



Gary Lee Neilsson

June 12, 1951 - September 3, 2011

Gary Lee Neilsson, age 60, of Carbondale, IL, formerly of Marion, IL, succumbed in his battle with pancreatic cancer at 5:20 p.m. on Saturday, September 3, 2011, in Chicago, IL. Gary was born on Tuesday, June 12, 1951, in Annapolis, MD at the U S Naval Academy hospital, to Bill and Dorothy Neilsson. His father, a career Naval Officer, was subsequently stationed abroad and in the United States, including Egypt, Ohio, Texas, and California. He graduated from high school in Rockford, IL in 1969, and went on to attend the University of Illinois, on a Navy ROTC scholarship, becoming a lifetime fan of the Fighting Illini. After graduating with a degree in business, he proudly served his country as a Supply Corps Officer with the U S Navy from 1973 to 1977, when he was honorably discharged.

Gary met his wife, Jane Vail, through the Greek system while at U of I. They were married in Metropolis, IL, at the First United Methodist Church, on July 7, 1974. After his time in the Navy, Gary and Jane returned to Champaign for his graduate studies, where he completed his Masters in Business Administration at U of I.

He and his wife then moved to Mundelein, Illinois, and Gary began work at American Hospital Supply. Later, Gary joined Midwest Dental, where he held various director-level positions. In Mundelein, Gary and Jane were blessed with three children, Jennifer, Amanda, and Michael. Gary later moved to Marion, IL, where he worked for a number of years as an insurance agent.

His wife, Jane, died on December 7, 1994, of breast cancer at the age of 41, after which Gary raised his family as a single parent. He is survived by all of his children: Jennifer Neilsson and her husband, Matthew Maas, of Chicago, IL; Amanda Urbanik and her husband, Tony, of Houston, TX; and Michael Neilsson of Carbondale, IL. He leaves one brother, Doug Neilsson and his wife, Linda, of San Jose, CA, sister-in-law Ann Lawrence and her husband, Chester, of Vienna, IL and brother-in-law, Joe Main and his wife, Judi Kay, of Marion, IL. Gary also leaves nieces and nephews; Ashley Ranshaw, Lindsey Angelats, Chris Lawrence, Drew Lawrence, Rob Main and Rachel Main, other extended family and many friends.

Gary will be best remembered for his sense of humor, his love of sports and his sense of duty to his family and his country.

Arrangements for Gary Lee Neilsson were entrusted to the Wilson-McReynolds Funeral Home, 900 N. Court Street, of Marion, IL.

A time of visitation for family and friends was from 11:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 10, 2011, at the First United Methodist Church, 100 E. 5th St., Metropolis, IL.

During the time of visitation a "Reflection of Life" DVD Memorial Tribute featuring special people places and events of Gary's life was presented to the family and friends.

Following the time of visitation the memorial service was at 11:30 a.m. with Rev. Dan Whitfield presiding.

Special scriptures were read during the service; "Psalm 23" by Chris Lawrence and "John 3:16" and "Romans Chapter 8" both read by Gary's niece, Rachel Main.

Reflections of memory were presented by Gary's daughter, Jennifer Neilsson and Gary's close friend, Kevin Bragee.

The prelude and postlude musical selections were presented by Gary's son-in-law, Matthew Maas on the piano.

Special musical selections presented during the service were "Old Rugged Cross" as a congregational hymns accompanied by pianist, Matthew Maas and the "Navy Hymn" by Josh Weakly acappella.

Interment of Gary's ashes followed in Massac Memorial Gardens of Metropolis, IL, beside his wife, Jane, and some were spread in the waters off Coronado, CA, a childhood home.

Military honors were accorded at the cemetery by members of the Overton P. Morris American Legion Post No. 306 of Metropolis, IL and the Illinois National Guard of Marion, IL.

Illinois National Guard member SGT Brandon Page presented each of Gary's children a flag.

Following the committal service at the cemetery the family and friends gathered at the home of Joe and Judi Kay Main of Marion, for a meal and continued time of fellowship and support.

The family requested in lieu of flowers, memorial gifts made to the "V Foundation", a charity devoted to eradicating cancer and giving hope to its victims and their families.

Memorial contribution envelopes were available at the church or were mailed in care of Wilson-McReynolds Funeral Home, P.O. Box 370, Marion, IL 62959.

For additional information please call the funeral home at 618-993-2131.