

Merle Wilbur Thompson, age 86, passed away peacefully at the Perham Living care facility on November 27, 2023. He suffered an incapacitating stroke in December of 2016 and was courageous during his illness. Despite his limited physical abilities, he remained a caring husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends and all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Merle Wilbur Thompson was born on November 26, 1937 in Frazee, Minnesota and was the first-born child to Milton and Margaret (Clark) Thompson. He grew up on the family farm north of Perham, Minnesota. As a child he went to District #158 Country School through the eighth grade and then attended Perham High School.

For six years, Merle served his country with the Army National Guard and did his basic training in California and then in Minnesota from 1959-1965.

Merle was introduced to Marian (Van Watermulen) by her brother Gearld. Merle and Marian were married at St. Henry's Catholic Church in Perham, Minnesota on May 18, 1964. He drove truck for the Perham Egg Plant from 1957-1967 and then worked for the Otter Tail County Highway Department until retiring in December 2000. In addition to his full-time job, Merle worked part-time for Meyers Service Station in Perham for many years.

After retiring, Merle and Marian spent 16 years of their winter months in South Texas where they met many dear people who became good friends. While wintering in Texas, Merle volunteered for the local Rio Grande tourism department, helped pick oranges for food shelves, was an active member of their parks' bike club, and handcrafted beautiful stained-glass art that is treasured by family and friends. Summers were spent in Perham, and Merle worked for several years at the Perham Lakeside Golf Course during the summer golf season doing maintenance and mowing the course. He also volunteered for the Perham Chamber of Commerce and drove the "train" for rides on the Perham Express during the summer months entertaining tourists of Perham.

Merle was a hard-working and loyal family man. He worked with a positive attitude and without complaint to help provide for those he loved. He enjoyed spending time with family, camping, riding the bike trails, working on his '56 Ford pickup truck, and restoring old tractors and collecting Farmall and Ford collectable toys. He had a way of lighting up a room with his genuine smile. He was an avid handyman and could literally fix almost anything. He would often be found picking up garbage when out for his walks or bike rides. He cared about the environment and was fond of the saying 'leave it better than how you found it'.

Merle made those around him feel loved and cared for. He had endless patience with children and his kindness, humor and friendship were felt by all he interacted with. He was very proud of his two children and loved watching his two granddaughters grow up to be intelligent and caring adults and adored his precious great-grandchildren.

As a child of God, Merle led by example and did leave this world a better place for all who had the good fortune of knowing him.

Merle is survived by his wife of 59 years Marian, daughter Maxine (Jay) Thomas, son Mark (Jill), granddaughters Chelsey (Dan) Steinlicht, Samantha (Chad) Schulz, and great-grandchildren Ellie, Lauren, Addison and Jake Steinlicht, and Walker Schulz, along with his sister Linda (John) Kindt, his brothers Dennis (Karen) Thompson, Ivan Thompson, and beloved nieces and nephews.

Merle was preceded in death by his parents, Milton and Margaret Thompson, his sisters, Doreen Lois Thompson and Karen (Thompson) Dreyer.

In Loving

MEMORY



Merle W. Thompson

November 26, 1937 ~ November 27, 2023

A Successful Man

By an Unknown Author

That man is a success -
who has lived well, laughed often and loved much;
who has gained the respect of intelligent men
and the love of children;
who has filled his niche and accomplished his task;
who leaves the world better than he found it;
who has never lacked appreciation of earth's
beauty or failed to express it;
Who looked for the best in others
and gave the best he had.



Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Memorial Service

Monday, December 4, 2023 at 11:00 AM
St. Henry's Catholic Church
Perham, Minnesota

Officiant

Father George Michael

Musician

Rick Fielder, Vocalist and Guitarist

Musical Selections

"On the Wings of the Snow White Dove"
"Prayer of St. Francis"
"Amazing Grace"
"How Great Thou Art"
"Song of Farewell"
"Be Not Afraid"

Honorary Casket Bearers

Merle's Granddaughters and their husbands
Chelsey and Dan Steinlicht
Samantha and Chad Schulz

Interment

St. Stanislaus Catholic Cemetery
Perham, Minnesota

*A heartfelt thank you to all who have come
to share in the celebration of Merle's life.
We have all been honored and blessed to experience this outpouring
of remembrance of the whole person who was Merle.
Please join us for lunch following the service.
-Merle's family*