

The Family Tree

A limb has fallen from the family tree.

I keep hearing a voice that says,

‘Grieve not for me’.

Remember the best times,

The laughter, the song.

The good life I lived while I was strong.

Continue my heritage, I’m counting on you.

Keep smiling and surely

the sun will shine through.

My mind is at ease, my soul is at rest.

Remembering all, how I truly was blessed.

Continue traditions, no matter how small.

Go on with your life, don’t worry about falls

I miss you all dearly, so keep up your chin.

Until the day we’re together again.



Forever in Our Hearts

Gary R. Willink

November 11, 1947 — May 10, 2026

Gary Robert Willink, age 78, passed away peacefully on Sunday, May 10, 2026, leaving behind a legacy of service, community dedication, and deep love for family.

Gary was born on November 11, 1947, in Baldwin, Wisconsin, to Robert and Ruth Willink. During his childhood, he moved with his family throughout Illinois, Wisconsin, and New Mexico before settling in Jackson, Minnesota, where he graduated from high school in 1965.

Following graduation, Gary attended Bemidji State University, where he played football, before enlisting in the United States Marine Corps in 1966. He served two and a half tours in Vietnam where he was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Navy Commendation, and Good Conduct Medal. After his military service, Gary pursued further education at Rochester Community College. While in Rochester, he met the love of his life, Sheila Clymer.

Gary and Sheila, along with their daughter Jamie, returned to Jackson in 1971 and were married on August 14, 1971. Their family was completed with the birth of their daughter Kris on May 7, 1974.

Gary was a hardworking and dedicated member of his community. He owned and operated Jackson Cycle until 1983, after which he began working for Wells Bus Company. He later retired from Southwest Coaches in 2011. His commitment to Jackson extended far beyond his professional life - he was deeply involved in civic service, holding several roles including hospital board member, city council member, county commissioner, and serving as mayor of Jackson from 1999-2007

An avid outdoorsman, Gary found joy in a wide range of activities including running, competing in triathlons and marathons, golfing, fishing, ice fishing, riding motorcycles, and snowmobiling. Above all, he cherished time spent with Sheila and their dogs at the campground.

A lover of music, mainly 60's rock, he attended many concerts over the years. There was always music in the house and he was often found dancing in the kitchen while cooking meals. He also took great pride in organizing large Willink family reunions, creating lasting memories in places such as Yellowstone, New Mexico, Colorado, and Wisconsin.

Gary is survived by his loving wife, Sheila; daughters, Jamie (Andy) Pratt and Kris (Mike) Weigelt; grandchildren, Danny (Sarah) Judge, Matthew Judge, Jessica Judge, Raina Weigelt, and Kieran Weigelt; great-grandchildren, Jack Judge and Kali Judge; sisters, Jean (Scott) Wilson and Joanne (Scott) Straetz; brother-in-law, Larry (Sandy) Clymer; and many cherished nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

He was preceded in death by his father, Robert (Ardy) Willink; and mother, Ruth Willink; father-in-law and mother-in-law, John and Kay Clymer; and brothers-in-law, Johnny Clymer and Ron (Susan) Clymer.

Gary will be remembered for his unwavering dedication to his family, his service to his country and community, and his zest for life and adventure. His presence will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

To view Gary's Tribute Video or leave a message of sympathy for his family, follow this QR code or visit his obituary page at www.sinnfuneralhome.com

