



Gerald Swaney

July 3, 1940 - December 12, 2021

Gerald Anthony Francis Swaney was born in Traverse City, Michigan on the 3rd of July, 1940. He was the fifth child of Elmer Alexander and Lillian (Magee) Swaney.

Gerry attended Traverse City St. Francis High School, (class of 1958), and later graduated from Michigan State University. He was a lifelong supporter of the Spartans – in part because that is where he met his wife of more than 55 years, Ann Elizabeth (Brainard) Swaney.

Gerry and Ann were married at the Michigan State University Alumni Chapel on April 30, 1966.

In 1969, the couple moved to Clear Lake City, Texas where Gerry worked as an engineer for the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center, designing food and beverage packaging used for Apollo Missions 11-17, as well as two of the Skylab missions, and the Tektite II habitat in the Virgin Islands. An important memory for him was the three weeks spent on an Apollo recovery ship.

In 1971, the couple welcomed their daughter, Elizabeth Jane, and in 1976 their son, Paul Alexander. The family would move to Warwick, New York (International Paper), and then Kankakee, Illinois (General Foods), where they welcomed their son Steven Gerald in 1978.

In 1980, the family settled in Old Mission, Michigan where Gerry's family had its roots, dating back five generations. Gerry became an integral part of the community, doing engineering work for Traverse City Canning and Coding Products. He was also instrumental in the creation of the School District's Manufacturing Technology Academy, then located at Northwestern Michigan College's Aero Park Campus. At Old Mission Peninsula School, Gerry coached basketball and track & field for over 13 years, continuing to coach even after his kids moved on to middle school.

Coach Swaney continued his dedication to educating youth through sports as the Varsity

Girls Basketball Coach at Forest Area High School, where he led the Lady Warriors to a District championship and was named by the Record-Eagle as Grand Traverse Area Coach of the Year in 1993. He helped build Forest Area's Track & Field Program through coaching and fundraising for a new running track.

Later he lent his talents to coaching the Buckley Bears for several years and proudly concluded his career by coaching two of his granddaughters at Suttons Bay.

Gerry was an avid farmer and gardener, growing cherries, apples, raspberries, asparagus, onions, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, and numerous other crops on the family farm where generations before had also cultivated the land.

Gerry was a loving husband, father, and grandfather. He is survived by his wife, Ann; their three children; Liz (Jon Lint), Paul (Jenny Brady), and Steve (April Shultz); and his five grandchildren Kaitlyn Ann Lint, Lauren Elizabeth Lint, Daniel Ryan Lint, Megan Jane Lint, and Owen Paul Swaney. Also sister Virginia Swaney Bennett, sisters-in-law Jane Brainard and Jeanette Denoyer (Don) Swaney, and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by brother Donald, and sisters Shirley Smaha and Lorraine McNabb.

Gerry passed away in his sleep, with family present, at 3:31am on Sunday, December 12th, 2021. He died on the same land where his father had been born more than 119 years earlier. He was a warm, sincere, funny, and devoted man, and he will be dearly missed.

A public Celebration of Life is planned for Gerry's birthday next July 3rd.

Cremation has occurred and he will be interred in the Ogdensburg Cemetery, Old Mission Peninsula.

If you are inspired to make a charitable contribution on his behalf, the family would encourage donations per his wishes to Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Old Mission Peninsula Historical Society, or to any youth sports organization you care to support.

Those wishing to share memories and condolences may do so on Gerald's tribute page, www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com

Tribute Wall

AK

“ Hello Ann and kids, sad to learn of Gerry's passing. I remember him being a familiar face at OMPS with coaching and support of PTO activities. He was a good guy and I'm sorry for your loss of him.

Arno Kramer - December 21, 2021 at 01:29 PM

AS

Thank you Arno. Those were indeed great years at OMPS.

We were all so young and so were our kids.

Ann Swaney - December 23, 2021 at 08:13 PM

BH

“ I have fond memories of meeting Gerry in the mid eighties when I was just starting out as an electrical contractor and he was the project engineer at Coding Products. That meeting helped propelled me into a successful career and a 25 year relationship with Coding. Gerry was a super guy to work with and I shall never forget the effect his trust had on my future. He earned the respect of all who worked for and with him. May his family find some comfort in knowing what a positive effect Gerry had on so many.
Bill Hagan.

Bill Hagan - December 20, 2021 at 05:10 PM

AS

I remember his speaking highly of you too, Bill.

Ann Swaney - December 23, 2021 at 08:14 PM

WT

“ So sorry to hear of Gerry's passing! He was a great coach and person! Sending hugs to Ann and the kids.

Wendy Trnka-Warner - December 19, 2021 at 01:47 PM

AS

Thanks Wendy. Appreciate your kind thoughts.

Ann Swaney - December 23, 2021 at 08:15 PM

MS

“ My Uncle Gerry was witty, kind and a fun loving man. When I did see him during my childhood, he was always interested in how I was doing and made an effort to strike up a conversation. He was very smart and he had a dry sense of humor. He was someone you felt very comfortable to be around. Rest in Peace Uncle Gerry! You will live on in our hearts forever!!

Michael Swaney - December 18, 2021 at 11:47 AM

EH

“ He was an exceptional coach to the girls of Forest Area. I will remember him fondly.

Eryn Hart - December 18, 2021 at 12:59 AM

AS

Thanks Eryn. I'm sure he would appreciate your saying that. He was always proud of you Forest Area girls and what you had accomplished.

Ann Swaney - December 23, 2021 at 08:16 PM

SO

“ Thinking of Ann and their entire group of family and friends.
Gerry could always make me laugh. Or at least make me smile.
Rockets, space, science, Old Mission, coaching and kids. And, Gerry.
Peace & love,
Susan Odgers and Tom



susan odgers - December 18, 2021 at 12:35 AM

AS

Susan - Just reading your comments made me smile. You nailed it.

Ann Swaney - December 23, 2021 at 08:17 PM

SL

“ Ann and family, so sorry for your loss. I always enjoyed working with Gerry at Coding Products, we had many laughs including the Christmas parties. I'll never forget the sign he always had on his desk, "There comes a time in every project when you must shoot the engineer and begin production." May you find peace in his life well lived. He touched many lives.

Sue Lockman - December 17, 2021 at 10:15 PM



Thanks Sue. He really enjoyed his time at Coding and being with the people who worked there. & yes, good Christmas parties!

Ann Swaney - December 23, 2021 at 08:18 PM