



Darrell John DeMarte

May 31, 1942 - October 9, 2024

On October 9th, 2024, Darrell John DeMarte left this life surrounded by loved ones and the cranberries that he devoted his entire life to, at the age of 82. Known as the man in black who never let anyone see under that black hat, he was born on May 31st, 1942, in Wakefield, Michigan.

Darrell, who spent his younger years in Ironwood, MI, was a lifelong pillar of strength for his family. As the oldest of nine children, his first favorite job in life was being a big brother. His second job was being a bit of a rebellious soul—his sisters recall that he once painted their dog completely blue, and at nine years old, he got pulled over by the cops while driving his mother home when she was sick. Throughout all of life's hardships and losses, he loved and protected his family with unwavering devotion, always making sure they came first. His sisters remember him for his relentless kindness and loving nature.

Darrell's passion for cranberries began at age 16 and grew into a career he dedicated himself to for 66 years. Over those many harvests, he witnessed countless changes on the marsh, but one thing remained constant—him. He loved every moment of his work, especially frost watch, embracing the words of Elvis, "TCB" (Taking Care of Business), to show his work ethic and sense of responsibility.

One year, his focus shifted when he laid eyes on a beautiful woman named Sharon, who would soon become the love of his life. Darrell and Sharon were married on September 21st, 1962.

Sharon was one of the most beautiful souls, inside and out, and she cherished family deeply.

Together, they had two wonderful daughters, Jody and Mary, followed by two grandsons, Alex

and Josh. Having their daughters and grandsons see them nearly every day was a gift that all of

them treasured. Darrell and Sharon were voted "Grandparents of the Universe" every single

year by their grandsons. Whether it was sharing their love for Elvis and country music, watching

Hallmark movies and the ID channel, or Darrell playing Guitar Hero with his grandsons, they

were a truly special couple who always made family and friends a priority.

They cared for one

another and showed what 58 years of marriage looks like. Sadly, on

November 27th, 2020,

Sharon passed away due to health complications. Surrounded by family and

loved ones, Darrell and his family were devastated by the loss of this incredible woman who was called wife, mom, and grandma.

Darrell was able to find love again with Cindy Shell, a kind soul who kept him on his toes and made sure he stayed on top of his health. On October 31st, 2021, Darrell and Cindy were married in Richland, Missouri. He spent his last years enjoying woodworking, restoring items from his storage in Michigan, dreaming about cars and Chevy trucks, and becoming a new parent with Cindy to a small puppy named Precious. Darrell wouldn't let that dog out of his sight, embracing his new role as a dog dad alongside being a husband. He could often be found scrolling TikTok or watching Hulu with Precious by his side.

On December 7th, 2023, Darrell unlocked yet another achievement in life by becoming a great-grandfather. Asher James DeMarte Negro was born, and even though they only spent a short time together, Darrell adored him. His eyes would light up every time Asher came near him.

A couple of the most treasured memories Darrell's grandsons recall include Alex waking up every morning to the sound of his grandpa checking the oil in his car. Darrell checked the oil in

family vehicles daily, and while they joked about it, Alex now misses hearing that car hood close outside. Another favorite memory of Josh's was the pure joy on Darrell's face when he got a three-wheeled bike. His excitement in sharing it with the family will remain forever ingrained in Josh's heart. That was a consistent thing with Darrell—his passion and enthusiasm for sharing joy with others.

Darrell was preceded in death by his grandparents, Joe DeMarte and Bernice Louise Jones; parents, John DeMarte and Mary Pearl Hotchkiss; step-parents, Toivo John Siirila and James Joseph Kucera; siblings, Pasco Dale DeMarte and James Joseph Kucera Jr.; and his wife, Sharon Betty DeMarte. He is survived by his wife, Cindy DeMarte; daughters, Mary Louise Abramson (married to Randy Abramson) and Jody Ann Shepherd (married to Brian Shepherd); grandchildren, Alexander Michael DeMarte Negro (married to Megan Elizabeth Negro) and Joshua John DeMarte Shepherd; and great-grandson, Asher James DeMarte Negro. Darrell is also survived by six of his siblings, James Siirila, Lucille Davis (married to Bob Davis), Stacy Johnson (married to Ken Johnson), Lisa Johnson (married to Matt Johnson), Christine Ozzello, and Marcella "Mike" Siirila. Additionally, he is survived by step-children, Ethel Marie Rowden, Veena Lee Mitchell (married to Robert), Joseph Daniel Mitchell (married to

Stephanie), and
Crystal Diane Shell (married to Donley), and step-grandchildren, Christopher,
Chelsey, Crystal,
Roland, Madison, Dustin, and Christian, as well as many nieces, nephews,
cousins, and
numerous friends.

A celebration of Darrell's life and legacy will take place on the marsh he spent
most of his life
on, on November 16th from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM (12926 Leasure Road,
Manitowish Waters,
WI 54545. Once there, follow the signs). The family welcomes any memories
or photos of
Darrell and appreciates your presence to celebrate the life of an outstanding
man.

Darrell was a once-in-a-lifetime soul who made the world a better place simply
by being in it. His
life has touched so many people, and the legacy he leaves behind will endure
for decades to
come. As Elvis said, "Values are like fingerprints. Nobody's are the same, but
you leave 'em all
over everything you do." Darrell's values are imprinted on the hearts of
countless people, a
testament to the goodness and lasting impact of his life. For his family, a world
without Darrell
remains impossible to imagine, as he was—and always will be—irreplaceable.

Tribute Wall

PB

“ I must be the only person to have ever seen Darrell without his hat! Many years ago when he was cleaning the flood ditch between the Koller Bartling marsh with a dragline, I drove up from behind, and there he was without his hat. When the dragline spun around in a matter of seconds, he had his hat on! I think I caught him by surprise. I also enjoyed a midnight visit watching frost. Those days are long gone and he will be missed. Peter Bartling

Peter Bartling - October 31, 2024 at 03:01 PM