one of my sweetest 6th grader, and full of energy. I am keeping all of you in my thoughts and prayers. Mary Beth Rossi (former Orchard Hollow and Shore teacher)

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**Mary Rossi** - October 28, 2024 at 07:33 PM

JH

*We are so sorry to hear this sad news. Our thoughts and prayers are with your family during this difficult time. May you find strength and comfort in the love of God and in the cherished memories you hold close to your heart. Jen Harris & Your Orchard Hollow Family*

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**Jeniffer Harris** - October 28, 2024 at 07:47 PM