



## Daniel T. Dorrity

October 29, 1932 - December 10, 2015

Daniel Terrence Pascal Dorrity died peacefully at the Robert and Helen Ball Hospice House on Thursday, December 10, 2015 after a long illness and gallant fight. Born on October 29, 1932 to Daniel and Margaret Dorrity, Dan grew up on a small farm in Stewartstown, Northern Ireland. As a Catholic in a Protestant country, he understood the struggles and importance of hard work, education and mutual respect for others regardless of their religious and political differences. As a young man he worked as a brick mason, estimator, contractor and an actor on the theatre stage before emigrating to Canada in 1957. He settled in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario laying fire brick at Algoma Steel before moving to Sault Ste. Marie Michigan. As a brick mason he worked to build St. Joseph's Catholic Church, LSSU's original Crawford Hall and the USCG - Base Soo, to name a few. He became a U.S. naturalized citizen in 1960. With the help and encouragement of Sharon MacLaren, Dan earned his GED certification to attend college and set out to become an educator while working as a brick mason to pay for his education. He attended Lake Superior State College for two years and earned both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Wayne State University. Later he received his PhD in History from the University of Michigan in 1973. After earning his Master's degree, Dan returned to Sault Ste Marie where his first wife Ida's family resided, and began teaching at Lake Superior State College in 1970. During his tenure, he served in academic administration as Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Director

of the Labor Force Program, Chair of the Department of History and Political Science, and Chair of the Department of History, Humanities and the Arts. As a professor, he taught a variety of history courses world history, Russian history, history of the English language, European history, political science and humanities. His teaching style was to engage the students to encourage them to form their own opinions, rather than to impose his own upon them. In a 1975 interview, when he was asked his opinion of the education system, Dan said: "Students are merely asked to check which answer is right or which one is wrong. They are not given sufficient opportunity to write, and therefore to use their own creative powers to formulate their own ideas or describe and analyze processes. There is too much emphasis on learning facts instead of understanding them or the causative factors behind them." Throughout his 44 years of teaching, Dan encouraged his students to think for themselves and to be confident in their beliefs. He admired the style of Plato, the insights of Shakespeare and the wit of Shaw and always welcomed a good philosophical discussion with his colleagues, his students and his family and friends. In 1976, Dan was elected to serve on the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners and was voted in as board chairman. He worked tirelessly, traveling weekly to the state capitol to advocate for the citizens of Chippewa County and the Eastern Upper Peninsula. These were ominous times, as the county faced the closure of Kincheloe Air Force Base and a prediction of 40% unemployment. As board chairman Dan worked with Governor William Milliken, U. S. Senators Donald Riegle and Carl Levin, and many local, state and federal officials of both political parties to guide Chippewa County's successful response to this historic economic crisis. Dan was a key leader in creating the Base Conversion Authority and the Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation - both critical to the restructuring of the Kincheloe Air Force Base from military to a civilian enterprise. Dan received special recognition for his leadership role in establishing the Chippewa County International Airport, securing correctional facilities in Kinross, Michigan and helping to bring a host of job-creating businesses to Chippewa County. In

1980 he became the Democratic U.S. Congressional 11th district candidate, campaigning with Eugene McCarthy, Vice President Walter Mondale and First Lady Rosalynn Carter; ultimately losing to his opponent in the Reagan landslide of 1980. In 1982 he was elected again to the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners and voted in as board chairman. During his two terms, he served on the Economic Development Corporation, the Base Conversion Authority, the Chippewa County Health Department, and the War Memorial Hospital Board. His political career ended in 1989 after serving on both the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners and the City of Sault Ste. Marie Commission. He never lost his interest in politics and helped to guide many who wished to enter the field of public service. To Dan, his greatest accomplishment was being a father to his two children, Brenna and Patrick. As a father later in life, he relished the joys of fatherhood and enjoyed singing Irish songs, dancing an Irish jig or playing "football" (American soccer) in the yard. He was a doting Dad and a very proud one. He is survived by his wife of 26 years, Sharon (O'Neil) Dorrity, daughter, Brenna and son, Patrick. Brothers Eamon (Margaret) Dorrity of Craigavon, Northern Ireland and Joseph (Jean) Dorrity of Swindon, England; sisters Eleanor McGrath of Edendork, Northern Ireland and Anna Leahy of Stewartstown, Northern Ireland; brother-in-law John Ewings of Belfast, Northern Ireland; mother-in-law Alice O'Neil and sister-in-law Mary Beth (Todd) Vollick of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. He was beloved "Uncle Terry" to many nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his parents Daniel and Margaret Dorrity; first wife Ida (Steve) Dorrity, brothers, Patrick (Patsy) and Gabriel Dorrity; sister Margaret (Peggy) Ewings; father-in-law Thomas J. O'Neil; and brothers-in-law Daniel McGrath and Steven Leahy. Services will be held on Thursday, December 17 at 1pm at the St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Visitation will be held prior to the service at Clark Bailey Newhouse Funeral Home from 10am to 12pm. Following the service, his remains will be cremated and later placed in the church cemetery with his parents and beloved brother Gabriel in Stewartstown, Northern

Ireland. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be designated to the Daniel T. Dorrity Study Abroad Fund c/o LSSU Foundation, 650 W. Easterday Avenue, Sault Ste Marie, MI 49783 or to the Robert and Helen Ball Hospice House at 308 W. 12th Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie MI 49783. May the road rise up to meet you, May the wind always be at your back, May the sun shine warm upon your face and rains fall soft upon your fields, until we meet again...

# Tribute Wall



“ *Daniel T. Dorrity*

October 05, 2023 at 09:54 AM



“ *Daniel T. Dorrity*

October 02, 2023 at 10:14 PM



“ *Daniel T. Dorrity*

September 01, 2022 at 07:49 PM



“ *So sorry for your loss Sharon. My best to you and the kids and my special friend, your Mom Alice.*

**Judy Jones** - December 15, 2015 at 12:00 AM



“ *Sharon I am holding you and your family in my prayers. I know that the loss is profound. The obituary is a beautiful and loving tribute to a wonderful life well lived. God bless you, Shelley*

**Shelley Wooley** - December 15, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ Sharon, Brenna, and Patrick, I want you all to know that kindness and collegiality I've experienced from your husband and father over these many years. Although he could beat me at tennis and golf (okay...that's not too surprising), and recite a Wilde, Shaw or Shakespeare quote more readily (again...not surprising), he was always supportive of my family and work. He was so, so generous in spirit. We've had many delightful conversations about the follies of human nature, the quirks of philosophers, and the joys of the contemplative life. I will miss him incredibly and his absence will leave an irreplaceable void. Please be assured that Dan and the Dorrity family will be in my prayers! Jason

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**Jason Swedene** - December 14, 2015 at 12:00 AM

GB

“ Sharon, Brenna, and Patrick - We are so sorry for your loss. Sending you (((hugs))) and prayers.

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**Gino & Pam Briglio** - December 14, 2015 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ Dear Sharon, We are so sorry to hear of the passing of your husband. Please accept our deepest sympathies and know that you and your family are in our thoughts and prayers. Chris, Lynn, Emily Gillies Robichaux

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**The Gillies Family** - December 14, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ One of the memories that always brings a smile to my face and a sense of "all is right in the world" is looking out my east window and seeing Dan kicking the soccer ball around with Patrick - even somewhat recently! It was a sweet sight to see an energetic man involved in his son and a son still willing to kick a ball around with his 'ole dad! Dan was a good man and a good dad and I know the void in your heart that his loss has created. Keeping you all in my prayers.

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**Michelle Markstrom** - December 14, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CV

“ Sharon and family, my deepest sympathy and prayers are with you at this time and in future days to come. Words cannot express the love being sent to you.

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**Cindy VanLuven** - December 14, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RM

“ Dr. Dorrity was one of my favorite professors in college. I really enjoyed the Humanities classes that I took with him. I have been fortunate to visit some of the prominent art museums in the world and see many of the paintings that we discussed in class with Dr. Dan. I'm very sorry to hear of his passing and would like to express my condolences to the family. He was a great teacher who touched a lot of lives. He will be missed.

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**Rick Mannor** - December 14, 2015 at 12:00 AM

EG

“ *My condolences on Professor Dorrity's passing. I took many classes with him while pursuing my B. S. Degree in History at Lake State from 1980-82. I always enjoyed his teaching style & found him to be engaging & challenging. I recall vividly the twinkle in his eye as he encouraged us to share our viewpoints & defend them. He was one of those classic university professors who I'm proud to have studied under.*

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**Eugene F. Groesbeck** - December 14, 2015 at 12:00 AM