



Gordon Sonsthagen

September 1, 1926 - December 31, 2013

Gordon “Gordy” Marvin Sonsthagen was born September 1, 1926 in Litchville, ND to Albert and Nellie (Michelson) Sonsthagen. He attended grade school at Spring Creek District #24 and high school in Litchville, where he graduated with the class of 1944. Gordon was baptized and confirmed at First Lutheran Church in Litchville. He served in the US Army during World War II in Japan from 1946-1947.

On December 26, 1956, Gordon married Frances Sorenson in Moorhead, MN. She passed away February 2, 1987. Gordon farmed on the family farm that was homesteaded by his grandparents, Anton and Oline Sonsthagen. He lived in the Litchville community his entire life. Gordon operated a feeder pig business for over 25 years. In the fall of 1981 through 2002 he ran the Rib Rack Café in Litchville. Gordon married Cleone Charnetzki in 1989. She passed away in 1993.

Gordon was very active in his community. Over the years he belonged to many organizations and served on numerous boards including the VFW Post #9315, the Cooties, the Litchville 2000 Committee, the First Lutheran church board, the Litchville Fire Department where he served as chief for many years, the Litchville Farmer’s Union board, the Litchville museum board, and the Valley City Lions club. Gordy was also very active with the Democratic Party.

Gordon entered The Legacy Place in Valley City, ND in January of 2012. He passed away on December 31, 2013 at Mercy Hospital in Valley City.

Gordon’s greatest joy was driving out to the farm every day to see his family, the crops and the cattle. When he was no longer able to drive, he called several times a day to see how things were going out there.

Gordon is survived by his daughter, Shelly and her husband, Dennis Nelson; his granddaughters, Holly and her husband, Tim Johnson, and Tracy Nelson; and a great-grandson, Connor Johnson, all of Litchville; a sister, Betty Quatier of Edmonds, WA; a step-son, Neil Nelson of Odessa, TX; two step-grandsons, Tony Gillihan and Nicholas Nelson; and many nieces and nephews. The staff at The Legacy Place was very special to Gordon and they all took good care of him.

He was preceded in death by his parents; grandparents; his wives; his brother, Bernie; and a step-son, Kenneth Nelson.

The funeral service, followed by military honors, for Gordon will be held on Monday, January 6, 2014 at 2pm in the Litchville School gymnasium. Burial will be held in the spring at Memory Gardens near Valley City.

Visitation will be held on January 5 at Oliver-Nathan Chapel in Valley City from 3pm to 6pm, with a prayer service beginning at 6pm. There will also be visitation at the school an hour prior to the funeral on Monday.

An online memorial page and guestbook are available at www.oliver-nathanchapel.com. Oliver-Nathan Funeral Chapel has been entrusted with handling the funeral arrangements for Gordon.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

JAN 6. 2:00 PM (CT)

Litchville School Gymnasium
304 - 6th Ave.
Litchville, ND

Tribute Wall

TG

“ Dear Family

You have my sincere sympathy on the passing of Gordy. He was a good guy and I enjoyed knowing him, especially in Lions Club.

Tom Goven

Tom Goven - January 06, 2014 at 05:23 PM

DS

“ *This is a difficult time for your family and Dan and I extend our deepest sympathy to you all. Time does heal the heart. I know that when you think of your dad, grandpa, great grandpa, and brother tears come so quickly. You all know that those tears will be replaced with smiles and a ton of memories and stories will live on forever. Blessed be the memory of Gordy!*

Dan and Sandy - January 06, 2014 at 11:20 AM

SM

“ *My sympathy to you Shelly and Dennis and your family. I remember Gordy as a man always on the move. He was a very driven man. I have memories of going to the Ribrack everyday for lunch and dinner. You Never left there hungry. And man could he sell raffle tickets. Gordy will be greatly missed.
. Blessed be his memory. Steve Mennis*

Steve Mennis - January 06, 2014 at 12:25 AM

VM

“ *My sympathy to Shelly & Dennis, and family on the loss of your father, grandfather. I'm glad I had opportunity in my younger years to know "Gordy". Being around him meant action, things happening. Whether it be getting the food going & served when we were camping, going to a TWINS baseball game, or opening his home during the winter on stormy blustery days. Apparently he made an imprint on Randy as well, bringing pigs to the sales barn when he was a teenager. RIP Gordy, man of heart & soul & maker of the best homemade soup.
Vickie & Randy Meidinger*

Vickie Meidinger - January 05, 2014 at 06:33 PM

KK

“ *Blessings to your family.....I have many memories of Gordy :)*

Kelli Kourajian - January 05, 2014 at 06:05 PM

TM

“ Shelly you and your family are in my thoughts and prayers. I will never forget him or your mom for that matter...they were great neighbors....I will always remember the sound of his truck pulling up next door, you always knew when he came home...he at times appeared to have a tough exterior, but he was kind, gentle person, and will be truly missed by all who knew him. I remember helping him in the cafe and enjoyed seeing his smile. I always loved going to the cafe with my dad and having Gordon make my eggs just like i liked them....if anyone else made them they were always wrong.....I learned to only order them if he was cooking. As I read the tribute from Nicholis it bring back more memories of the trouble that we got into, and yes we probably deserved it. But he had a great way of teaching lessons. A great song I like about memories is called Precious Memories song by Alan Jackson. God bless you all in this time of loss.

Tammy McCleary and family

Tammy McCleary - January 04, 2014 at 06:25 PM

AS

“ Having worked a year at the Legacy Place, I will say that Gordon is a man who changed my whole perspective on patient care. He was one of the few residents that I allowed myself to become very close to. His stubbornness was only a ruse to mask all the love that this man held within. He took great pride in all his life's accomplishments; his farm, his work done to support his hometown, and most importantly his family. He also took great pride in giving the staff at the Legacy Place enough of a hard time to make us love him that much more. Although I no longer work there, I can speak for the whole facility (staff and residents) in saying that his 'tough love' persona will be missed greatly!



Ashley - January 03, 2014 at 01:19 PM

LQ

“ Our sincere condolences to the Sonsthagen family. LeRoy and Ida Quatier



LeRoy Quatier - January 03, 2014 at 09:44 AM

AN

“ *Arlene Nelson lit a candle in memory of Gordon Sonsthagen*



Arlene Nelson - January 03, 2014 at 12:16 AM

NI

“ *While some considered Gordon to be “gruff”, “stubborn”, or even “mean”, he absolutely had a heart of gold. He could be tough as nails yet be tender and gentle.*

How many men would allow a rotten teenager, from the city no less and who wasn't even a blood-relative, to stay for 2 ½ months of the year, over 6 years, and eat everything in sight?

Gordon was in his element at the Rib Rack, and catering the many picnics throughout the summer, being able to joke with everyone that came along and to hold his own in a battle of quick quips.

Being able to spend my teen summers with Francis and Gordon were the greatest opportunities in my life. My working for him in the restaurant and in the field definitely tested his patience and he did a fair bit of yelling, and looking back I can see that most of it was justifiable, but I also saw there were a lot of lessons in each of the many situations.

Of all the male role models in my formative years, Gordon was the single most influential person who taught me what it was to be a man.

I can honestly say that I would not be where I am today if it had not been for Gordon.

The two pictures I have posted of Gordon and Litchville represent for me a time in my youth that I cherish and hold dear, my memories of growing up in a safe and encouraging environment with loving and generous people.

I am honored to have been able to call him Grandpa. He will be missed.

Nicholis

Nicholis - January 02, 2014 at 11:34 PM



I'm Tony, Nicks brother, the other grandson, though not a blood relative, that spent many summers of my youth at Gordons and Francis's home in Litchville. He did seem at times to have a rough exterior, (his bark was bigger than his bite, as they say) but deep down I knew that Nick and I were special to them. They treated us with such love and attention, not only during our summer visits, but also during the Christmas holidays when we could always expect a very large package of presents and treats. I also remember a few occasions when Gorden and Francic flew out to WA state to spend a few days with us. And the nights we were treated to a meal at a fine restaurant. (I remember one time in particular when Gordy nearly sent Francis into shock at the size of the tip he gave the waiter, who no doubt deserved it. The memories I have of them both and the friendly people of that little town in ND will be forever etched and treasured In my memory and heart.

Tony (Nelson) Gillihan

Tony Gillihan - January 04, 2014 at 05:53 PM



*Nicholis, I am so sorry for the loss of your Grandfather. Your tribute to Gordon is well spoken. I remember all those summers well. I would have to say I remember you and Tony testing his patience as well, but that is what grand kids do. I think I probably helped you get into trouble with Gordon as well. I know that they loved you both very much, and were very proud of you both. They were always excited when you were coming out for the summer. And I am thankful they did have you stay as it made for fun summers with friends. May you always keep the memories in your heart and mind as if it was yesterday. God bless you and your family through this sad time. Sincerely
Tammy*

Tammy McCleary - January 04, 2014 at 06:10 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Tribute Wall



Nicholis - January 02, 2014 at 11:31 PM



“ Vicky Justesen Hlubek lit a candle in memory of Gordon Sonsthagen



Vicky Justesen Hlubek - January 02, 2014 at 08:31 PM

NN

“ Hopefully each person has some people who they where Blessed to know and have great respect for that person because of who they where. Gordon Sonsthagen was my ex-father in-law and to this very day he has a very special place in my heart. He was a strong man and had a great heart. He was so good to me and was a positive influence in my life and my two sons. Him and France helped me all through the years of raising my sons their grandsons Tony and Nick and give us wonderful memories of the times we got to spend with them in N.D. and also the times they visited us in Tacoma, WA. My heart goes out to all who loved them both. I cry as I write this cause I too loved them. To Shelly and Family you are in my prayers at this time. God Bless you all.

Love,
Norma

Norma Noe - January 02, 2014 at 12:41 AM

TM

Norma, my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this sad time. May you hold those special memories in your hearts and minds forever. Your tribute shows how very special Frances and Gordon were to those they loved.

Tammy

Tammy McCleary - January 04, 2014 at 06:15 PM