



David Allen Laiskonis

September 14, 1951 - September 9, 2011

DAVID'S LIFE STORY: David Laiskonis had a heart for others. He especially loved bringing joy to the souls of older folks and giggles to the lives of children. Music was an expression of giving for him. He could often be found playing his guitar at community events, or just pulling up a chair to strum a few lines or two. Whether he was serenading a crowd or just a few, David delighted all with his engaging, faith filled spirit and fun-loving ways which will be deeply missed. The 1950s marked a quieter time full of hope and optimism in the U.S. as the World War II post-war baby boom continued. Families moved from rural areas and cities to newly developed neighborhoods. It was an age of innocence, even as the clouds of the Korean War cast a shadow of concern. Even so, the very heartbeat of America was forever strengthened as people worked harder to provide a better life for their children. And so it was for Stanley and Geraldine "Geri" (Nowak) Laiskonis from the lakeshore city of Ludington, when on September 14, 1951 they welcomed the birth of their son, David Allen into their hearts. David arrived into the arms of his parents at the Paulina Stearns Hospital in Ludington. His father was a hard working dairy farmer and they made their family home in the close knit community of Custer. He grew up alongside his brother, Lawrence sharing memorable and adventurous times. As members of St. Mary's Catholic Church, David often played for guitar masses, and often played for the school choir. He attended St. Mary's school through the 8th grade before graduating from Mason County Eastern High School in 1969. Following high school, Dave began taking

general courses of study at West Shore Community College. Like many young men, he felt the call to duty and in 1970 enlisted to serve in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. Stationed in Korea, he served as a Psychological Social Technician, a position he thoroughly enjoyed. After being honorably discharged from service in 1973, Dave married his sweetheart and soul mate, Deborah Norkaitis on November 17, 1973 at St. Mary's Church. Dave returned to his studies at West Shore, and received his Associates Degree in Law Enforcement in 1977. He then attended Oakland Community College where he his law enforcement certification. He proudly served as an officer with the Scottville City Police Department before moving on to the Mason County Sheriff Department where he remained for the next 21 years. He and Deb made their home in Scottville for 19 years before moving to Custer near Deb's parents. At the core of Dave's heart was the desire to serve others. He volunteered at St. Ann's Senior Center in Baldwin, and soon after was hired to deliver Meals on Wheels to local shut-ins. In time he became the Senior Activity Coordinator at St. Ann's. He absolutely loved working with seniors. It was a blessing for all each time Dave picked up his guitar to play, and often sang to their delight. They enjoyed it so much, and many would dance and sing along. Dave worked at St. Ann's for seven years, and counted those years as some of the best of his life. Most recently, Dave worked at Lake Michigan Broadcasting in Ludington where Deb was a salesperson. There he operated the radio board during the Mason County Central sports broadcasts. For anyone who knew Dave, it was clear music was major in his life. He loved playing for various events, parties, and gatherings. He often traveled with the Scottville Clown Band and played following the parades and concerts as a warm down. He even provided music for the "Big River" play. It was typical to find him pulling up a stool on the sidewalk during the Scottville Main Street events and play, and often did so at Friday Night Live in Ludington. He found contentment and joy simply playing for the people. In 1980, Dave became hooked on civil war reenactments. While traveling to Mackinac City, he observed the Roger's Rangers group at Fort Michilimackinac and officially

joined them in 1994 as a Sergeant. A part of living history, his group gave presentations to students in the Grand Rapids area on special educational days every year, and he even sewed many of the clothes he wore. Dave loved history, especially living history. When he shared information, one had better be prepared for the whole story, because Dave could never tell just a part of it. Eager to learn more, he came to know the history of Mason County as well. Some of the programs he enjoyed watching were the History Channel, American Pickers, and Pawn Shop to mention a few. Whether traveling to art shows, concerts, outdoor festivals, or renaissance fairs, Dave and Deb were always on the go. They supported one another in each of their endeavors, too. If Deb was involved in an activity for work at the station, Dave was sure to be by her side volunteering, driving promotional vans in parades, or helping with remote broadcasts. He participated in numerous volunteer opportunities, some of which included Scottville Main Street, the Scottville Optimist Club, Scottville Harvest Festival, Summerfest, and at the Scottville Senior Center. He also enjoyed playing his music at area nursing homes. Dave was a kid at heart when it came to the holidays. He was quite the decorator, and his enthusiasm was evident at Halloween and Christmas where the many lights he put up lit the evening skies. The love of children was the center of Dave's heart, especially sharing history with them. He considered his best friend's kids as his own, and always referred to them as his "faux children". He was very involved in their lives, many activities, and celebrated with pride their accomplishments. They even joined Dave in the civil war reenactments as well, even teaching them how to sew. Dave enjoyed spoiling them. Although a frugal shopper, he loved his "dollar" finds. He often bought his bargains by the bagful to share with others, but especially his "faux" children. Everyone enjoyed being in Dave's company. His witty, off-the-wall humor yet quiet personality was appreciated by all. A bit of a rebel, Dave was the type of man who broke his own trail and lived to the beat of his own tune. He cared deeply and respected the feelings of others, and was always willing to give someone

the benefit of the doubt. A fun-loving, adventurous, and engaging people person, he was never afraid of a challenge. He was also a loving and devoted husband to his wife and life partner, and in him Deb found a husband who was everything a soul mate and friend should be. More than a spouse, he was her steadfast sounding board, counselor, and kept her grounded. At the age of 59, Dave blessed the lives of others and will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved him. David Laiskonis died suddenly on Friday, September 9, 2011 from a brain aneurysm. He was preceded in death by his parents Stanley and Geraldine Laiskonis, and his father and mother-in-law Anthony and Wanda Norkaitis. He will be greatly missed by his wife Deborah, his brother Lawrence (Janice) Laiskonis of Georgia, his sister-in-law Toni (Jerome) Miller of Custer, his nieces and nephews Michelle Miller of Scottville, Melanie Bettinger of Ludington, Amy Gough of Livonia, and Michael Laiskonis of New York City, his great nieces and nephew Zach and Abby McKelvey, and Katie St. Germain, his best friends John and Penny Fort of Au Train, MI, his faux children Kim and Jim Marrison, Kelly and Rob Purtee, and Mike and Mandy Fort, and five faux grandchildren. The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, September 13 at the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Custer. Burial will follow at Brookside Cemetery in Scottville. Friends may meet with his family for a time of visitation on Monday evening from 6:00 – 8:00 PM at the Stephens Funeral Home in Scottville. Those who wish to make a memorial contribution are asked to consider the Scottville Optimist Club, or the Scottville Clown Band Scholarship Fund.