

Donald “Don” Mathias Wilken was born July 10, 1937 in Millerville, MN to Carl and Anna (Peffer) Wilken. Being one of eight available sets of helping hands, Don had fond memories of helping his family on the farm. In 1955, he graduated from the Alexandria High School before moving west to California for work. After one year, he moved back to Minnesota where he met his future wife, Judy Carlson, while she was working as a waitress at a restaurant called the Bus Depot in Alexandria. In 1958, the two were united in marriage and in 1959 the couple moved to Beloit, WI. While in Beloit, Don worked in sales at Beloit Iron Works, and also raised six children with Judy: Jeff, Patti, Sharon, Denise, Stephanie, and Carla. In 1968, Don lost his better half and faced parenthood alone for a while, as he worked hard to provide for his family and keep them afloat. On March 31, 1993, at the age of 56, Don retired, and in 1995, moved to the Brandon area where he spent his retirement years helping local farmers with their planting and harvesting needs.

Don was a self-proclaimed “Farmall Man” and marveled at his collection of red tractors that he loved to repair. He was a man that enjoyed the simple pleasures in life: beer, old trucks, and pretty women. He never lost his charms, enjoying flirting with his hospice nurses even in his last days. Don was also a numbers man, keeping track of everything from the daily weather temperatures on his calendar, to his calorie intake throughout the day. He put his mathematical talents to good use by becoming a mischievous card counter when playing games like Buck Euchre. He also enjoyed a good, old-fashioned game of solitaire. Don will be remembered for his wry smile, tremendous sense of humor, and laughing until his dentures fell out.

On Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at the age of 81, Don passed away at his home surrounded by his loving family after a courageous and long battle with cancer. He is preceded in death by his parents, Carl and Anna Wilken; wife, Judy; son, Jeff Wilken; brother, Charles Wilken; sisters, Florence Anderson, Elmyra Olsen, Margaret Augustson, Beatrice Perkins, and Leona Hopfner.

Donald is survived by daughters, Patti Wilken (special friend Randy Myrum), Sharon (Jim) Burns, Denise (Scott) Swanson, Stephanie (Matt) Warden, and Carla (Jon) Vanderheyden; grandchildren, Geoffrey and Joey Nelson, Megan Warden, Missi (Juan) Espinoza, Kelsey, Hannah, and Mikaela Burns, and Lydia Vanderheyden; 8 great-grandchildren; sister, Adeline Brozek, and many nieces and nephews.

Footprints In The Sand

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me." The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During the times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

In Loving Memory of

Donald M. Wilken

July 10, 1937



February 27, 2019

Celebration of Life

Anderson Funeral Home

Alexandria, Minnesota

Friday, Mar. 8, 2019

11:00 AM

Officiant

Pastor John Martinson

Musical Selections

"Green Acres"—Eddie Albert

"My Way"—Frank Sinatra

"Drink A Beer"—Luke Bryan

Please join the family for a time of sharing and fellowship immediately after the service at The Mercantile Bar & Grill—15233 County Rd 6 NW, Garfield

Arrangements

Anderson Funeral Home—Alex, MN