



Gary F. Alexander

November 25, 1938 - April 27, 2016

Gary F. Alexander, age 77, passed away on April 27, 2016, at Hospice House. Gary had been seriously ill for some time with a rare neuron disease called Progressive Bulbar Palsy. Gary is survived by his wife Noel, children Carrie and husband Brian Eavou, Fred "Fritz" and wife Traci Alexander, Kevin Alexander, Karen and husband Kyle Gordon, and good friend Aletha Marshall, as well as his beautiful sister, Sondra and husband Dave Goulette.

Grandchildren include Dane Wallis, Jr., Abby VanSloten, Brittany and Randall Alexander, Kyle and Erik Alexander, step-grandchild Brandon Marshall. Gary has one great-grandchild: the one and only Jarrett VanSloten. During the latter part of his illness, Gary moved to our local Hospice House. Never had he met so many noble, caring, thoughtful people, from the expert nurses to the wonderful volunteers. Gary's wife and his family will never forget these loving, positive people who go out of their way to help. When young, Gary's children nicknamed him "Sarge," which fit him well. They visited "Sarge" daily. Gary was supportive and interested in their accomplishments, and their presence brought him joy. He and Noel could count on all of them, including those who live far away, who called and sent notes. Even though Gary was unable to speak clearly as the disease progressed, he could still laugh and smile. Carrie, Fritz, and Kevin saw to it that he was smiling and rarely alone. Carrie brought sunlight and expertise, dependably watching over and comforting him, Brian brought him interesting ideas, treats and jokes, Fritz brought him love, help, story-telling, and incomparable humor, Kevin brought him steady and

unfailing company, great weaponry conversations, novels he knew Dad would like; Karen, who lives out of state, called often with encouraging words and sent notes, and his good friend Aletha prayed for him. Gary was thankful for his children and was proud of each of them. Gary grew up at Sault Ste. Marie, enjoying the outdoors, fishing, hunting, and various firearms. Having his priorities straight, Gary might not remember what the doctor had said during an important health appointment, but he could remember the finest decimal points on a Ruger. Gary loved ice fishing, making and using his own spears the old Scandinavian way, getting the tines for the spears from Norway. When younger, he could be seen trolling for pike, and catching any fish that took the bait, whitefish and perch included. He was at home when outside on the river or in the woods, staying engaged with his family and friends outdoors.. A plumber and pipefitter by trade, Gary and friends worked in Michigan on various contracting jobs when young, and later Gary worked for Algoma Steel (now Essar Steel) in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, for many years. He is a long time member of the Plumbers and Pipefitters' Union. Gary attended Ferris State College for one year, then took on his plumbing apprenticeship and earned his plumbing license in his early twenties. Gary enjoyed movies, going camping with his wife Noel and stepdaughter Karen, going to dog shows with Noel, for long rides with his friend, Jim, hunting at camp and fishing with his friend Don, visiting his great Canadian pals at Monday morning "coffees" in Sault, Ontario. He never sat still for long. He was not a musician, but he didn't let that stop him. He enjoyed making up songs, singing well-known songs off-key at the top of his lungs with the wrong words, going into contortions while dancing to 50's music, doing the jitterbug and other dances. He slyly purchased a bugle at a garage sale; he could and did blast it with gusto. The bugle was helpful, though. Overnight visitors didn't need to worry about sleeping in, nor bringing an alarm clock. The times he spent with Carrie, Fritz, Kevin, Karen, and "Son Number 3", Brian, brought much laughter. He enjoyed long-distance conversations and jokes with Aletha, as well. Visits from great friends like Don, Jim, Ed, and Frank, gave him a great lift. His hunting and

fishing buddy, Don, and he were like brothers, spending much time outdoors over the years, on the water, in the woods, and out at camp getting ready for deer season. Don visited Gary every day while Gary was sick. Over the years, they spent hours at Camp and did some logging out in Don's woods. Gary was a real Michigan outdoorsman; a "man's man." He is already greatly missed by his family and friends. It could be that the first thing he said upon arriving in the next life was "How's the fishing, up here?" Viewing hours will be from 10:30 AM until 12:30 PM, on Tuesday, May 3, 2016, at C.S. Mulder Funeral Home. A Funeral Mass will be held that same day at 1:00 PM at St. Joseph Catholic Church on Minneapolis St. with Father Sebastian Kavumkal as celebrant. Burial will occur in June at Donaldson Cemetery. Donations to Hospice of the Eastern Upper Peninsula would be very much appreciated.

Tribute Wall

JK

“ Noel and Karen and family, I was saddened to hear of Gary's passing. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Jane

Jane Kennedy - May 10, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DW

“ Noel, I am so sorry to hear of the passing of your husband, Gary. I did not know him, but from reading other messages, sounds like he was a wonderful man. My heart and prayers go out to you and family and anyone else that he knew him and was close to him and grieving the loss. <3

Darlene (Stevenson) Warren - May 04, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DA

“ I am the grandson of Carl & Dorothy Alexander. Some of my fondest childhood memories were my many trips up to the Soo to visit my grandparents. It was during these trips that I got to know Gary. He was fun guy to be around and had a witty sense of humor. He loved joking around and laughing. I quickly learned that Gary was one of the most important persons in my grandpa's life. They shared the passion and love of the outdoors - especially fishing! I remember in their later years, Gary would check on them every single day to make sure they were okay and didn't need anything. I am certain that my grandpa has a big smile on his face now that he has been reunited with his best friend and fishing buddy! I regret that I didn't see Gary as often in my adult years, but I cherish my memories of the bond that he had with my Grandpa for all those years. Gary was a special man. My prayers and thoughts are with all friends and family during this difficult time!

David Alexander - May 01, 2016 at 12:00 AM

LH

“ Gary will be missed by many but will fill their hearts with such loving memories. God bless and comfort the whole family, especially my wonderful friend Noel. You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Linda Hellstrom - April 30, 2016 at 12:00 AM

LF

“ I knew Gary for many years. Our chance meetings were infrequent but always a pleasure. He was a nice guy & obviously much loved by his family & friends. Rest in peace, Gary.

Larry Farnquist - April 30, 2016 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ I feel so blessed to have known Gary and called him a friend. I am so thankful for the love he had for my mother, Noel. He treated me with kindness and love. I knew that even across the miles I could call him for honest advice or a good laugh and when I visited, a cold beer and lively stories in the garage were always a highlight of my stay. I will miss Gary. My heart aches for my Mother and all his family and friends who are mourning.

Aletha Marshall - April 30, 2016 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ My sincere sympathy to all of Gary's family, most especially to Noel. I always loved to come to the house and visit because I knew Gary would always have a great story to share! I will miss his booming voice and the way he always listened and cared about others. He truly was a "BEAR"!

Ardie Marchetti - April 29, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JK

“ *Mr. Alexander , that is how I knew him for almost 40 yrs. now. Will be missed. Wish I could have visited more often...*

John Kravis - April 29, 2016 at 12:00 AM

M(

“ *I am so sorry to all of you for the loss of such a loved man. I enjoyed seeing him each time i ran into him at my step-dads (Don) house and the times they would stop at my house on their way to or from camp for a beer. He always hugged me and made it a point to tell me how proud my dad would be of me. Gary worked with my dad for years in the plumbers union and i loved to hear the stories. Don will miss him tremendously and i am so thankful they had such a wonderful friendship for so many years. God bless all of you in the days ahead. RIP Gary.*

Michelle Tobias (Shields) - April 29, 2016 at 12:00 AM