



Gary E. Petersen

May 2, 1946 - December 12, 2020

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It is with great sadness that the family of Gary Eugene Petersen announces his passing on December 10, 2020 while visiting with his daughter and three grandchildren in Oregon. He was 74 years old. His contagious smile, helping hand, patient teaching methods and wisdom will be greatly missed. If there was one thing he believed, every experience could be a moment to learn from and if he had already learned that which the moment could teach, he became the teacher.

The oldest of four siblings, Gary was born on May 2, 1946 in Watertown, South Dakota to Ordeen and Doris Petersen. He spent his childhood growing up in towns throughout the state and helping extended family on their farms during the summers. His love of being on the farm, hard work, and of nature was nurtured during this time and throughout his life he would often recall fond memories of those summers. At the beginning of high school his Dad bought a gas station and moved the family to Brooklyn Park, MN where Gary helped his father while attending and graduating Brooklyn Center High school. After a small window at the University of Minnesota and a local community college, Gary joined

and entered the United States Air Force in April 1967 as a Survival Instructor. In December of 1967 he married his high school sweetheart Gloria Zimney. He served in Florida, Libya, Washington and Alaska until his retirement 20 years later in 1988. During this time he had two children and was very active in both the church choir (he loved to sing!) and as the volunteer church treasurer at St Nicholas Catholic Church. Outside of work and the church, he enjoyed snow-machining, hunting moose, helping with the local Alaskan Baseball League team, the North Pole Nicks, playing golf and gatherings with family friends. After retiring from the military, Gary went back to school where he earned his Bachelors of Science in Accounting in 1993 from the University of Alaska. He began working for the IRS in late 1993 where he worked auditing businesses and small gov't entities. He spent every March and April volunteering his time with the IRS's VITA program at the libraries in both Fairbanks, Alaska and, once the government moved him, in Reno, Nevada where he assisted low income individuals prepare and file tax returns. In his later years in Reno he volunteered to help at golf tournaments, unpacking and packing hot air balloons when they flew out in early mornings and began taking extended vacations in his RV. Gary retired from the IRS as his second government retirement in January 2014.

His dream of becoming a full time RV'er became a reality within weeks of retirement and he spent the remainder of his life traveling the United States hiking the National Parks, capturing natures beauty in his photographs, biking, playing pickleball, helping on his Cousins Farm Twice a year, Volunteering building homes with Habitat for Humanity, visiting his daughters and grandchildren on each side of the coast and becoming well known in the RV touring circuit, both enjoying the tours and being a tail-ender on many tours, all the while sharing his wisdom, a lending hand, and building friendships with people all over.

Gary is survived by his Father Ordeen Petersen, brothers Alan Petersen and Glen Petersen, sister Diane (Steve) Marohn, his two daughters LeAnne Cray and Melessia Todd (Mothered by Gloria Petersen), and 6 grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his mother Doris Petersen.

A Memorial service will be held at Evans-Nordby Funeral Home, 6000 Brooklyn Blvd. Brooklyn Center, MN 55429 on December 22, 2020 with viewing beginning at 10am CST and service held at 11am CST. Due to being in our time of the pandemic, the service will also be streamed online for safe distance remembrance via Zoom using the Meeting ID: 995 5479 9749 with Passcode: Petersen or the link below

[Gary Petersen Online Memorial Service 11am CST](#)