



## Gary James Anderson

June 12, 1943 - March 7, 2026

Born as James Gary Mason on June 12, 1943, in Fairmont, West Virginia, Gary was raised by his mother Jeanne and father Harold Anderson. As a child he was in advertisements singing for Buster Brown shoes. He loved to be barefoot as a kid though his mom and memaw (a ballerina from Czechoslovakia) preferred him in fancy clothes. He sang and danced in West VA, but did not carry that forward into adulthood. He attended TCU as an undergrad and earned his MBA from University of Southern California. He married Shannon Ross Askew in 1967 and moved to Minnesota to work at Control Data. His family always found his job to be very cool and enigmatic as his work was highly classified and his office was described as a literal vault. He would eventually retire from General Dynamics as a program manager - though we are not absolutely sure, which is why we are still alive.

Gary also loved sports. He coached youth basketball for his sons and served as their hockey team manager and President of the Fridley Hockey Association. He attended all his sons' Hill Murray and Fridley high school hockey games. As Papa, he became an avid fan of his grandchildren's athletic careers, rarely missing a soccer or basketball game. He loved researching teams and entering the annual March Madness pool at work. Gary was an avid Gopher basketball fan, sporting season tickets for 50 years, and bringing family and friends along to "rah, rah, rah, for ski u mah!" every winter. Gary also loved NASCAR and traveled to Talladega to witness it in person with his

long-time fishing buddy, Tom Anderson.

Which brings us to Gary's deep love as an outdoorsman for fishing. Gary was at home on a lake. He loved finding the best fishing spots on any lake, but especially Lake Kabetogama in Voyageurs National Park, which he frequented for decades. Gary was very particular about everything, and even more so with fishing. He would only get his leeches from one particular bait shop that was inconveniently way out of the way. But they were the best. Gary would argue with Tom over where the best fishing spots were, and whether they should use his hand drawn maps, or Tom's high tech GPS gear. Gary always preferred his "line up the big rock with the dead tree on the far shore" directions, but they found a way to work together every day to bring home some delicious walleye and tell even better stories from the day.

His love of fishing began a family tradition that now spans four-generations and five decades. His great grandchildren look forward to the reunion every summer - week at the lake with just the family. No TVs, no computers, no restaurants or amenities. Just a dock, a boat, the water, campfires, and a big family full of love... which all started with a man's love for a fishing line and his family.

Gary was very generous, taking the family to the rodeo annually and sharing his love of country music by treating friends and family to country western acts at the State Fair. Like a true bred Minnesotan, after retirement he worked traffic at the Fair, loving the chance to meet vendors as they came in and enjoying fair cuisine every day.

Some of Gary's quirks that both drove his family crazy and that endeared him to them are worth mentioning. After all, it's these little things that make us who we are in part, isn't it? Gary was a relentless record keeper. He wrote everything down. He loved watching Survivor, so he has profiles of every

contestant that was voted off each week. He would go to lunch with Shannon every day and write down where they went and how much it cost and the name of his server. He left behind a stack of receipts for his favorite dessert: key lime pie.

Speaking of pie, he was a foodie of sorts, BBQ: finding small BBQ vendors all over the country to try, in Texas, Des Moines, Minnesota, Louisville; anywhere he (or his family) traveled. He liked Mexican food, and hot dogs, especially Chicago style. He was a steak lover and loved his daughter's salad. He loved burgers too. He became a huge fan of Nautical Bowls after discovering them in an airport on the way home from Texas. After that we went every Sunday to get a treat - and spoil his dinner.

He loved to visit his family in Texas as well. His daughter and her four children would take him all over Austin, eating barbeque (his favorite), going hiking and enjoying one another. He would also attend UT baseball games and go horseback riding.

Gary loved his wife dearly. He took care of her as her health was declining. He did the best he could to take care of her and keep her close as they grew old together. He would always say she was so cute. He reveled in her as an artist and displayed her artwork with pride. He was completely helpless in the kitchen and relied on her completely.

It is impossible, really, to boil a whole life down into a small set of paragraphs and a fumbling of words. But what his family would really want the world to know about Gary is this: he was a good man and everyone who was privileged to be in his world was better for it in some way. He was very moral and principled. As a Catholic he believed in right and moral living. He had high standards and lived up to them. He was incredibly generous, if anyone

needed anything he was always willing to help with no expectations. And although he fronted at times with a hard exterior, the man loved deeply. He cared for people and animals and the wellbeing of those around him. He provided for his family and lived honorably.

Gary will be missed dearly by those lives he touched.

Gary is preceded in death by his mother Jeanne and father Harold (Bud) Anderson. He is survived by Shannon, wife of 58 years, daughters Dixie (Chuck) Lewis, Tammy Shaull, sons Shane Anderson and Kevin (Erica) Anderson, 12 grandchildren: Jonathan Lewis, Holli Scott, Melissa Clark, Kysandra Johnson, Kayla Witbeck, Ryan Shaull, Jacob Shaull, Marissa Anderson, Kayden Anderson, Elijah Anderson, Charlie Anderson and Micah Anderson, and 13 great-grandchildren.

A Funeral will be held at the Church of St. William, 6120 5th Street NE, Fridley, MN on Thursday, May 7 at 11:00 am with the visitation an hour before. A luncheon will follow at St. Williams. Memorials can be made in Gary's name to Minnesota Teen Challenge or Samaritan's Purse.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 7. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

The Church of St. William  
6120 5th Street NE  
Fridley, MN 55432

## Funeral Service

MAY 7. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

The Church of St. William  
6120 5th Street NE  
Fridley, MN 55432

# Tribute Wall

MS

“ We had many conversations with Gary over the backyard fence. He was a wonderful gardener and would often share tomatoes with us. Our condolences to Shannon and family. We hope you find moments of peace, comfort, and healing.  
Gene and Martha Schermer

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**Martha Schermer** - March 22 at 02:09 PM