



Paul Edward Champion

August 3, 1957 - June 6, 2021

It is with deepest sorrow, we announce that Paul Edward “Champ” Champion, of Traverse City, passed suddenly on June 5, 2021. He is the beloved son of Donald and Lorinia Ruth Champion.

Those who knew Paul, even in passing, lost a shining light in their lives. We know Paul will be loved in heaven as much as he was loved on earth.

He was born in Warren, Pennsylvania and resided in Clarendon, and Sheffield, PA. Paul moved to Traverse City in 1975. He graduated from the Great Lakes Maritime Academy and has an undergraduate degree, with honors from Ferris State University. He had love and respect for the water enjoyed a successful career as a professional mariner. He became an experienced sailor in travel and leisure.

Paul was a constant student of life; a progressive thinker, music lover, true motorcyclist, world traveler, fearless snow skier, compassionate caregiver, a loving partner, and raised the bar on general goodness. The instant you met him, he accepted you as a friend. He left all of us in a better place.

Paul will be missed every day by his mother, Lorinia Ruth; sister's; Donna (Fred) Kukla and Judy (Frank) Work; several nieces and nephews; 1 great-niece and 2 great-nephews, as well as extended family members and friends.

Paul was preceded in death by his father Donald L. Champion; brother, Larry Stephen Champion and niece, Stephanie Saber.

Paul's love and friendship, kindness and generosity, will be deeply missed by family and his extended family of friends.

A celebration of Paul's life will be held Wednesday, June 16, 11:00 AM, at Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home in Traverse City. Visitation begins at 10:00 AM and will continue

until the time of service. The service will take place outside.

Please consider memorial contributions to Central United Methodist Church c/o Community Outreach, tccentralumc.org/outreach, or to the Great Lakes Maritime Academy, nmc.edu/give.

Paul and his family are being cared for by Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home. You may visit his tribute page at www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN **16**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home
305 Sixth St
Traverse City, MI 49684
info@reynolds-jonkhoff.com
<http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Paul Edward Champion*



Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home & Cremation Services - June 15, 2021 at 09:25 AM



“ *Send BEAUTIFUL Flowers Locally to the family of Paul Edward Champion. Express your condolences, giving comfort and support. Click here to view selections on our website*

Send Flowers - June 08, 2021 at 02:05 PM

“ Paul Champion was the REAL DEAL, the GENUINE ARTICLE,
With the last name CHAMPION, many friends called him CHAMP.
We would not have called him that if it had not fit.

Paul was also a MAGNET.

I think if you walked into a room full of people, and didn't know anyone,
If Paul was there you would likely be drawn to him, and perhaps he to you. He'd
make you feel better about yourself, not by platitudes, but with his genuineness.

Paul & I began the Maritime Academy together in 1975 where the 3 years of
school and sea time began with 60 students and ended with less than 30; so you
really got to know each other. Paul cultivated more enduring relationships (both
Deck and Engineering students, and other friendships he made in this area) than
anyone has. One day in school I was distressed by a poor test grade. Paul said to
me: "Forget about it man, you know what kind of Mate you are!" That was just the
encouragement I needed.

Many years ago in Jacksonville Florida, Paul was Chief Mate aboard the
Steamship El Yunque. Our family was visiting my parents who retired to that area,
so Paul had us aboard for a ship tour. Afterwards while catching a bite to eat at a
nearby restaurant, our youngest son Oliver, disappeared for a moment. He had
slipped out of his chair, crawled underneath the table, and popped up into a chair
next to Paul...the magnet.

On August 2nd. 2015, the Big Blow storm hit our region. Paul knew that Katherine
& I were in Canada, and that Oliver was still home. Because we live in the woods,
Paul (w/o anyone calling him) grabbed a chainsaw and made his way over here
to clear the trees from our driveway. I think the rest of his day was spent driving
around town to help anyone in need.

Anyone who knew him, wanted to be around him.

My wife Katherine reminds me that: grief is the proof of love.

Not just your love for Paul, but of his love for you. That love lives on.



“ Abe and family purchased Small Vase Bouquet with Glass Cross for the family of Paul Edward Champion.



Send Flowers - June 15, 2021 at 07:08 PM

BS

“ Paul and I graduated together from GLMA centuries ago. We both were deck cadets and spent nearly all of our waking hours in TC together with a very tight-knit group of GLMA brothers. We shared an apartment for a year. I didn't stick on the boats, took other paths after a few years on the lakes, but I always carried Paul and our GLMA comrades with me in a warm spot in my heart. Those who knew Paul know what I mean when I say he was a shining light... vibrant, kind, funny, warm, energetic. He lit up the room and pushed a welcoming bow wave of friendliness wherever he went. I am so fortunate to have spent a few years at his side, and I am devastated by the news of his untimely passing. My heart breaks for his family and friends, both here in Michigan and back in Pennsylvania. Champ, I'm cradling your memory extra close.



Brit Satchwell
Saline, MI

Brit Satchwell - June 15, 2021 at 01:25 PM

SC

“ So many memories



Sarah Crane - June 15, 2021 at 12:03 PM



“ *Jan Hurley purchased Heavenly Heights for the family of Paul Edward Champion.*



Send Flowers - June 14, 2021 at 11:49 AM

BP

“ *The swing sets and the sun sleeps.
A kind man will not sail these rivers again.
Lord, help his rest be a peaceful one
like the waters he's found to be his friend. -Brad Purcell*



Brad Purcell - June 12, 2021 at 11:35 AM

RA

“ *3 files added to the album Memories Album*



rae - June 10, 2021 at 10:00 PM

JL

“ *I was heartsick to learn of Paul's death. He was a positive force during his time of volunteering with Central Church Outreach. He was an uplifting team member and made each encounter with our Outreach guests a chance to show respect. The more I have learned over these few years about Paul the greater my esteem and admiration for him has become. I hold you in his family in the light as you grapple with losing him.
Jane Lippert, Central Church Outreach Coordinator*

Jane R Lippert - June 10, 2021 at 09:27 PM

BC

“ I remember when Paul came to California on his Harley. He came to visit me and cousin Sandy, and Aunt Betty he would always talk about going to visit aunt Betty, and getting on that "parking lot" which was the freeway to go the 40 miles to see her. He was so funny! What a nice young man, so kind and caring. He will be missed.

Brenda Crispino - June 10, 2021 at 02:44 PM



“ Tom Marinelli & Georgeanne Rosenblum purchased In Our Hearts Lavender for the family of Paul Edward Champion.



Send Flowers - June 10, 2021 at 10:23 AM

TM

“ I met Paul about 15 years ago at a BMW motorcycle rally in VT. We became fast friends that weekend, and as he rode away on Sunday morning he stood on the saddle of his moving motorcycle and yelled "see ya back in Michigan". We have visited nearly every year since. Along with Frank, we had many fun days riding together. Like his many friends and family members, it's hard to imagine life without his unique sense of humor and spirit of adventure. Such a wonderful guy and great friend, So sad

tom marinelli - June 08, 2021 at 06:55 PM

FH

Far enough back that I don't exactly remember, Champ has been a good friend as we shared many common interests, boats , motorcycles, just doing stuff together. We could talk smack about those other guys knowing we weren't any better and be impressed by those that were. One snowmobile trip to Canada we found ourselves looking at a kayak and a rope and then each other. After pulling each other around the snowy frozen lake in the kayak at a high rate of speed behind the snowmobile his comment was" no one will believe we weren't drinking"... So we did. I cannot say it any better than Tom..."it's hard to imagine life without his unique sense of humor and spirit of adventure".

Fred Heltenen - June 09, 2021 at 07:40 AM

SP

From one of your "younger" cousins back in Pennsylvania...

Paul was full of life and energy. We didn't get to see each other often enough, but when he walked in the room you knew you were going to laugh a lot and go away shaking your head. In recent years he would call to chat for no reason, and we would be on the phone for ages while he told a tale of riding a motorcycle too fast or some other crazy mischief!

My dad absolutely loved visits from Paul. Dad would be totally amazed that he could pack everything he needed in the saddlebags of a motorcycle and go for ages! One day I was in Florida visiting my dad and we heard a motorcycle and my dad jumped up and said, "By God I think Paul is here!" Paul reached in a saddlebag and pulled out a bottle of red wine and yelled, "Hey, Unc! Can you whip us up a meal to go with this!" We had a delicious meal, and you know we laughed a lot!

I couldn't believe it when my husband told me the news. It took me a while to call to confirm this sad, sad news. My heart is broken. Our family will never be the same.

Sue Papalia - June 10, 2021 at 10:02 PM

SP

Although I haven't known Paul since his he was one of the kids next door, he, along with his parents and siblings, have always held a special place in my heart. They are "family" in memory, and I was so saddened learning of this loss. My love and sympathies are with you, Ruth, Judy, and Donna.

Sharon (Swartz) Petruney - June 12, 2021 at 08:56 AM

JL

We have been friends with Champ for well over 50 years. He would look us up whenever he came into town to visit his parents. He always came bearing gifts - a bottle of red wine, some kind of cherry food item, and a huge volume of stories to tell. He kept us entertained with stories and laughter for hours. Many times we met him at the Lee House in Sheffield where we sure to run into the locals who were always happy to see him. We will miss his stories, his laughter, and most of all his friendship. Ruth, Donna and Judy you are in our thoughts and prayers.

John and Marsha Logan

John Logan - June 12, 2021 at 09:56 AM