



## Nels Stokholm Christensen

November 7, 1940 - October 22, 2007

Nels Stokholm “Bud” Christensen was a man of character and strength. He was close to his family and welcoming to friends and strangers. He lived his life with honesty and integrity, cutting to the heart of what mattered. Though quiet, his actions spoke louder than words as he led by example. Bud loved his family and they knew it. Bud was born at a time when the United States was cautiously watching events unfold in Europe, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt was encouraging Americans with his Fireside Chats. Families had come through the challenges of economic depression with a determination to make life better for their children. One such family was Aage and Florence (Hansen) Christensen of Scottville, Michigan who welcomed the birth of their fourth child on November 7, 1940. Nels Stokholm was born in the apartment of Christensen Bar, owned by his father and his Uncle Arne. Throughout their childhood, Nels’ five siblings – Ralph, Nedra, Audrey, Peter, and Lance – were treated to his practical jokes and harmonica playing. Nels started with the harmonica when he was eight years old, and he kept up with it all his life. In high school, Bud met a fellow classmate who would become his wife. Sandra Schilling was impressed with his strong silent demeanor, and his ability to dance was also very appealing. They graduated from Scottville High School in 1960 and were married on January 14, 1961 at Scottville United Methodist Church. The godly character that Sandy first saw in Bud when they were dating, continued throughout their marriage. His love for Sandy showed more in his actions than in any words he might have spoken. Bud continually looked

for ways to serve Sandy, and they delighted in one another's company. One of the favorite activities they shared was dancing. They danced together their whole lives, even as recently as October 22, 2007. Bud and Sandy set up house in Ludington and began their family. They were overjoyed by the birth of Dennis Lee in 1961 and then Carla Catherine in 1962, but deeply saddened when each child died at birth. Their hearts were made glad again when their son Ted was born in 1963. But events half a world away interrupted their lives. Bud was visiting his brother in the armed services one day, when he ended up enlisting in the Army. It was just before the start of the Vietnam Conflict in 1963, and Bud served at Fort Lee, Virginia before going overseas to France. During his army career, he was a sharpshooter and a construction engineer in the building of roads. He was honorably discharged in 1966 and returned to Mason County. The job he found would be the only one he ever needed. Bud worked for Consumers Power, starting out as a tree trimmer, then as a lineman, and concluding his 30 years as a serviceman and troubleshooter. He retired in 1997 with the gratitude of a company that benefited from his excellent service and loyalty. At the conclusion of Bud's military service, he and Sandy were once again blessed with children. Daughters Nicki and Sara were born in 1967 and 1975, respectively. Bud was the kind of father who raised his children by the words he spoke and the example he was. He taught them to respect others – their family and friends, their elders and even animals. Because he helped others without expecting anything in return, Bud's children learned to give of themselves in the same way. The love within their family was nurtured by the church they attended and broadened to many around them. Several recipients of the family's generosity of heart were exchange students from around the world. They first hosted Laurence, from France, through a local friend from France. Then Rosemary, from Australia, came to stay with them after becoming close friends with Nicki. They opened their home to Yoshi, from Japan, when Ludington schools had an overage of exchange students. Oliver, from Germany, came to stay with them by way of a government award program. The Christensen family thoroughly enjoyed each

student for the duration of the time they had together. But that was not unexpected, since their home was always open to anyone. Bud loved having his children around, and he gladly welcomed their friends as well. Over the years, Bud enjoyed outdoor activities that he had learned as a child. He fished on camping trips and hunted on excursions out west. Bud, along with his brothers and other family members own a cabin called Lone Pine Hunt Club on Conrad Road, and Bud spent many afternoons and evenings there. He also went on several elk hunting trips with his brothers, his son-in-law Jim, and his friends Ray Keith, Bob Thurow, Larry Moorlag, and Bill Partrich. In winter, he traveled to Arizona near Parker Dam on the Colorado River, where he liked to ride Jeeps and Quads through the Arizona mountains. He ventured as far away as Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and Alaska, where he even panned for gold. Whether heading off into the wild or tinkering with things around the house, Bud always kept himself busy. Bud was a member of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Scottville, the Mason County Fin and Feather Club, and the Rock Bridge Artillery Brigade. With his friend Gil Stansell, Bud reenacted Civil War battles as a Gunnery Sergeant with the southern Rebel Army. On more reserved occasions, he could be found playing harmonica around a campfire with his guitar-playing buddies. The joy of playing stayed with Bud through the six years he struggled with Alzheimer's, right up until just six months before his passing on Monday. Bud was loving husband, father and grandfather and a beloved brother, uncle and friend. They will miss his many "Bud-isms," yet they will long remember his gentle heart and caring ways. Nels "Bud" Christensen, went home to be with his Lord on October 22, 2007. He was preceded in death by his parents, his children Dennis Lee and Carla Catherine, and his brother Ralph. Bud will be greatly missed by his wife Sandra, his children Ted (Patricia) Christensen of Glendale, Wisconsin, Nicki (James) Claire of Scottville, and Sara Christensen of Ludington; his foreign exchange children Laurence Didier of Nancy, France, Rosemary McClelland Strahan of Melbourne, Australia, Yoshiyuki Shimizu of Tokyo, Japan, and

Oliver Mathis of Germany; his beloved grandchildren Krystle Maneke of Glendale, Wisconsin, Carlie and Brianna Claire of Scottville, and Loren Nels Christensen Cart of Ludington; his brothers and sisters Nedra (Robert) Haupt of Scottville, Audrey McDonald of Ludington, Peter (Jackie) Christensen, and Lance (Marge) Christensen all of Scottville; his mother-in-law Catherine Schilling of Walhalla; his sister-in-law and brothers-in-law Arlene Christensen of Ludington, Steve (Pat) Schilling, and Martin (Cheryl) Schilling all of Walhalla; his stepbrother and stepsister Jim Christensen of Fountain, and Darlene (Richard) Bettison of Ludington; and numerous nieces and nephews. Funeral services will be held for Nels at 11:00 AM on Saturday, October 27 at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Scottville, with his pastor, Rev. James Schroeder officiating. Burial will follow with Honor Guard rites at Center Riverton Cemetery. Friends may meet with his family for a time of visitation on Friday from 2-4 and 7-9 PM at the Stephens Funeral Home in Scottville. Those who wish may make memorial contributions to Our Savior Lutheran Church. Funeral arrangements are being cared for by the Wyman Funeral & Cremation Services ~ Stephens Funeral Home.