

James Droste



James' Life Story

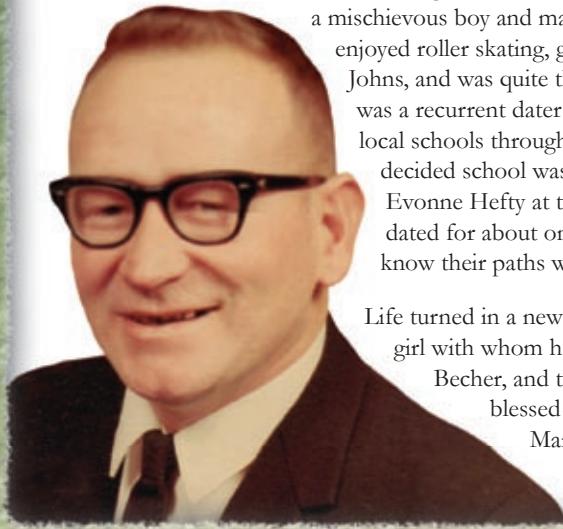


Although he could be stubborn about the things he was passionate about, James Droste had a heart of gold. He was a hard worker throughout his life, yet he recognized the importance of drinking in each moment he was given. Jim was blessed to find love not once, but twice, and his children brought him great joy. He was social and outgoing throughout his entire life and an avid sports fan as well. Although his life was not always easy, Jim took every challenge in stride while continuing to embrace those he held dear.

The year 1930 marked the beginning of a decade that was cloaked in hardship for many American families due to the Great

Depression, which hampered America into the early forties. Many people lost their jobs, their homes, and even their hope for the future. This was a year of great celebration, however, in the family of Anthony and Anna (Harr) Droste as they welcomed the birth of their son, James, on October 11th. James, who was most often called Jim, was born in Westphalia, Michigan, as the fourth of five children in his family, which included three sisters and one brother. His father was a farmer who raised hogs and chickens, and he also had a few dairy cows. Jim was very close to his family and developed a love for farming from an early age. He was quite a mischievous boy and made friends easily. Jim

enjoyed roller skating, going to the movies in St. Johns, and was quite the ladies' man. In fact, he was a recurrent dater as a young man. Jim attended local schools through only the seventh grade because he decided school was just not a good fit for him. He met a young gal named Evonne Hefty at the roller rink when he was 21, and she was just 16. They dated for about one year before they officially broke up. Little did they know their paths would cross again many years down the road.



Life turned in a new and exciting direction for Jim when he met a delightful girl with whom he would create a lasting legacy. Her name was Deanna Becher, and they married in 1955. It wasn't long before the couple was blessed with eight children including three sons: Mike, Tony, and Mark, and five daughters: Trish, Lynn, Diann, Ellen, and Jamie. Jim worked hard to support his family at Fisher





Body in Lansing for over 30 years before retiring. After sharing nearly 40 years with Deanna, Jim was deeply saddened with her death on August 28, 1994.

While Jim was busy building his family with Deanna, Evonne was busy living her own life. She had met and married Edward Tomasek in 1954 with whom she had five children.

Evonne was also happily married for 40 years until the death of her husband, just two days after Deanna's death.

Almost two years later, Evonne wrote

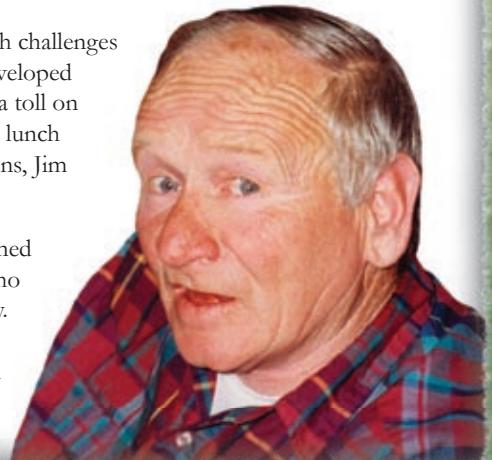
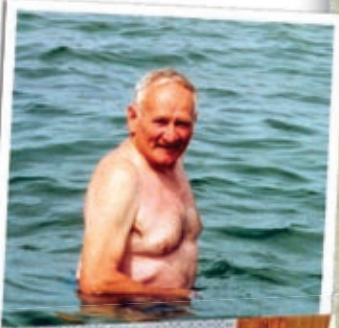
to Jim and asked him to meet her for a cup of coffee and a conversation - he accepted. This was the first time they had seen each other in more than 45 years! From the moment their eyes met again, they both knew that they would be together. Jim and Evonne were married on November 27, 1998, marking a new chapter in a story that although interrupted for quite some time, spanned nearly 60 years. They enjoyed traveling together, especially going to the Soaring Eagle Casino in Mt. Pleasant. Jim and Evonne also loved spending time at their place on Lily Lake in Harrison, located to the northeast of Big Rapids.

There were a variety of things that Jim enjoyed through the years. The love for farming he established during his youth continued throughout

his entire lifetime. Jim enjoyed playing cards and bingo, and he was also a member of the Moose Lodge in Harrison. One of his favorite ways to spend his time was gathered with his children, which certainly kept him busy since between his children and Evonne's children, there were 13 altogether! Nothing could have pleased Jim more than being a grandfather, and the times he spent with his grandchildren were among his most treasured moments. Jim was an avid fan of the Detroit Tigers, Pistons, and Lions as well.

During his later years, Jim faced health challenges of his own. Beginning in 1995, he developed health problems that eventually took a toll on his body. After enjoying an afternoon lunch with Evonne at a restaurant in St. Johns, Jim drew his last breath.

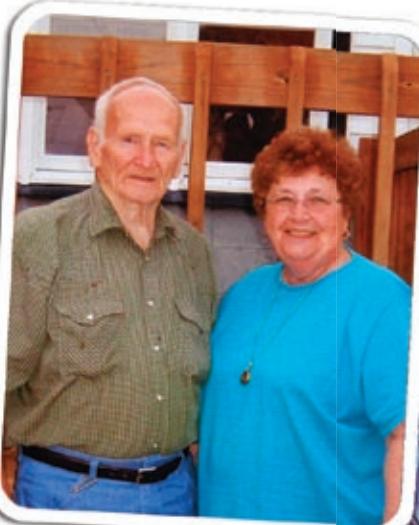
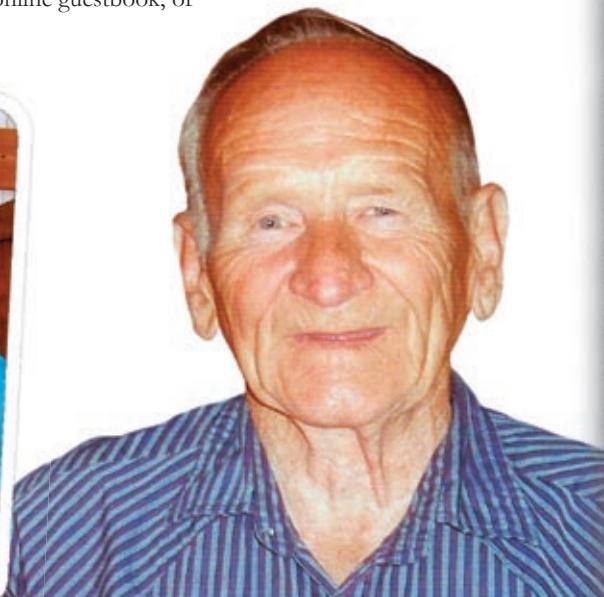
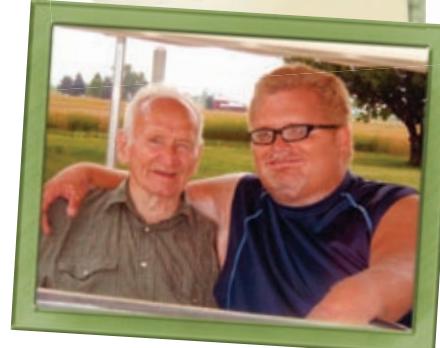
With his friendly and outgoing personality, James Droste brightened the lives of those around him. He was a dedicated family man who delighted in the love he shared with his family each and every day. Jim worked hard, yet truly embraced his retirement years with more time to pursue the things he greatly enjoyed. He was a man of great strength and integrity who will be dearly missed.





James R. Droste of St. Johns, formerly of Westphalia, died Sunday, January 10, 2010. Jim's family includes his sons, Mike, Tony (Maggie) and Mark (Denise) Droste, daughters, Trish (Joe) Witgen, Lynn (Kevin) Stalker, Diann (Al) Wilson, Ellen (Steve) Miller and Jamie (Ken) Gilbertson, sister, Helen (Paul) Fox, 13 grandchildren, 4 great grand children, 5 step children and numerous nieces and nephews. Jim was preceded in death by his wife Deanna; his parents; Deanna's parents, RG and Florence Becher; sisters, Bernadine (Roy) Alexander, Florence "Toots" (Louie) Cook;

brother, John; brother in law, Richard Becher. Memorial services will be held at 11:00 a.m., on Wednesday, January 13, 2010, at Osgood Funeral Home, 104 E. Cass St., St. Johns. The family will receive friends on Tuesday from 2-4 and 6-8 p.m. Please visit www.lifestorynet.com where you can leave a favorite memory or photo, sign the online guestbook, or make a memorial contribution directly to the family.



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