

Curt Joseph Bessette was born on September 12, 1959 in Aurora, Illinois to James Arthur Bessette and Shirley Mae (Clawson) Bessette. He grew up in Aurora and graduated from West High School in 1977. While still in high school, he began working for Lyon Metal Products where he became a Draftsman and Project Coordinator. He worked there until 1983 when he enrolled as a freshman at Arkansas College (later re-named Lyon College) in Batesville, Arkansas receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management and Accounting. He later attended Bristol University in Tennessee receiving a Master of Arts in Executive Management and Accounting. After college he worked for Plasti-line, Inc. and American Sign as a designer and customer service manager managing 192 accounts. His last job before retirement was as Area Facilities Manager for Toys "R" Us managing construction and maintenance projects for 97 retail facilities located in 9 states. He retired in 2000.

Curt was a talented artist as a young child showing a talent for various art styles and becoming known among his peers as the artist. A quiet child, he spent many hours quietly drawing and creating art from the people and scenes around him. At age four he became painfully aware of tragedy. His six-year-old brother Richard, whom Curt idolized, died from complications of chickenpox. Even at that young age Curt was intensely affected and remembers looking out the front window daily waiting for Dickie to come home from school and the overwhelming sadness each day when he realized his brother wasn't coming home. Some of Curt's early work was drawings of his brother. So, art became not only a way to express his sorrow, it became a refuge and Curt became a meticulous perfectionist, a trait that stayed with him the rest of his life.

Throughout his elementary, junior high, and high school days, his art was a defining factor in his life earning him several awards from various competitions and art shows. One such competition won him scholarships to the Allerton Art School, Monticello, Il. (1995 and 1996).

A big influence on Curt's life was the public library where he was able to study the lives and art work of the masters. He would spend hours at the library perusing the volumes of books on various artists, art styles, and art history that he found there. In his explorations of differing types of art, he discovered the art of architecture, which he believed was truly an art form, and developed a lasting appreciation for it. Growing up in the Chicago area gave him the opportunity to visit some of the actual works of his favorite architect, Frank Lloyd Wright.

As an adult, he always incorporated the library into his life and instilled that love and loyalty within his family. From checking out books and videos, to creating and leading meetings, to performing in Boone County's CenterStage Players presentations, to holding theatre classes, to playing trivia, Curt was deeply involved. When he got a chance to apply for the Library Board, he jumped at the chance. He was so excited when he was told he was in the running for the position. He talked about it enthusiastically voicing his interest and desire to be a bigger part of the library. When he received word that he had been selected, he was even more excited and appreciative of the opportunity it gave him to give back something to an entity that had meant so much to him from early childhood till his death.

The day he had to go to the hospital was that same day an important library board meeting was taking place, and he was so upset he couldn't be there. He kept wanting to put off going to the hospital until after the meeting. His last hours he spent talking about what he wanted to do when he got out of the hospital. His input for the new BCPL's Hebron Branch took up much of those conversations.

Curt married Jo Anne Schmitt Henry on May 22, 1999 in Fort Wright, Kentucky. They were happily married for 18 years until his death in 2017. Curt was a member of Alpha Psi Omega, CenterStage Players (Florence, Kentucky), Boone County Public Library Board of Directors, and several local charities. He enjoyed playing Trivia, participating in community theatre, working on projects, and collecting bunny artwork. He mostly enjoyed creating his original works of art for which he received many art awards including OCTA awards for program art.

Curt's bio was written by his wife, Jo Anne Schmitt Henry