



Walter J. Olmstead

May 28, 1937 - June 19, 2013

WALTER'S LIFE STORY: A man of honor, integrity, and unconditional love for his family, Walter J. Olmstead, Sr. was a genuine blessing in the lives of those around him. He was a true gentleman if ever there was one and a firm believer in the notion that everyone and everything is to be treated with respect. With the love of his life by his side for more than 50 years, Walter witnessed his family tree blossom to include the generations to whom he passed on numerous lessons in character and pieces of wisdom. The memories he leaves behind will be forever cherished. The 1930's brought about a time of change for many, as they rebuilt their lives following the depression. One young couple, Walter J. and Kathryn E. (Stark) Borton, were delighted to welcome the year 1937 as they were expecting a baby. Sadly, Walter died on April 10, 1937, just before his baby was to be born. Kathryn was filled with mixed emotions just over one month later when the son she named Walter Jay made his arrival on May 28th. She later remarried Donald Olmstead, who adopted Walter and raised him as his own son. In many ways Walter experienced an upbringing that was rather typical for the youth of his generation. He was raised in the family home in the Galien area and was a student at local schools. Walter's high school years found him at Galien High School where he served as class treasurer and president. He was also an accomplished athlete who competed in track and played both football and baseball. Walter also performed in the class play. Summers often found Walter spending time with his uncle, Kenneth Stark, and at their family cottage on the

Middle Bayou of Hamlin Lake in Ludington. After graduating from high school in 1955, he went on to Kalamazoo College and later became a college graduate. As a young man Walter settled into a job at Modern Plastics. This proved to be a fateful move as it was there that he met the woman of his dreams. She was a young woman from Stevensville named Gwen Osborne, and it wasn't long before the couple fell deeply in love. With a desire to establish a life together the couple was married on June 18, 1960, at Crystal Springs First Church of God in Benton Harbor. Together they were blessed with three children: Marianne Kay, Walter Jr., and Janice. After working for Modern Plastics for a time, Walter later began working as a foreman for Whirlpool Corporation and then for Carl Heald Inc. When he relocated to Ludington in 1989, Walter opened Ameriprise Financial Services in downtown Ludington. Work was something Walter enjoyed, but nothing was sweeter than spending time with his family. Many of their most priceless moments were spent at the family cottage. Walter enjoyed spending as much time as possible outdoors, often with his children and grandchildren hunting, fishing, and going on nature walks, as well as swimming and water skiing. During the winter months he liked snowmobiling and ice fishing. Traditions such as Walter's fresh omelets and Gwen's homemade cinnamon rolls on Christmas morning before opening presents were treasured ingredients in their family life. The Olmstead family always engaged in an egg hunt on Easter as well. Throughout his life Walter was a vital component in the communities he called home. From 1972 through 1989, he operated a charter boat service called Blue Water Sport Fishing Charters on Lake Michigan near St. Joseph. Walter was a member of the Great Lakes Charter Captains Association and Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fisherman's Association. He was also a trustee with the Elks Club in St. Joseph, elected Admiral of the St. Joseph Venetian Festival in 1986, and a member of both Berrien County Sportsman's Club, and the Fin & Feather Club of Mason County where he helped instruct hunter's safety classes, and concealed carry classes. Walter also loved sharing his passions with younger generations as he supervised youth shoots, and

sponsored youth to attend the Michigan United Conservation Corp camps. The things to love about Walter are numerous. Known as Bud or Buddy to many of his friends, his voicemail and answering machine messages always brought smiles to those who called even though they were unable to reach him at the time. Even in these messages it was easy to catch Walter's sense of humor and admirable character. He always told the best stories and had a contagious zest for living that was impossible to miss. Walter was genuine, the real deal, and someone who was respectful of people, things, and the environment. His professional and kindhearted demeanor showed in the way he ran his charter boat. Walter treasured the times he shared with his nine grandchildren and his six great-grandchildren later in life. He loved passing his passion for the outdoors on to these younger generations. Walter was deeply saddened with the death of his beloved wife in July of 2012, but he continued to savor the days he was given to spend with his loved ones. With a life that spanned times of great change in the world around him, Walter Olmstead, Sr. made a significant impact in the lives of so many who were within his reach. He had unconditional love and respect for others that provide us all with much to aspire for. Life will never be the same without Walter here, but the legacy he leaves behind will be carried on by the generations who follow him. He will be deeply missed.

Walter J. Olmstead, Sr. died on June 19, 2013. Walter's family includes his children, Marrienne Kay Olmstead of Custer, Walter J. (Anita) Olmstead Jr. of Ludington, and Janice (Steve) Johnson of Nappanee, Indiana; 9 grandchildren; and 6 great-grandchildren. A Celebration of Life will be held for Walter from 2-3 p.m. and a time to reminisce from 3-4 p.m. on Saturday, June 29 at the Stephens Funeral Home in Scottville. His family looks forward to celebrating his life with you during this time. Those who wish to make contributions in memory of Walter are asked to consider the Alzheimer's Association, the Berrien County Sportsman Club, Mason County Fin & Feather Club, or to Harbor Hospice.