



John Andrew McCumber

February 27, 1926 - December 17, 2009

There are two common words that help to define the life of John A. McCumber – family and love. His family meant the world to him and he loved not only each and every member of his family but all those within his reach. Everyone will always remember John’s wonderful stories and it never really mattered whether they were entirely true or not as they were always fun and entertaining. In fact, John loved to talk and would even argue a point he didn’t necessarily agree with just to keep the conversation going. His daughters proclaim that he raised the practice of “puttering” to an art form, always coming up with new and inventive ways to make something old into something new again. It was in 1926 that Walter and Maggie (Dargie) McCumber were celebrating a joyous time in their family as they welcomed the birth of their son, John Andrew, on February 27th. John was born in Riverton Township as the youngest of three children. Sadly, both his older brother and his older sister died from illness at a young age. He attended Riverton Elementary School near his home and developed a passion for playing baseball as a young boy. John went on to Scottville High School where he played football and became a graduate with the class of 1944. With his formal education behind him, John, who was often known as Pic or Pickle, was ready to embark on the next phase of his life. He developed a passion for cars that remained throughout his lifetime and he had a Model A car of his own that was his pride and joy as a young man. John played fast-pitch softball and was the star pitcher on the Pratt’s Jewelry sponsored team. He enjoyed a

tremendous stint as a fast-pitch pitcher, resulting in the honor he received when he was inducted as a member of the Mason County Softball Hall of Fame in 1987. John also spent many hours taking road trips to destinations like Oxbow Lake where he enjoyed camping, fishing, tobogganing at the state park, ice fishing, and ice skating with his good buddies, Bob VanDyke and the Harley boys, among other friends. John's life was forever changed when he became acquainted with a young woman named Blanche "Blinky" Shafer through activities with mutual friends. John and Blanche were married on October 16, 1948 at St. Simon's Catholic Church in Ludington. They were later blessed with seven children who were the light of John's life. Their first five children were closer in age, and then there was an eight year pause before their last two sons were born. The younger two were often referred to as "the little boys" and they in turn referred to their older siblings as "the fab five." All of his children got used to answering queries with, "Yes, I'm one of Pic's kids!" John and Blanche raised their family as a close-knit group, they truly enjoyed spending time together in a variety of ways. They often went on family picnics at the drop of a hat. They simply gathered what was in the kitchen, drove off, and found a spot where they would light a fire and enjoy the time together. The McCumber family also frequented the Starlight Drive-In Theater in Ludington in their family station wagon, loaded up with the familiar huge bag of popcorn and sodas. John tended to fall asleep during the movie and often drove off with the speaker still attached to the window when they woke him to tell him that the movie was done. At times they took off on impromptu drives ending up somewhere along the Pere Marquette River. Their family also had several picnics at St. Mary's Lake where John had so much fun with his children in the water, usually making sure that no one stayed dry for too long. Most of their family activities were outdoors where they enjoyed a variety of activities appropriate to the season including tracking animals and making snow caves. Many of their most precious family memories were made at their family cabin. It had always been John's dream to provide a get-away cabin for his family. He purchased some property on the

Sauble River, cleared it, and planned in detail the cabin he wanted for them to enjoy. The Friday night it was completed, John arrived home from work late and upon hearing of the completed cabin, was ready to go out and see it. Bubbling with excitement, John and Blanche hauled their sleeping children out of bed and did just that! Throughout his life John worked as a mason and was very proud of his work, including his membership in the brick layers union. He loved to point out the many chimneys and fireplaces touched by his workmanship. John was also part of some major projects in the area. He was the brick foreman when the St. Simon's Catholic Church was built in Ludington and on the Ludington Pumped Storage project as well. Even after he retired at the age of 62 he continued to do small jobs for family and friends. There were many ways in which John was truly one-of-a-kind. He always named his cars including "Black Beauty," "Green Hornet," and even his wife's car was "Silver Streak." John was always one to have several jobs in the hopper, although they didn't always get completed. He never threw anything away and insisted that everything could be fixed, although they usually weren't. John had strong opinions about things and was not shy about voicing them. His family was everything to him and "The Gathering of the Clan," as he called it when everyone was together, were the most treasured times in his life. John A. McCumber was a man of great character. He loved his work and puttering around the house, but his favorite moments were those he spent with his family. John will be dearly missed, but his true legacy will live on in the hearts and lives of those he leaves behind. John died at his home on December 17, 2009, following a battle with lung cancer. In addition to his brother and sister, he was preceded in death by his parents, sister-in-law Mary Bennett and brothers-in-law Larry, Clarence and Harvey Shafer. John will be lovingly remembered by his wife Blanche, his children Janet (Douglas) Barth of Clarksville, MD, Diane (Jeff) Day of Indianapolis, IN, Tim McCumber of Traverse City, Tom (Kathy) McCumber of Ada, MaryAnn (Steve) Nielsen of Scottville, Todd (Robyn) McCumber of Custer and Jon (Pam) McCumber of

Grand Rapids; eleven grandchildren Steven (Rebecca) Barth of Bel Air, MD, Joanna Barth of Clarksville, MD, Tim (Kelly) Day of Shelby Township, Katie Day of Toledo, OH, David and Laura McCumber of Ada, Kari Nielsen and Tessie (Josh) Henry all of Scottville, Stephanie Nielsen of Grand Rapids, Jenni (Travis) Altman of Ludington and Joe McCumber of Custer, great grandchildren Ian Barth and Chase and Mack Henry, sisters-in-law Emma VanHorn, Phyllis Petersen, and brothers-in-law Arthur (Donna) Shafer and Tom Shafer.