



## David "Randy" Mercer

September 17, 1954 - July 29, 2016

Cedar Falls - Dr. David "Randy" R. Mercer, age 61, of Cedar Falls, Iowa, died Friday, July 29, 2016 at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City. He was born September 17, 1954 in Coatesville, PA, the son of Chester L. and Marian (Thompson) Mercer. On March 29, 1997, he married Elizabeth Castillo in Iquitos, Peru; they later divorced. He earned his BS in Biology and Chemistry from Clarion State College in Clarion, PA, an MS in Biology from the University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. in Entomology from the University of California at Berkeley.

Most recently Randy taught at Hawkeye Community College as an Instructor of biology, and worked during the summers on research in Entomology at the University of Iowa. He had a long career as a research Entomologist with a specialization in mosquitos.

Randy was a gifted educator who enlivened lectures with personal experiences and colorful examples. While teaching at Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, he enjoyed helping students see the ecological processes around them, especially drawing their attention to the smaller organisms. His trademark academic apparel consisted of tropical printed short-sleeve shirts, acquired during his travels to South America and Polynesia while studying mosquito-borne illnesses. Randy involved students in mosquito studies in Iowa and other parts of the U.S. He was a well-respected and much liked

instructor at Hawkeye Community College, where he was teaching when diagnosed with cancer.

As an entomologist, Randy was interested in the interaction of insect parasites with their host. He was particularly interested in understanding the interaction of mosquito species with the bacterium, Wolbachia, in a number of locations around the U.S. In addition, he had a keen interest in the ability of this bacterium to limit mosquito populations and had studied whether this could serve as a practical approach for controlling mosquito numbers.

Randy felt himself fortunate to have traveled much of the planet particularly in Kenya as a volunteer with the Peace Corps as well as Peru and Tahiti in pursuit of research related opportunities. He travelled extensively throughout the United States for both pleasure and research.

Randy is survived by his children, Timothy and Rosemarie Mercer of Pleasant Grove, UT; a stepson, Shesthers Panduro of Cedar Falls; a sister, Janis Dagger and husband, Dr. Raymond Dagger of Mt. Airy, MD; and a brother, James "Jim" Mercer and wife, Linda S. Mercer of Simpsonville, SC. He was preceded in death by both of his parents.

Memorial services will be held 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, AUGUST 16, 2016 at First Presbyterian Church in Cedar Falls.

Memorials may be directed to the family.

Online condolences may be left at [www.richardsonfuneralservice.com](http://www.richardsonfuneralservice.com).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

AUG **16**. 10:30 AM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church  
902 Main Street  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613  
(319) 277-3930  
<http://www.firstprescf.org/>

# Tribute Wall

JF

“ *It's only now (Jan 2021) that we see this sad news of Randy's demise.*

*We worked as volunteer teachers out from UK together with Randy (Peace Corps) for several years (1977-1980) at Thatha Harambee Secondary School, Kenya.*

*We had an ambitious Irish-sponsored development programme for the school which Randy contributed to wholeheartedly, and when Petronella and I left in 1980 Randy took over the headship from me. When he eventually moved on he set up the Youth Polytechnic in nearby Kithyoko.*

*I attach a photo from c.1978 of Randy, me and a pupil carrying a water tank we were about to install at the school.*

*John & Petronella FRITH, now in Toledo, Spain*



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**John FRITH** - January 01, 2021 at 12:00 PM

JS

“ I am glad to have spoken with Randy years after we graduated from Cal-Berkeley. We came in in the 1984 cohort.



Randy, thanks for your courage! That is what I remember the most from you.

If any of his children and/or immediate relatives wishes to contact me for my memories of Randy, please feel free to do so: Dr. Jorge Santiago-Blay, [blayj@si.edu](mailto:blayj@si.edu) ; 202-633-1383.

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**Jorge A. Santiago-Blay** - December 30, 2018 at 12:22 PM

JN

“ I shared offices with Randy when he first came to Hawkeye Community College. He has been one of the most enjoyable office mates I've had. It was always good to see him around the halls at Hawkeye and in the break room. He had such a wonderful dry sense of humor. He really loved my family and my five year old son Zechariah. We ran into him all the time in downtown Cedar Falls, the Cedar Falls Library, and Hong Kong (a Chinese restaurant in Cedar Falls). He was always so nice to Zechariah even when we would stop by and visit him while he was sick. He spent his last Christmas and Easter at my parents home celebrating with my family and I. Everyone loved him so much! It is hard to see him go so soon. He will be greatly missed!

Sincerely,

John, Elizabeth, and Zechariah Neely  
(and John's mother and father)

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**John Neely** - August 16, 2016 at 04:06 PM



“ *Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of David "Randy" Mercer.*



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August 11, 2016 at 10:21 PM



“ *Randy was a wonderful colleague to work with. He most definitely loved teaching, and attended a majority of the STEM festivals we were asked to volunteer for since he enjoyed sharing his knowledge with students of all ages. He was always quick to lend a hand, especially when my students' chemistry projects entered the biochemistry realm. Randy, your caring attitude and kind compliments will be missed by both faculty and students here at Hawkeye.*

*Irene Metz*

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**Irene Metz** - August 02, 2016 at 09:43 AM

TS

“Randy and I started teaching at Hawkeye Community College in the Fall of 2010 and were in a two-year induction program together with about fifteen other people. That allowed us to get to know each other more closely. You could tell that he was highly intelligent and had an "edge" about him. Throughout those two years a natural connection between him, another colleague and myself occurred.

*During in-services we would naturally find each other. He was always welcome to talk to or sit with me and/or another colleague friend. None of us were into cliques. He was a private person and I didn't know a lot about his personal life but that was okay. Our son's were both CF wrestlers which was something else connecting us. I still remember the picture day. It was very gloomy and cold on Prairie Lake. My son and I were parked and another car pulled up right next to us. It was him with his son and younger daughter, I believe. He spent time with her out on the dock some after some brief conversation.*

*Randy was a great person and it was an honor to have met him. I feel that he was misunderstood by many but not by me. He was genuine person. God bless you Randy!*

*Sincerely,  
Todd Stabenow*

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**Todd Stabenow** - August 01, 2016 at 03:46 PM

JP

“ As an adjunct instructor at Hawkeye Community College, Randy was a valuable resource and colleague to me during his time here for the past five years. I substitute taught for him a few times, and I remember Randy mentioning in a meeting that I was a smart guy. I also taught for him when he fell sick last year and I was really taken aback when I learned he was not returning this year for teaching and really surprised when I had heard he had passed away. Randy will also remain in my memory and be sorely missed by myself and others at Hawkeye, my prayers go out to the family.

*Jeff Perkins*  
*Natural Sciences Adjunct Instructor*

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**jeffrey perkins** - August 01, 2016 at 03:34 PM

EC

“ Randy was my U.S. Peace Corps trainer in 1983. I knew him for just six weeks before heading off to serve in Kenya - but what a life long impression he made on this young girl!  
With a devilish smile and a heart of gold he encouraged all of us at a time when we were both excited and scared and about to step into one of the most important experiences of our lives.

*I am sorry for your loss of Randy too soon. I hope you can take some comfort in warm memories of Randy and know that he touched many people in his life.*

*Eve Cox*

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**Eve Cox** - August 01, 2016 at 10:15 AM

PM

“Randy will be much missed. He was a good friend and colleague. We knew we were both Peace Corps volunteers in Kenya, Randy several years before myself. He taught in a challenging high school in Eastern Kenya, ten miles from the nearest road; he stayed for four years. It was only this past spring as we talked that we discovered we had actually met 30 year before as he was a trainer for my Peace Corps group. A Ph.D. in entomology, from, I think, U.C. Berkeley; he later conducted research in various places including the South Pacific and South America.

*I also knew him to be a very proud father who talked often about his kids.*

*A patient and considerate teacher; a generous and humorous colleague.*

*He will be much missed.*

*Uende salama, ndugu.*

*Patrick Malloy*

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**Patrick Malloy** - August 01, 2016 at 09:32 AM

TA

“Randy was a great colleague at Hawkeye who was always ready with wisecracks and comments based on his vast experiences overseas. He clearly loved his work and loved the insects and people he encountered in his work. He was kind and patient. I will miss him.

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**Timothy Adamson** - August 01, 2016 at 08:41 AM



“ Randy will be missed here in the neighborhood. I will never forget his kindness and willingness to help. My thoughts are with his family and I send love to Chester, Tim, and Rosemarie.

Joanna Yezek - July 31, 2016 at 11:35 AM



Sorry for the misspelling of your name, Shesthers. Also sending thoughts to Janis.

Joanna Yezek - July 31, 2016 at 11:39 AM

RC

Randy, we'll miss you.

Rita Cummings - July 31, 2016 at 01:52 PM

RC

“ Randy was a kind and gentle soul, a wonderful neighbor who will be missed. I am sad for his family, especially for Tim, Rosemarie, and Shesters. God bless you all and please know that you are in my prayers. Bob Coyle

RF Coyle - July 31, 2016 at 08:30 AM

TK

“ Randy was a good neighbor and friend. He had a unique way of looking at things and a wry sense of humor that will be missed. The neighborhood will not be the same without him.

Tom & Lisa Klenske

Tom & Lisa Klenske - July 30, 2016 at 07:02 PM

CL

“ I am so sorry to have lost Randy, He was always ready to pitch in and help, His soup was always a hit on souper bowl events. He will be missed.

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**Chad Lee** - July 29, 2016 at 08:14 PM