

The Funeral Director's Prayer

Dear Lord, give me the patience needed

to serve everyone as my own;

the wisdom to understand others feelings;

the knowledge to learn as well as to instruct;

the kindness to treat everyone equally at all times;

the strength to endure long hours and hard work;

the desire to serve others as I would my own family;

the humility to accept words of thanks and praise;

the compassion to be able to touch another's soul;

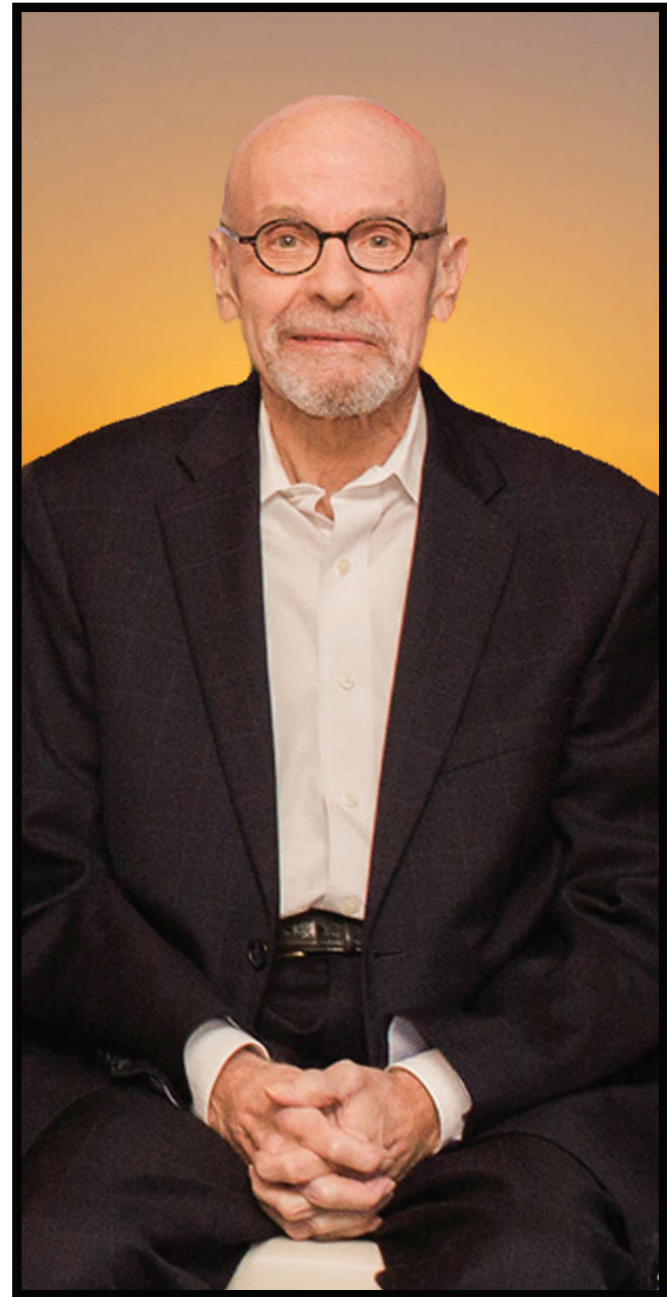
the pride and the right to smile when I have served a family well;

and, Lord, most importantly,

the right to shed an honest tear when my heart is touched.

Lord, make me thankful that I am a Funeral Director.

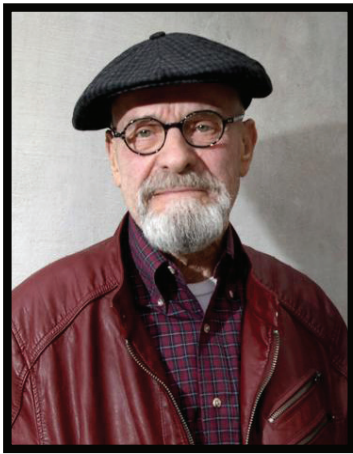
Amen.



GARY LARSON

1944 ~ 2020





Gary I. Larson, 75, Mandan, died unexpectedly on June 8, 2020 at Sanford Health, Bismarck, from complications after a fall. He was surrounded with love and friendship.

Gary was born on July 12, 1944 to Selmer “Sam” and Grace (Newman) Larson. Raised and educated in Minot, he graduated from Minot High School in 1962. Gary attended Minot State College and was studying at the Wisconsin Institute of Mortuary Science when he volunteered for the draft. He was inducted

into the US Army on April 13, 1967 and arrived in Vietnam in September of that year. He was first assigned to the 1st Infantry Division as a clerk, but later, during the Tet Offensive, was reassigned to the mortuary. After 15 months, he extended his tour to immediately get out of the Army when he returned home. Gary Larson left Vietnam, but Vietnam never left him. He was forever changed because of his time in Saigon but said he’d do it all over again, because he helped grieving families back in the US to get closure.

On Jan. 4, 1971, Gary married Patricia Tonkin in Minneapolis. They moved to Neenah, WI and later to Chicago, IL where Gary finished mortuary school. In 1979, they moved to Mandan where Gary worked for Buehler Funeral Home. In 1989, Gary and Pat purchased the funeral home from Warren Buehler and they worked side by side for the next 25 years. Gary was a sharp dressed man with a quiet and gentle demeanor. He helped countless families say farewell to their loved ones with the utmost care and dignity. He took great pride in his work and was dedicated to the families of the communities he served. Gary made many friends and connections through his years of funeral service. They sold the funeral home and retired in 2014.

Although their free time was limited with the work they did, Gary and Pat enjoyed numerous trips to Mexico as well as a memorable trip to China. They were season ticketholders to the Minnesota Vikings for many years and loved spending time at their cabin in Pick City on Lake Sakakawea. Gary was a huge Minnesota Twins fan, always had a news channel on the TV, and loved feeding the birds and dreaming about woodworking projects. He was a catalog shopping addict and enjoyed getting new gadgets and tools. He had an impressively full closet and a hat and shoe collection that anyone

would love to have if it wasn’t for his incredibly long arms and narrow feet that made him a unique size. Gary was a storyteller second to none and if he chose to share his stories with you, it was generally the moment you realized you wanted him in your life. He was an introvert but once you got to know him he would share anything he had to offer. Generous and giving, Gary usually had a \$20 bill in his pocket for kids who helped him with things around the yard or funeral home and was the kind of guy who always had candy in his pocket to share. Gary and Pat always had dogs in their home and any pup who was blessed to live with them was loved and spoiled to no end. Pat passed away in 2016 and Gary’s loyal pets gave him much love and companionship to his final day.

Gary is survived by his sister, Vivian (Rob) King, Bismarck; brother-in-law, Bernie (Eloise) Pellenwessel, Minot; mother-in-law, Edna Tonkin, Roseville, MN; special sister-in-law, Penny (Andrew) Hoffman, Roseville, MN; brothers-in-law, Ross (Sue) Tonkin, Phoenix, AZ, Jeff Tonkin, Roseville, MN, and Jon (Debbie) Tonkin, Bloomington, MN; and many nieces, nephews, and great-nieces and great-nephews. Blessed to have shared in his life is a former employee and her family who became family to Gary and took care of him until his last breath. Jessie and Bill Hilfer and their boys, Kaden, Ryan, and Liam, who loved “Uncle Gary” and visited him often making sure he had all the comforts he wanted as well as a great stash of munchies, ice cream, and cookies. Also funeral home handyman and dear friend, James (Sue) Allmer who showed selfless dedication and willingness to help Gary with anything he needed without ever wanting anything in return. And finally, his beloved dogs, lap warmers, crumb eaters, and home security alarms, Trooper and Lacie.

Gary was preceded in death by his wife of 45 years, Patricia “Pat” Larson; his parents; sister, Jeanette Pellenwessel; brother, Rich (Mardi) Larson; father-in-law, Robert Tonkin; and nieces, Mary (King) Fiechtner and Lori Rae Larson. Gary was greeted in Heaven by numerous dogs who he’d cared for until their last day. Since his passing many have said “Gary was one of the good ones.” Your work here is done my friend, may the work you have done speak for you.

Memorials are preferred to the ND Veterans Cemetery, Central Dakota Humane Society, or Furry Friends Rockin Rescue.

Celebrating the Life of Gary I. Larson

Funeral Service Monday, June 15, 2020; 11:00 AM
Buehler-Larson Funeral Home
1701 Sunset Drive, Mandan, North Dakota

Officiant Pastor Christina Martin

Musicians Janell Campbell & Mike Shirek of Prairie Road

Casketbearers Andrew Hoffman, Nicholas Hoffman, Jeff Tonkin
Remington Utgaard, Bill Hilfer, Kaden Hilfer
James Allmer, & Nathan Grubb

Gathering

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Greeting

Prayer of the Day

Reading 2 Timothy 4:7-8
Wisdom 3:1-9
John 14:1-6

Funeral Message

Special Music "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

Commendation

Committal

Special Music "Amazing Grace"



**Burial will be at the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery
following the funeral service.**

Please go to www.BuehlerLarson.com to share memories of Gary.

*God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
As it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make things right
If I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with Him
Forever and ever in the next.
Amen.*

Photo of Lake Sakakawea