



## Ronald Leroy Bruning

September 8, 1933 - July 25, 2014

Ronald Leroy Bruning of Rogers City and Cedarville, 16-year manager of the Les Cheneaux Club on Marquette Island, Cedarville and former owner and operator of the Bruning Standard Station in Hessel, died at the age of 80, Friday, July 25, at the Ball Hospice House in Sault Ste. Marie.

Ron was born September 8, 1933, to Loretta and Ernest Bruning in Belknap Township near Rogers City. He grew up on the family farm with eight other siblings. He was graduated from Rogers City High School in 1951 having never “missed a day of school in his life,” as he often reminded his children through the years.

Ron held many jobs throughout his life, taking away from each a variety of skills, lessons, and anecdotes with which he entertained friends and family members.

He started working as a young teenager at Shaffer’s Bakery in Rogers City where he learned to make the bread and sticky buns shared and enjoyed by many. He also worked as a pin setter at the local bowling alley, resulting in a life-long affinity for the game. Other jobs he held as a young adult included working on the United States Fish and Wildlife Service sea lamprey control project through the Hammond Bay Biological Station, working as an able-bodied seaman aboard the Great Lakes freighter John G. Munson, he also

worked for Somes Electric Company on projects such as the Tower of History in Sault Ste. Marie and Northern Michigan University dormitories, earning the rating of journeyman electrician along the way, and even occasional stints as a bartender when times were tight.

Ron was drafted into the United States Army in 1957 and served through 1959. During his military service, he did his basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was then stationed in Wuerzburg, Germany, with the 3rd Infantry Artillery Division: but a talent for music resulted in him spending most of his active duty playing clarinet in the Kitzingen Area-U.S. Army Band.

Ron married Rita Ellen Smith of Cedarville, on June 25, 1960, on Marquette Island, Cedarville. They were married for 24 years, in which they raised five children. Their years together were busy and satisfying while they owned and operated Bruning Standard Station in Hessel, affording them the opportunity to meet and interact with many residents and visitors of the Les Cheneaux community. In 1979, Ron and Rita moved their family to Marquette Island, where they became the managers of the Les Cheneaux Club following the retirement of Rita's parents, Dick and Ellen Smith. Rita preceded Ron in death in 1983, and Ron continued to manage the Club up until 1995, when he retired and moved back to Rogers City.

Ron had a wide range of interests that kept him engaged in life such as wood working, reading, golf, bowling, camping, spending time outdoors, road trips, travel, and both playing and listening to music. He was an exceptional clarinet player and his passion for music was inherited by his children, who played a variety of instruments and/or sang in choirs all through high school, college, and beyond. Ron enjoyed listening to classical music, opera, and the big band orchestras such as Benny Goodman and Woody Herman. He loved telling stories (some taller than others), and had a rich, eclectic background from which to pull his yarns. Some of his best stories involved some adventure

while out for a drive; or his time in Germany, an experience he treasured all his life. He was particularly fond of taking long drives to see the best scenery, and he had a habit of taking the back roads and the longest route to any destination, just to see country he hadn't seen before. He also enjoyed visiting and chatting with his friends and extended family, and loved nothing more than a good joke. "I always loved the fact that he was a very balanced person who had varied interests", one of his daughters recalled. "He could spend a lot of time alone, but was never lonely."

Even in retirement, Ron's strong work ethic and the gratification he received from keeping busy led to countless odd jobs: painting houses, building and refinishing furniture, and many other wood projects in the Rogers City area. Retirement did give him more time, however, to enjoy some of his favorite pastimes, including fishing, golf, reading and spending time with his family. He loved traveling, especially road trips, and he traveled out west on a driving tour to New Mexico and the Southwestern states. He traveled to Mount Rushmore and Glacier National Park, which was one of his favorite sites. He would travel to Chicago or Florida each winter during his tenure at the Les Cheneaux Club. He loved Canada and he traveled extensively through the country, and he especially loved visiting Manitoulin Island, Ontario. Ron and Rita both loved the Keweenaw Peninsula, and they camped there and throughout the Upper Peninsula with their children.

Throughout his life he was a member of many clubs and organizations including the Les Cheneaux Sportsman's Club, Clark Township Ambulance Corps, Ducks Unlimited, and bowling leagues and golf teams wherever he lived. He was a supporter of many charities and causes, especially public radio and television. Always willing to help people; friends and family members simply describe Ron as a kind man. His faith granted him a quiet strength which allowed him to remain stubbornly individualistic throughout his

life without compromising his capacity for compassion, tolerance, and love.

In addition to Rita, Ron was preceded in death by his parents; siblings, Arlo “Sam” Bruning, Arnold “Arnie” Bruning, Judith “Judy” (nee Bruning) Wrigglesworth, Mick Bruning; and in-laws, Iris (nee Derry) Bruning, Erv Grulke, William Cole, and Tom Bennett.

He is survived by his children, Denise “Kim” Horn of Rogers City, Lesa E. Hester of Hessel, Jeffery A. Bruning of Marquette, Pamela K. Swope of Albion, Gretchen L. Chapel of Grosse Pointe Woods, and Richard D. Bruning of Cedarville and their spouses, Michael Hester, Rick Omlor, Tim Swope, George Chapel, and Amy Polk. He is also survived by grandchildren, Jami and Kaiti Horn of Rogers City, Thomas Swope III of Albion, Luke Swope of Grand Rapids, David and Dennis Malkowski of Cedarville, Jon Chapel of St. Clair Shores, and Rita (nee Chapel) O’Farrell of Franklin, Wisconsin and their spouses, Elyse Swope, Kylie Chapel, Callin O’Farrell, and great-grandson, Kian R. O’Farrell of Franklin, Wisconsin.

Surviving siblings include Elaine Grulke of Rogers City, Betty Cole of Alpena, Nancy Bennett of Saginaw, and Ernest “Pep” and Charlotte Bruning of Cedarville.

Small in stature, but large in heart and the ability to leave an impression on those he met; Ron’s personality lives on in his children, grandchildren, great-grandson, in-laws, friends and acquaintances. He taught all of us that there can be supreme satisfaction in a simple life enhanced by faith, charity, books, music, and—every so often— taking the long way home.

Memorial donations in lieu of flowers can be made to Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church - 202 W. M-134, Cedarville, MI. 49719; St. Michael Lutheran Church - 5918 451 Co. Rd., Rogers City, MI 49779; St. John Lutheran Church - 460 W.

Erie Ave., Rogers City, MI. 49779

A memorial service will be held Saturday, October 4 at 1:00 P.M. at the Les Cheneaux Club Golf Course. Interment will be in Cedar Cemetery in Cedarville.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Ronald Leroy Bruning*

October 05, 2023 at 09:54 AM



“ *Ronald Leroy Bruning*

October 02, 2023 at 10:14 PM



“ *Ronald Leroy Bruning*

September 01, 2022 at 07:49 PM



“ *So sorry to hear this. My prayers to all of you at this time! Your Dad was a great man! Mary Beth Risk (mrozek)*

**Mary Beth Risk** - July 28, 2014 at 11:11 PM



*It's only taken me 7 1/2 years to see your post. I love you and thank you so much. I'd love to reconnect. Here's my number: (313) 585-3885*

**Gretchen Chapel** - January 28, 2022 at 07:07 PM