



## Richard Allen Wendt

September 27, 1951 - July 16, 2011

DICK'S LIFE STORY: Through the life of Richard Allen Wendt, the lesson can be learned that true happiness is not found in what we have - but in what we give. Dick was a friend to all, not knowing what an enemy was; a selfless man, looked up to as a hero by his brothers. Dick treasured his family and made it his personal mission to see to it that his nieces and nephews were pleasantly spoiled in every way. An outdoor enthusiast, Dick found any body of water fit for fishing, and enjoyed the beauty of the simplest of things. He leaves behind a brilliant mosaic of memories that will remain forever a treasure in the hearts of all who knew him. The fifties were a colorful time when the country was introduced to rock 'n roll and teenage girls wore poodle skirts and pony tails, while young men everywhere imitated the smooth moves of James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*. As the decade dawned that there was great cause for celebration in one young family from Scottville as they announced the birth of a healthy baby boy on September 27, 1951. Richard Allen was welcomed into the world by his parents, Sanford and Ruth (Dickey) Wendt, and was one of five children along with his siblings Larry, Charles, Thomas, and Sandra. They grew up together in the family home in Custer, during the years when his father worked for Dow Chemical and his mother enjoyed being home with her children. When he was two years old, Dick contracted polio and spent several months in a Grand Rapids hospital. His parents were told he would never be able to walk without crutches, but Dick would have no part of that. He ditched his crutches one day to retrieve something and didn't use them again until

these most recent years. With his new found freedom he was determined to enjoy each and every moment he was given. For a time, Dick attended Resseguie School before moving to Mason County Eastern Schools in Custer. In high school he enjoyed being the student manager for the basketball team, wanting to stay involved even though he wasn't able to play. Dick also played the coronet in the band for awhile. After graduating from high school in 1969, he continued his education at West Shore Community College, a new facility, and he was part of the first class to graduate in 1971. Since they did not have an indoor location large enough to host the graduation festivities, the pomp and circumstance took place on the front lawn. Dick went on to attend Central Michigan University, graduating with a bachelor's degree in education. Throughout his life Dick worked in a variety of fields. He initially worked as a substitute teacher in local schools throughout Mason, Oceana, and Lake Counties. Dick later worked as a field crew leader for Stokely's Cannery in Scottville, then worked in the dispatch area for several years. From there he went to work in shipping and receiving for Jackson Vibrators in Ludington before settling in at Great Lakes Energy, formerly West Michigan REA, where he worked as a construction coordinator from 1984 until his death. Although work was certainly a necessary part of Dick's life, there was so much more to living for Dick. He enjoyed hunting and for him, fishing was an option anywhere there was a body of water. Some of his favorite fishing spots included the Pere Marquette River and special spots in the Upper Peninsula. Dick often went sucker fishing with his nieces and nephews, did a fair amount of perch fishing, and really was always up for fishing for just about anything. In fact, if it was an outdoor activity, Dick was ready for it. He enjoyed traveling around on their farm in his golf cart, picking blueberries, planting flowers, and watching wildlife, or just tooling around with his golf cart buddy, Ron Sorensen. He also did the snowplowing for several friends and neighbors during the winter months. A man of many interests, he was a fantastic cook whether he was in the kitchen or out cooking on the grill, and he was also a member of the Writing Group People and enjoyed Sudoku, crossword

puzzles, and jigsaw puzzles. He also was the editor of the Country Lines Magazine for Western Michigan Electric. The thing for which Dick was perhaps best known was his willingness to lend a hand in any way he could. He volunteered for several community projects and had been actively involved in Boy Scouts for many years. Dick had a special place in his heart for all children. It was easy to see that, for Dick, the sun rose and set with his nieces and nephews. As far as he was concerned, they could do no wrong. He spoiled them at every opportunity and made every effort to pass his mischievous sense of humor on to them. Priceless memories were made out in the field during haying time when he took them out for impromptu driving lessons. Although his form of driver's education may have been a bit unorthodox, it was always a ton of fun! His nieces and nephews knew it was wise to visit Uncle Dick when they had a project or fundraiser of some kind, as he was notorious for buying cases of whatever they were selling. There is an endless list of extraordinary traits in Dick's good character - he was a great friend as well as a fun-loving prankster. He could weave a story like no other and had an unmatched sense of humor. He never worried about gaining wealth according to the world's standards and, out of his heart that knew no bounds; he gave most of his money away to help the people and causes about which he was passionate. Life will never be the same without Richard Allen Wendt, but many lives are forever changed for the better because he was a part of it - the "biggest, most generous heart in all of Mason County", Dick will be deeply missed. Dick was preceded in death by his brother Larry on December 28, 1964, and will be greatly missed by his parents Sanford and Ruth with whom he lived, his brothers Charles (Carole) Wendt of Scottville, and Thomas (Debra) Wendt of Custer, his sister Sandra (James) Durfee of Scottville, and many beloved nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, and numerous cousins. Funeral services will be held for Dick at 11:00 am on Thursday, July 21 at the Stephens Funeral Home in Scottville with his friend, Rev. Norman Letsinger officiating. Burial will take place at Riverside Cemetery

in Custer. Friends may meet with his family for a time of visitation on Wednesday evening from 5:00 – 8:00 pm at the funeral home. Those who wish may make memorial contributions to the Area 24 Special Olympics, or the Boy Scouts of America (envelopes for both available at the funeral home).