



Joel Maderer

May 5, 2026

Joel Maderer passed away peacefully on May 5, 2026 at Generations Regency Nursing Home in Niles, IL, leaving behind a legacy of compassion, quiet strength, and unwavering dedication to both his family and his community.

Joel was the youngest of the three children of Raymond Maderer and Muriel (Ross) Maderer. He carried forward the values instilled in him—kindness, integrity, and resilience—which guided him throughout his life and work.

He was a proud graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, class of 1969, and went on to earn his master's degree in social work from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. A lifelong learner with a deep appreciation for culture and connection, Joel spoke four languages fluently, including Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Italian, a gift that enriched both his personal life and his professional work.

For many years, Joel served as a devoted worker with the Chicago Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). In this role, he made a profound difference in the lives of countless children and families, advocating for their safety, dignity, and well-being. His work was a calling and he approached each case with empathy, patience, and a deep sense of responsibility. Joel's commitment to protecting vulnerable children and

supporting families in times of need stands as one of his greatest and most meaningful accomplishments.

Joel also lived his values through service and faith. He was a deacon in the Metropolitan Community Church, a ministry founded in 1968 for the support of LGBTQ+ individuals and their families. In this role, he offered guidance, compassion, and a welcoming spirit to all in order to foster a community rooted in acceptance and love.

Beyond his work and service, Joel embraced life's simple joys. He enjoyed gardening, bowling, playing bridge, and square dancing—activities that reflected his sociable nature and love of bringing people together.

He shared a loving and committed life with his partner, Jack Shreve, whose companionship brought him great joy and comfort for twenty-six years. Together, they built a life grounded in care, loyalty, and mutual respect, along with their beloved dog, Gabby, always a source of merriment and joy.

Joel was preceded in death by his sister Charlotte Jackson and brother Charles Maderer and survived by sister-in-law, Kathleen (Voermanns) Maderer. He is lovingly remembered by his nephews and niece: Joel (Melissa) Maderer, Pete Maderer, Christian (Kelly) Maderer, and Amy Maderer, along with many great-nieces and great-nephews who will carry forward his memory. He also held a special bond with his cousin, Carol Hyde, in whose home he spent his teenage years.

Joel will be remembered for his gentle spirit, his tireless service to others, his deep faith, and the lasting impact he made on the lives of so many. His legacy of compassion and dedication will continue to inspire all who knew him.

Donations to honor Joel can be made to the American Diabetes Association,

PAWS Medical Center and Clinic of Chicago, or the Human Rights Association, the nation's largest civil rights organization working to achieve LGBTQ+ equality.

A celebration of life memorial is planned for June.

Arrangements by Inclusive Funeral Care, 773-318-1305 or www.InclusiveFuneralCare.com.