

In Loving Memory
Vernon "Vern" Wieberdink

April 18, 1937 † April 5, 2018

Funeral Service

Alexandria Covenant Church
Alexandria, Minnesota
Sunday, April 15, 2018, 2:00 PM

Officiating

Reverend John LeVahn

Honors By

Alexandria Fire Department Honor Guard

Casket Bearers

Bryon Wieberdink	Dalen Wieberdink
Kevin Wieberdink	Brent Wieberdink
Eric Wieberdink	Ryan Slagter

Honorary Casket Bearers

Terran Kloos	Tiana Kloos
Diego Kloos	Jonathan Kloos
Bailey Wieberdink	Jack Wieberdink
Matt Wieberdink	Joe Wieberdink
Chase Wieberdink	Natalie Wieberdink
Nicolas Wieberdink	

Military Honors By

American Legion Post #87
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #936
Vietnam Veterans of America Post #235
Marine Corp League #1409
Minnesota National Funeral Honor Guard

Burial

Hudson Cemetery
Monday, April 16, 2018, 11:00 AM
Hudson Township, Minnesota

Do not stand at my grave and weep

I am not there. I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.

I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.

I am the gentle autumn's rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush,

I am the swift uplifting rush

Of quiet birds in circled flight.

I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry;

I am not there. I did not die.

~ Mary Frye ~



We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support, kindness and acts of love. Words cannot express how much we truly appreciate everything you've done for us ~ it will never be forgotten.

Joyce, Lori, Wayne & Kyle


659 Voyager Drive NW ~ Alexandria,



Vern was born on April 18, 1937, in a farmhouse in Holland Township near Prinsburg, MN. It was evident from a young age that he was a talented, creative, and hard-working young man who loved to invent and improve everything he touched. In Vern's words, "In high school, we would go outside at recess, tear cars apart, and put them back together. We weren't really supposed to do that, but we never got in trouble."

After graduating in '55, Vern started working for Berghuis Construction laying sod. Since driving the water truck paid better, he decided to be a driver. He then made the decision to join the Army when he learned that Berghuis wouldn't promote anyone who hadn't joined the service.

Blessed with an inquisitive mind (and a mischievous nature), Vern excelled in the Army. He was a terrible soldier (hated to follow orders), but a wonderful mechanic, so even when he wouldn't obey the rules and the army tried to put him on KP, they eventually relented and let him work in his own unit without interference as long as he could keep all of the equipment running. They sent him off for truck training, and he scored at the top of his class. This earned him the highly coveted plaque that he and his colleagues dubbed "The Flaming Piss Pot." Following 3 years of service in the Army, Vern returned to Prinsburg where he went back to work for Berghuis.

It was while living in Prinsburg that Vern met the light of his life, Joyce Downs. They married on Jan 18, 1962. It was bitterly cold, with an air temperature of -32 degrees, and they embarked on their new life's journey by thawing frozen pipes in their trailer house after the wedding.

Later on, while helping to build Interstate 94 between Sauk Centre and Fargo, they found their dream location and settled on

Maple Lake near Alexandria. It was at this time that Vern was offered an opportunity that would allow him to raise a family while enjoying all that the area had to offer. And so he began his career at Alexandria Vocational Technical Institute where he started and built the Diesel Mechanic program. Always pushing and never satisfied, his students won several state and national VICA competitions and thousands of dollars worth of prizes. He retired in 1995 after 29 years at Alex Tech.

During his tenure as a teacher, Vern felt that there wasn't enough competition in his life and thus began his racing career. He started racing Skidoo snowmobiles in the winter, and in the summer a bright yellow '57 Chevy (always #2) at Viking Speedway. The stock car racing career came to an abrupt end when he was T-boned on the front straight and nearly killed, but he sure did enjoy it.

With all of his experience, he and his friend, Frank Chan, decided that they could build a better mousetrap, and they developed and built 6 of the infamous "CW" snowmobiles. Ultimately his expertise led him to get involved in *Race & Rally* magazine, where he wrote a regular column called, "Got a problem? Ask Vern." During this time he also served as Race Director for the 12 year run of the annual Dayco Holiday Spectacular snowmobile race, the largest professional race in MN and one of the top 5 snowmobile races in the country.

When his 3 children were in elementary school, Vern decided to purchase a "hobby" farm near Forada, MN. The goal was to ensure that his children learned the value of hard work on a farm. Ultimately what started with 40 acres and one heifer named Betsy, grew into the Wieberdink Registered Polled Hereford farm with over 100 head of cattle and 600 acres of land. He never thought small.

In 1987, frustrated over the lack of quality self-contained breathing apparatus while serving as a Forada volunteer firefighter, Vern started Alex Air Apparatus to ensure firefighters had access to the best equipment available. As with everything Vern did, what started as a tiny venture grew into a thriving company that today employs 30 people and serves fire departments in five states. Vern was very proud of the commitment of his employees to Alex Air customers and the exceptional service they provide. He continued to work with Alex Air until the very day he died. There was never any quit in Vern.

Through all of the work and adventures, Vern was always motivated to see the world. He & Joyce traveled everywhere together. It was very important to him that all of the family stayed together, and he was forever setting up trips and trying to herd all of the kids and grandkids to come along and try something new. Over the years, the family took cruises, visited Branson, Las Vegas, and New Orleans, rode snowmobiles and drove 4-wheelers in Yellowstone, went to the beach in Mexico and enjoyed spending time together. He was never able to sit still and stay in one place unless he was reading from one of his thousands of books.

80 years wasn't nearly enough for someone like Vern. He was so much larger than life that it didn't seem possible he could ever go. Nevertheless, Vern left us unexpectedly on Thursday, April 5. He'll be greatly missed by his wife Joyce, children Lori (Gary) Kloos, Wayne (Chris) Wieberdink, Kyle (Marcia) Wieberdink, 11 grandchildren, and countless family and friends. He made the most of his time here on earth and was a tremendous example for all of us.

Bon Voyage Dad...

