



## Jay Arthur Lively

July 26, 1930 - November 3, 2015

Jay Arthur Lively passed away Nov. 3, 2015, in Traverse City. He was 85 years old.

Jay, by his own account, had a good life. He was born July 26, 1930, in St. Clair, Michigan, the only child of William Arthur and Edna Pearl (Atkinson) Lively. He graduated from St. Clair High School where he excelled at sports, played in the band, and learned to love Greek mythology. He attended Graceland University and graduated from Michigan State. After college, Jay served in the Army and worked briefly for Mobil Oil.

Jay married Mary Lou Richards on Aug. 17, 1957, in Harbor Beach, Michigan, a love story for the ages. At Mary Lou's encouragement, Jay became a teacher, and taught fifth grade for more than 30 years at Jefferson and McKinley elementary schools in Livonia, Michigan. They resettled in Traverse City after Jay retired, and enjoyed their new life Up North for just a few years before Mary Lou died in 1997. Jay nursed his broken heart by devoting himself to his grandchildren, building a cabin on Lake Superior, traveling, golfing, reading, walking, shoveling snow, and following the Spartans and the Detroit Tigers.

Jay will be lovingly remembered by his children, Janet (Kevin Lynch) Lively and Jim (Kelly) Lively; his grandchildren, Emily, Marley, Jane and Annie Lively, and Conor and Ruth Lynch; brothers-in-law, nieces, nephews, cousins, many good friends and treasured neighbors.

Visitation will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 7, at Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home. Memorial contributions may be directed to American Legion Junior Baseball and Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities.

# Events

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**NOV** **Visitation for friends and family** 03:00PM - 05:00PM

**7**

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Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home

305 Sixth St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

**DEC** **Memorial Service** 03:00PM

**26**

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Park Place Hotel

300 E. State Street, Traverse City, MI, US

# Comments

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“ After reading these tributes, I wish I had known Jay better. He was my mother's cousin. Art and Herb Lively were brothers. My mom, Ruth Lively Grice, was some years older than Jay. Uncle Art and Aunt Pearl were special to me. They lived on the same block as Grandpa Lively, so I would go over and get into their games in the hall closet when we visited. On later trips, when we would stay with Art and Pearl, and once, after Uncle Art had passed away, I got to stay up in the attic bedroom. I loved that room, cool at night with the sound of lake boat horns in the early morning. I never remember Jay being there when we visited. But I remember a black and white photo of him in Graceland Yellowjacket football uniform with coach Carter on the wall of his bedroom. Dad, Harvey Grice, was president of Graceland. We moved there in 57, so we probably just missed Jay being a student. But I do remember one time when he and Mary Lou stayed with us in Lamoni. We would stop in to visit relatives in Michigan every few years. And as a kid, I remember the olders chatting in Jay and Mary Lou's house, but all I can recall is Mary Lou tending to her first born infant. We always talked about Jay and Mary Lou with love. One time, I must have been off to college, the Lively family stopped by Rolla, Mo to visit my parents. I think I was told they were on their way to Disneyland. Dad took a Polaroid of them next to their car. I recall that photo, though I never met Janet and Jim as they grew. Years later, Jay was in Independence, MO when my mother and brother Bill were both ill. My sister, Ruth Ellynn, and I were there visiting them. Jay was so kind and caring. He said he was on his across country to OR to visit Mary Lou's sister. A short time later, after I had returned home to CA, who should drive up to our inn, but Cousin Jay Lively! We shared a meal and visited on the porch for a few hours, but he said he had to keep moving. We emailed a couple times after that, but then, his email did not work, and I lost track of him. Just on a whim, I googled him, and sadly, found his obituary on line!

I am thankful for this opportunity to learn more about my cousin Jay, and hopefully, to reconnect with his children.

Sincerely, Sheri Grice Overly in Trinity Center, CA

**Sheri Overly** - September 24, 2018 at 01:56 PM

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“ Mr. Lively was my 5th grade teacher at Jefferson Elementary in Livonia in 1975. He was also my Safety Patrol leader back in the good old days when the students were the crossing guards and we raised the American flag in the morning and lowered it at the end of the school day. It is absolutely amazing that its been 40 years since I last saw Mr. Lively, all of my memories of being one of his many students during his teacher career are all good. He certainly left his finger prints on so many young lives during his teaching career, he left a lasting impression that continues to live on.

Sorry for your loss,  
Dean Babcock

Dean Babcock - November 30, 2015 at 05:09 AM

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“ I first met Jay in 1986 when I returned to teaching in Livonia. As luck would have it, I was assigned to McKinley Elementary as a fourth grade teacher. Jay was one of my mentors. I found out right away why Jay was a special person and teacher. The students idolized him. He was so caring and devoted to the kids. We became good friends during the year and lifelong Spartan buddies!He helped me immensely during our time teaching together.

One fond memory was our trip to old Tiger Stadium to watch the last Tiger game in the old park. We both played hooky that day and enjoyed a final Tiger victory in the old park! Jay loved the Tigers and the history of the old park. He gave me a history lesson that day about the park. I will always remember that day.

I enjoyed his visits after he retired and looked forward to seeing him in Florida at the Minnesota Twins exhibition games each year and during the summer at the Tiger games. He was such a tremendous baseball an devoted Tigers fan.

The world has lost a terrific person and I will always be grateful that I had the opportunity to know Jay. The Tigers and Spartans have lost a true fan!

Larry Shanks

Larry Shanks - November 10, 2015 at 12:41 PM

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“ How do you come to terms with the loss of a dear friend, one who has influenced our lives in more ways to count? Our introduction to Jay was the night we closed on our new house on a snowy day in December 1983. Once we got the keys we just had to visit our new home. We pulled up the driveway, and that's when we met Jay. He was outside shoveling snow (which we'd quickly learn was a hobby of his :) ). He came over to introduce himself and invite us in to meet the lovely Mary Lou. An hour later, we felt part of the Lively family and had already gained an appreciation for Mary Lou's iced molasses cookies! From that day forward, we gained much more than a friend. This wasn't just an "across the fence" friendship with the neighbors, it was heart to heart. When our kids came along, they inherited a third set of grandparents, who loved them as their own. So many images of those times, from Katie "playing dough" with Mary Lou to helping Jay care for his garden by being his little pea-picking buddy, to seeing them help decorate the kids' bikes for a miniature 4th of July parade on Maplewood Street. As the kids got older we'd visit them up in Traverse City, where we also got to know Jim & Kelly, Janet & Kevin, Shirley & Ken, and the rest of the Lively bunch. In recent years we were lucky to be able to spend some real quality time up at Jay's cabin in Brimley. This past July we spent a couple days with him there, which included hours sitting on the deck watching the waves lap the shore and the freighters gliding by. Conversations ranged from family to politics to how we could manage to find our own little piece of paradise like Jay & Mary Lou did all those years ago. The last time we saw him, we had just discovered a new source of tasty whitefish near the cabin (Pickles!) and enjoyed some quality time, eating whitefish, and enjoying the view overlooking the bay. When it was time to go we hugged long and hard, knowing it would probably be a while, but never dreaming that we'd never see him again. Jay, we hope you're at peace now, and once again taking long walks hand in hand with "Lou-Lou." Thank you for all you did for us. You will always be in our hearts.

The Blacker family



the Blackers - November 08, 2015 at 05:50 PM

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“ I was sorry to see Jay's obit in the Free Press. We worked together at McKinley School for several years. He taught 5th grade in the classroom next to my 4th grade room. It was my good fortune to have worked with him and to share some humorous situations while on recess duty.

He happened to be here in Livonia at the time of my retirement so he attended the party and reconnected with former colleagues and me. I was delighted to have him join me on that occasion.

Anne Carrier

anne carrier - November 07, 2015 at 06:56 AM

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“ What can I say about Jay that hasn't already been said? My husband and I and our family feel so very fortunate to have been his next door neighbor for 17 years! We've shared stories, laughs and sorrows with him and the love of a goofy dog, Webster, who considered Jay his Godfather! He was a neighbor made in heaven and I feel so very lucky to have been able to know him and his family! My condolences to Janet and Jim and their families. Thank-you for sharing your Dad with us! He was one of the kindest men that I have ever known.



Debbie Donick - November 07, 2015 at 06:37 AM

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“ Arlene and I have fond memories of Jay and Mary Lou while attending the Highland Park Congregation of Community of Christ church. I grew up together with Mary Lou in Harbor Beach but first met Jay when I started attending at Highland Park. While attending there, Jay and I took Communion to Arlene Brown and her dad George. It was through Jay's introduction that I first met Arlene and we began dating. We celebrated our 51st Wedding Anniversary on August 8, 2015! What a wonderful blessing it has been. We will always remember the wonderful associations with both Jay and Mary Lou and we offer our sincere sympathy to Janet, Jim and their families. Jay will be greatly missed. Tom & Arlene Jeffers

Tom & Arlene Jeffers - November 06, 2015 at 09:54 AM

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“ I was very fortunate to teach with Jay at Jefferson Elementary in Livonia. How I wish I'd known Jay lived in Traverse City. Jay was without a doubt one of the finest gentlemen and teachers I have ever had the pleasure to know & work with. Our fun times in the faculty lounge will be with me forever. He did indeed have a wonderful life & he made this life so much better for everyone he came in contact with. Well done, Jay! You lived an A+ life!!!

**Ann Clark** - November 06, 2015 at 07:46 AM

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“ I also taught with Jay at Jefferson Elementary in Livonia and second everything that Ann has said.

Margie Sievert

**Margie Sievert** - November 09, 2015 at 02:59 PM

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“ For the past 16 years, I was lucky to ride along with Jay as he drove from Michigan to Florida to attend the Spring Training games of his beloved Detroit Tigers. As we zoomed along I-75, after leaving chilly Michigan, he was so pleased to see the red buds beginning to bloom in between the trees along the roadside and then in Tennessee and Georgia to see the pear trees in beautiful bloom. Of course, at the games it was always hot dogs and batting practice and the fun of seeing the veteran players as well as the new ones. He always tried to decide which of the new players would make it up to Detroit after Spring Training ended--he was so good at picking the ones who actually made the team. Then on the way back when the temperatures started to go from warm back to chilly we would stop in some of the places Jay thought would be interesting--included were Plains, Georgia, Charleston along with Folly Beach, Savannah, St. Augustine and on and on. What a joy those trips were and how much it lifted his spirits after a week of games and the stops along the way. Jay really cared about people and that made people really care about him.  
Joan Garrett

**Joan Garrett** - November 05, 2015 at 05:17 PM

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“ Jay was a gentleman. Working with Jay was a pleasure. He always treated his students with respect. He was a gentle soul and a gentleman of whom his family may be most proud.

**Deborah Ervin** - November 05, 2015 at 01:40 PM

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“ Whether is was a band concert, a baseball, football, or a basketball game, it was ALWAYS a treat to see Jay. He always had a smile, was always interested in each family member, and always had a gracious word to say. He was one of the very kindest of people. What a gift to have known Jay.

Jim and Jaema Stilley  
Emma, Wes, and Hayden Talbot

**Jaema Stilley** - November 05, 2015 at 06:46 AM

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“ 2 files added to the album New Album Name



**Laurie Blacker** - November 04, 2015 at 12:43 PM

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“ Jay Lively was a dear friend of ours. We were fortunate to meet Jay through our neighbors, Jim and Kelly. A nicer guy would be hard to find. We shared so many fun times together; golfing, cross-country skiing, baseball, socializing and more. But my favorite memory of time spent with Jay was sitting around Jim’s fire watching the sap boil each spring. He was a fixture for this event, always there to keep the fire burning and the sap boiling. If he wasn’t around the fire he was out in the woods collecting sap with his granddaughters and the family dog. You can learn a lot about a man in those long hours around the fire. What I learned about Jay was that he had a gigantic heart and he loved everyone. Most of all he loved his family – and he counted me as one of them. Thank you, Jay. Every time I sit by that fire and smell the wood smoke, every time I taste the sweetness of the boiling sap, every time I walk the woods with full pails I’ll remember you and smile!

**Mike Binsfeld** - November 04, 2015 at 10:32 AM



“ I will miss looking out my kitchen window and not seeing my good friend and neighbor sitting in his easy chair. I will miss our talks we had sitting in the lawn chairs in his driveway. I will miss his positive outlook on life and the calming influence he had on me. We all are better people for knowing Jay. As he said, Go Tigers, Go Spartans and anybody but the Yankees.

He was the best neighbor anyone could ever have and one of the nicest men I will ever have the privilege to call my friend.

Forever in my heart

**Bob Donick** - November 07, 2015 at 06:11 AM