

Steve J. Bratka, 65, of Fort Worth, Texas, died Sunday, December 7, 2014 at his home. Steve was born August 13, 1949 in Burwell, Nebraska to Frank (Bud) and Lois Bratka. Steve is survived by his parents; his long term partner, Tim Meagher of Fort Worth; sister, Connie Benjamin, Lincoln; brother, Lex Bratka and wife, Patti, Burwell; four nieces and eight great nieces and nephews.

Steve attended University of Nebraska-Lincoln to be a chemical engineer and then got the bug to work for the railroad. His career began in 1970 and spanned forty years. In 1975 he was promoted to Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE). He served as Local Chair of Division 98 in Lincoln, NE and was reelected numerous times. He was elected First Alternate Vice Chairman of the BN/MRL General Committee of Adjustment in 1989, ascending to full time office as Third Vice General Chairman in St. Paul, Minn. in 1991. He served the GCA as General Chairman in 1998, then as a Vice General Chairman from 1998 until he retired in 2011 (In 1999, the BLET office moved to Fort Worth, Texas).

National BLET President Dennis Pierce said, "Steve Bratka left an indelible mark on our Organization. He championed the causes of those who had no voice, and as one of the many officers of our Union that he mentored, I can say that our Organization lost one of its true heroes with his passing."

Steve was civically involved, holding leadership roles in his community and in the local Democratic Party. He loved to play the accordion and had a wide network of friends. He loved his heritage and traveled to the Czech Republic many times and developed lasting friendships there.

Steve was a brilliant man who waged a valiant, 3 year fight against liposarcoma cancer. He loved his family deeply and we loved him deeply. We will miss him every day but remember the light that he was.

A farewell memorial service to celebrate Steve life was held on January 24, 2015, in Fort Worth, TX. A graveside memorial service will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, February 6, 2015 at Cottonwood Cemetery in Burwell, Nebraska. A lunch will follow at the Burwell Legion Club. Memorials can be sent to Mr. and Mrs. Bud Bratka who will distribute them in memory to Steve's favorite charities.