



Ernest Brodsky

MAR 10, 1929 - APR 13, 2020



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Ernest K. Brodsky (Monday, April 13)

Ernest K. Brodsky, loving husband, proud father, dear friend, and hard-working farmer and ironworker died on Monday, April 13, leaving his corner of the world and the people in it a little better for his being there.

Ernie, a.k.a. “Mr. Ernie,” was born on March 10, 1929 to Karl and Anna Brodsky, on their farm near Wagner, S.D. Although throughout his life Ernie never strayed far from the farm, his love of sports allowed him to gravitate to anything that was played with a ball, becoming a four-year starter on his Ravinia High School basketball team and playing quarterback on his high school’s inaugural 6-man football team. Sports then took Ernie to Southern State College in Springfield, S.D. where he played football for one season before lack of funds and a knee injury ended his academic and athletic careers.

Ernie’s schooling would continue in construction, starting with work on a concrete crew for a contractor on the Fort Randall Dam project in Pickstown, S.D. More importantly, it was on this project where he met the love of his life, Mary Ann Grippo, who worked in the company’s front office. He tells the story where after their first date he wrote in a journal, “I’m going to marry that girl,” and he did. Shortly after completing his service to his country during the Korean War, he and Mary Ann were married in Hot Springs, AR. Ernie and Mary Ann spent 27 married years together before her untimely death in 1981. Ernie often said about their relationship that “There is not a pedestal high enough for her.” Their devoted life together saw them raise five children. Many people will recall him saying that he and Mary Ann had gotten married, had five kids, then grew up with them.

After moving to the farm south of Oshkosh in 1958, Ernie split his time between running his milk herd with his wife and working for Hennes Erecting. He lived out his later years of life in his bucolic Valhalla among generous neighbors who looked in



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on him, kept his driveway and yard free of snow, and ensured that his ancient John Deere lawn mower was running. In his last years when posed with the option of moving off the farm, he would wistfully look out his living room window through a tangle of bird feeders to the fields beyond the barn and say, "Where else could I have this?"

Ernie was a lifetime member of the Ironworkers Union and retired from the trade in 1992, but he didn't sit at home for long. Through his temporary employment agency he was hired for a one week assignment in the accounts receivable department at Bemis in Oshkosh. This, instead, turned into a 17-year relationship with the Bemis staff that he treasured dearly.

Throughout his life Ernie was immensely proud of his Czech heritage and never strayed far from his Czech roots. After retirement his love of Czech culture took him on a guided tour of the Czech Republic. He often recalled that the highlight of this trip was going out to the local haunts with the tour's bus driver because he was the only person in the group who spoke the language. Ernie was an active member of the Wisconsin Czechs Organization, often being called upon to sing with the polka band that would be a part of the group's monthly meeting and dinner. He served for many years on the organization's board of directors and as its treasurer.

Ernest was preceded in death by his first wife Mary Ann and his second wife Carol Coakley, his brother Don Brodsky and sister Rose Ann Troll.

By the numbers, Ernie's legacy lies in his 5 children whom he referred to as "his five best friends": Mike (Sheri) Brodsky, Petaluma, CA; Patrick (Lisa) Brodsky, Conway, AR; MaryEllen (Greg) Wright, Delavan, WI; Ernie (Christy) Brodsky, Melrose, WI; Sue (Bob) Molash, Oshkosh, WI; his 22 grandchildren, and his 17 great grandchildren. He is also survived by sisters-in-law Helen (Jim) Klages, Delavan, WI.; and Marge Ryan, Germantown, TN, as well as many nieces and nephews, his special pen pal Jon Westling and the myriad of friends he has touched in his 91 years. Special thanks to Ernie's caregivers, Mark, Paula, and Tammy, for their compassion and kindness over the past eight months.

Private committal services will be held at Sacred Heart Cemetery with immediate family, and a celebration of Ernie's life will take place at a later date.



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Memorials can be made to the Wisconsin Czech Scholarship fund or to the local Humane Society.

“Good night sweet prince, and flights of angels carry thee to thy rest.”



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Ernest by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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