



Nicholas Steven Tatarchuk

January 3, 1924 - September 12, 2012

LIFE STORY: Although Nicholas Tatarchuk valued many things throughout his life, none were more important than creating close relationships with the family he treasured so deeply. He was a loving husband, devoted father, proud grandfather and great grandfather, and a friend to many. Nick was a man of great strength who worked hard throughout his life, but also fostered a gentle compassionate spirit by helping and teaching others. He realized that true joy in life comes not from material possessions, but the lifelong friends and loving family that surround you. As America was winding down its first 25 years of the new millennium called the 20th Century, events were taking place that would shape our way of life for years to come. Joseph Stalin took power in the former Soviet Union, Ford Motor Co. produced its one-millionth automobile, and Parker Brothers came out with Monopoly, which became one of the world's most popular games. Jacob and Mary (Colta) Tatarchuk, immigrants of the Ukraine and Austria, were living on their farm in the rural community of Carr Settlement in Mason County, Michigan, where his brother, Emil, also had a farm. On January 3, 1924, the couple delighted in the birth of their son, Nicholas Steven. Nick, along with his brother John and sister Anna, were raised on the family farm in Mason County, where they grew up with an appreciation for hard work. Neither of his parents spoke English, so Nick was often their interpreter. Always active, Nick was very athletic. He literally ran to school every day, and participated in football, basketball and track (shot put) at Baldwin High School. After graduating in 1941, Nick and some men from

the Carr area put together a traveling basketball team, playing games against other community teams. Nick was a very physical basketball player and he developed a reputation for making men out of boys when they played with him. He loved the game and continued playing well into his 40s. Nick's life took on added meaning and direction when a beautiful young lady caught his eye as she walked past the local pickle station where he was working. Her name was Renetta Bregg and Nick wasted no time in asking her for a date. As they got to know each other, the two fell in love. They were married on May 1, 1943, in St. Gregory's Catholic Church in Carr Settlement, the start of a wonderful new family. True soul mates, Nick and Renetta spent the next 66 years together, raising their four children: Carol, Nancy, Nicholas and Betty, making wonderful memories together. The couple made their home in Scottville for a time before Nick bought his Uncle Emil's farm down the road from his parents. No stranger to hard work, Nick farmed for many years, raising dairy and feed cattle, pigs, chickens, geese and Percheron and Belgian horses. At one time, he owned a stable of 33 horses that he used for farming and logging. He was proud of his horses, knew each one well and could still tell the names of every horse he had ever owned. Eventually, Nick began working construction with his neighbor, Dewey Chrysler, and he used the horses to cart away the dirt as they dug out new basements for existing homes. A perfectionist when it came to his work, there are many strong, sturdy homes and businesses that Nick built around the Mason and Lake County area that are still admired today. Some of them are recognized today as Johnny's Skate Center in Custer, Custer Baptist Church, Dr. Bacon's office in Scottville and the Carr Fire Station. It was said that if Nick built it, it was built to last. Even though he had a special affection for his horses, Nick had a heart for all animals. When one of his mares was in labor, Nick hunkered down in the barn close by until the foal was born. He had one special horse, Jim, that was taller than his truck, but Nick had trained him to simply step into the box of the truck when they needed to go somewhere. Nothing made Nick happier than to share his horses with others, giving hay rides at White Pine Village,

the Chicken BBQ in Scottville, school functions and church socials. He loved to see the smiling faces of children when he taught them about the horses. Nick enjoyed competing in various horse pull competitions throughout the area for many years as well. Although a rugged man, Nick had a tender, compassionate heart and was always looking for ways to help others. Around the holidays, he fixed plates for shut-ins and homeless and delivered them. Whenever his friends came to visit, he made sure they never left hungry. Nick worked hard, took care of his family and loved his wife dearly. He didn't need great things in his life to make him happy. It was the simple pleasures that meant the most to him, like driving to Ludington beach with Renetta to get ice cream and watch the sunset. Sunday afternoons after church, they'd enjoy a good dinner together and then danced to polka music. For many years, Nick loved to go deer hunting, and did so until his 80s. These are the moments that gave him a full and happy life. He will be greatly missed. Nicholas Tatarчук passed away on Wednesday, September 12, 2012 with his hammer in his hands. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife Renetta, his parents, his brother John, and his sister Anna Reminieć. Nick will be greatly missed by his children Carol (Carl) Cox of Cadillac, Nancy (William) Yahne of Alpena, Nicholas (Ginny) Tatarчук of Holland, and Betty (James) Savich of Carr Settlement; 8 grandchildren, and numerous great-grandchildren, and great, great-grandchildren. The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Nick at 11:00 am on Saturday, September 15 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Custer. Burial will follow at St. Mary's Cemetery. Friends may meet with his family for a time of visitation on Friday from 2-4 and 6-9 pm at the Stephens Funeral Home in Scottville, and on Saturday from 10:00 am until time of Mass at the church. A Prayer Service will be held for Nick on Friday evening at 7:00 pm at the funeral home. Nick's family requests that memorial contributions be made to the family for charities to be decided later.