

David Blessing Merrell

1970 - 2023



David Merrell

Obituary

David Blessing Merrell lived life fully all the way to the end when he passed from us July 15, 2023. David was with his partner Charlie, training for his next big adventure scuba diving when his heart failed him. David was born April 23, 1970, the fourth in a passel of boys, to Ellsworth and Carol Merrell, who were living in [Barstow, Calif.](#) The youngest of the boys, David found his place as the fun-loving precocious performer who navigated the rough-and-tumble world of big brothers with good humor and always flair. His middle name is for his doting Grommy, Flora Blessing, who lived in the family home, helping to raise him. His childhood was filled with

animals, yard work, and family. He carried his love of animals throughout life. In adulthood there was always a Pug nearby. At the end, there were five yes five practically perfect Pugs who made life better for David. There was nothing understated about David. He lived big, he laughed big, he loved big. Even from childhood, David made friends easily and once friendships were forged, David stayed true to them, making those friends his family. When David left Barstow to make his way in the world, he chose Riverside, a place he treasured and would call home for the rest of his life. He and Charlie made their two homes in Riverside into havens of love, welcoming all to enjoy their generous hospitality and bountiful culinary talents. Guests did not leave until they lingered long enough to appreciate the glory of "Sunsets on Ladera." David transformed the grounds of his homes into showcases of splendor with every imaginable stitching of succulents. He adored hunting for the perfect bauble and ornament for his "aquarium" garden. As much as he enjoyed the look of his eclectic gathering of curios, the hunt was just as much of the appeal. In Riverside, David also found the profession that would make his found family even bigger. His teaching career that spanned almost three decades gave him great satisfaction and pride. His students became his children. His colleagues became his brothers and sisters. He was so good at building relationships. The most important lessons his students learned were about being genuinely good people. A man of many interests and talents, music was also important to David. He sang big and loud and moved with groove. From elementary school band, to his adult stint in the gay men's chorus Men Alive, David had rhythm and enthusiasm in the performance. David is survived by his beloved partner Charlie Harfouch; father Ellsworth of Apple Valley, brothers Jim (Becky), Brad (Julie) of Apple Valley, and Paul of Minneapolis; nieces and nephews and their children; and dozens of chosen family from throughout Southern California. He was preceded in death by his mother Carol and grandmother Flora Blessing.

We will celebrate David's life from 10 a.m. to noon on Sept. 16 at Central Middle School, 4795 Magnolia Ave. [Riverside, Calif.](#), 92506. In lieu of flowers, the family requests any donations be made to Patricia Beatty Elementary PTSA; Memo: Mr. Merrell's Donation Fund. Mail to: Patricia Beatty Elementary PTSA, 4261 Latham St., [Riverside, CA](#) 92501.

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