



Urban N. Bernier

March 24, 1921 - February 25, 2011

LIFE STORY: Urbain Bernier filled a lifetime with the love of family. An unassuming man whose actions spoke volumes for his character, he was in all ways a genuine good natured man with whom others could rely. A wonderful storyteller, he often began with, "There I was . . . ", and always used his quick wit and charming ways to bring smiles to those around him. A true kid at heart, Urbain was a loving and devoted husband, father, brother, and friend. From the world of fashion to the world to politics, forces clashed in the 1920s to produce one of the most explosive decades of the century. An age of prohibition, prosperity followed many new advancements, discoveries, and inventions of the day which greatly improved the American way of life. A sense of gaiety filled the air, and The Roaring Twenties challenged America's once conservative nature all while bringing a sense of hope to the nation. It was during this time of change on March 24, 1921 when Albert and Blanche (Sorel) Bernier welcomed the birth of their son, Urbain into their hearts. Born in East Hampton, Massachusetts, Urbain was the third of eventually seven children. His father, a lumberjack by trade, moved to the U.S. from Quebec in his younger years, while his mother grew up in Massachusetts and taught music lessons. When young Urbain was two years old their family moved to Detroit, where his father could search for better work opportunities. During his youth Urbain acquired a few of his mother's musical abilities. As a boy he played the trumpet and guitar, but really enjoyed playing baseball, too. He was a fun-loving and active child who seemed to always find his share of mischief,

often with his brothers. Even so, he was a likeable young man and a friend to many. With the onset of World War II, Urbain and two of his brothers felt the call to duty and enlisted in the U.S. Army. Urbain, who was nicknamed "Frenchy" while in the service, served with the Army Air Corps as a radar operator. He was stationed in the Pacific Theatre, notably in New Guinea and the Philippines. Upon returning home to Detroit after the war, Urbain realized he had an entire lifetime ahead to do as he pleased. However, fate took the lead when a pretty young lady named Theresa Long, a friend of his sister, quickly captured his attention. He and Theresa began dating and before long they fell deeply in love. Knowing full well who he wanted to share a lifetime with, she never hesitated when Urbain proposed. On May 25, 1946 they happily exchanged vows of marriage in a ceremony held in Detroit. After settling in the Lincoln Park area, they began their life together as husband and wife. A year later they were blessed with the birth of their daughter, Carol. Fourteen years later their son, Urbain Jr. would complete their family. Urbain supported his family as a yard clerk working for New York Central Railroad, which is now known as Conrail, where he remained for the next 44 years. He also had several side businesses over the years as a way to earn extra income for his family. He made wood pallets in the basement of their home, and invested in a dump truck he used for hauling banana stalks to the dump from Eastern Market. For a time he also worked on the loading docks for McCoit Cartage Trucking Company. Although a hard working man, Urbain never lost sight of the importance of family. A wonderful provider, his family was everything to him and he always made time for them. He coached his son's little league baseball team, and family vacations out west and on the east coast were thoroughly enjoyed. They made frequent visits to Canada, often north to Montreal. In 1973 they bought property near Harper Lake in the resort area of Irons located in the Manistee National Forest. Taking in all the area had to offer with the lake's beautiful sunsets and pristine waters, Urbain, with the help of his son began building a home on their property. He and Theresa moved there in 1982, and finished the home where he would enjoy

the rest of his days. Urbain found much to keep himself busy. He was a member of the Moose Lodge in Lincoln Park, and the Peacock VFW Post in Irons. They faithfully attended Mass as members of St. Bernard Catholic Church where Urbain took part in the Men's Club and sang in the choir. Whenever there was a church festival, Urbain was sure to be found tending bar. He and Theresa decided to take ballroom dance lessons, and their membership at the Moose Lodge allowed them the opportunity to meet many new people, and develop long lasting friendships. A genuinely nice guy, Urbain Bernier never held a grudge and was rarely angry. He was never too serious, and known for being a teaser, he always enjoyed a good joke in the company of good friends. In fact, he enjoyed teasing his nurses right until the end. He will be remembered for his love of children, and treasured his own, especially his grandchildren. They will forever hold fond remembrance of him singing and whistling, each recalling his special song for them. He also loved singing to the woman who captured his heart years earlier, his beloved Theresa, and serenaded her in song even while at the nursing home. With integrity, Urbain was a fine example of a gentle and loving man who will be deeply missed. Urbain Bernier died peacefully on Friday, February 25, 2011 with his beloved Theresa by his side. Along with Theresa, he will be greatly missed by his daughter Carol Kasperek and her husband Anthony of Cedar Springs; his son Urbain Bernier Jr. and his wife Linda of Taylor; his grandchildren Kurt (Karen) Kasperek, Nicole (Todd) Weller, Jennifer (Nathan) Levandowski, and Destinee Bernier; his great-grandchildren Nicholas, Jordan, Dylan, Danielle, Katie, Brian, and Jacob; his brother Edward Bernier of Detroit; his sister-in-law Helen (Frank) Gutowsky of Irons; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers Arthur, Honourous, and Victor Bernier; and his sisters Jeanette Loucks, and Marie Blanche LaPorte. Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, March 1 at the St. Bernard Catholic Church with Rev. Dennis O'Donnell as celebrant. Burial with Honor Guard rites will take place at Lakeview Cemetery in Irons in the spring. Friends may

meet with his family for a time of visitation on Monday evening from 6-9 PM at the church. Those who wish to make memorial contributions are asked to consider Hospice of Michigan, or the Disabled American Veterans.