



## Riley Messer

November 30, 1954

TRAVERSE CITY — Nov. 30, 1954, launched the positive spirit of Riley Everette Messer II into this world, the son of Riley E. and Mildred (Lucas) Messer. Curiosity, intellect, energy, a passion for the outdoors and mirth were characteristics that marked every day of his too brief life. A graduate of Grosse Pointe North High School, Riley received an associate's degree from North Central Michigan College, conveniently located near the ski hills he grew up loving. However, the lure of the Great Lakes won out over other career options (having already mastered pottery, professional dishwashing, long-haul truck driving, hospital orderly tasks, small engine repair, motorcycle maintenance and various other positions). In 2005, he retired as captain after a 25-year career with Cleveland Tankers. In recent years, Riley honed and mastered woodworking skills and built his dream house, putting to use all the mechanical and structural aspects of building he had acquired as a homeowner and landlord. With a view of his beloved water, he could welcome everyone during every season, no longer tied to a sailor's scheduled absences. Riley's greatest joy was the outdoors and all things physically challenging. Canoeing, sailing, skating and bicycling all vied for his attention, but his greatest dedication was to cross country skiing, which he pursued at every opportunity. Regardless of the challenge of the course, the road or the weather, Riley never experienced anything but happiness when he was moving in nature. Riley was genuinely interested in people and never missed an opportunity to address and dignify individuals. He truly took to heart the adage, "Don't say anything if you can't say something positive." He was the captain of positive to all who knew and loved him and the tall, friendly stranger in the background to those not as privileged. Riley is survived by his devoted wife of 24 years, Lizbeth Messing; siblings, Brenda Outland, Beverly Kerwin, Patricia (Kal) Abdalla, Robert Messer and Allison (Henry) Garcia; stepmothers, Alice Marinos and Madeline Messer. Riley was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Eric Messer. A memorial gathering will be held for Riley at noon on Oct. 3 at Timber Ridge. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be directed to ALS research at the University of Michigan. Donations should be addressed to PNYR&D, 109 Zina Pitcher Place, Ann Arbor, MI 48109. Please sign Riley's online guestbook at <http://www.reyonlds-jonkhoff.com>.