

**Darrell** was born on March 1, 1939 to Richard and Viola Gildemeister. He graduated from Pipestone High School in 1956 and served in the US Army in Germany where he got to meet his high school hero, Elvis Presley. He married Albertha Van Wyhe, known as Buff, on November 25, 1960 and lived in Sioux Falls where Darrell began a long career at John Morrell. They moved to an acreage near Dell Rapids in 1967 and later moved with their 3 children to their much loved hobby farm north of Dell Rapids. After retiring from John Morrell and a year managing another small meat packing plant, Darrell had another career as a manager in the South Dakota Highway Patrol at the entry port and finally retired again in 2001. He enjoyed his farm for 43 years before moving with Buff to the Inn on Westport in Sioux Falls.

On that hobby farm, Darrell built duck ponds and pheasant habitats where he spent hours every day after work tending and watching his collection of water and prairie fowl. He trapped and fished his creek and hunted a few deer that crossed through. When he wasn't tending his own birds, or hunting them throughout the state, he could be found reading about them, watching movies of them, carving them, painting them and telling stories about them. This passion for hunting and waterfowl and wild animals began as a little boy of 6 and never waned from pigeons to peacocks, a variety of ducks and geese, exotic pheasants, guineas, pet raccoons, rabbits, ferrets, a de-scented skunk from the zoo, and more. For a change of scenery he'd find other men gathered to talk about hunting or swap birds or hunt the four legged creatures. He was also an excellent trainer of hunting dogs and collected quite a few, but Smokey the Weimaraner and Baron the Black Lab were the best he ever had.

The farm delighted his senses, filled with his birds, and a menagerie of any other animal he could bring home. Every spot that could fit a tree or a shrub got one he selected and tended. His vegetable garden fed friends and strangers and was always a chance to share the bounty if you would just listen to one of his stories. He always took delight and joy in a sunrise. He saw everything and tried to help you see it too if you were nearby. Though he faithfully attended church and knew the hymns and the words of scripture, truly the outdoors was his cathedral, the place where he most clearly saw God.

Darrell was preceded in death by his sister Myrna (Duane Shortie) Larson, his brother in law, Cornelius (Spark) deRuyter, and parents. He left behind is wife Buff; his children, Kim (Jeff) Larsen of Hudson, WI and grandchildren Zoë and Ava, son Bryan of Baltic, and grandchildren, Hans, Fritz, Greta and Richard, son David (Teresa) of Chandler, AZ and grandchildren Kirstie and Drew. Also surviving are Darrell's sister Shirley (Cornelius "Spark") De Ruyter of Rock Valley, IA and brother Dennis (Mary) of Lake Park, IA and many nieces and nephews and in-law's.

Thanks to so many who have cared for Dad these last years of his decline, especially the staff at Good Samaritan Village in Sioux Falls. Thanks to so many friends for your prayers and condolences. Memorials will be sent to Ducks Unlimited and Reformed Church of Dell Rapids Youth Ministry.

We are confident that Darrell rests in peace and will rise in glory.

**Buff** Albertha was born on September 4, 1934 near Carmel, IA to Gerrit and Albertha "Alice" Van Wyhe. As fourth of nine brothers and sisters, Buff dutifully worked on the family farm outside of Rock Rapids, IA. She attended Nettleton College in Sioux Falls to learn book-keeping and accounting, skills she would use professionally for the Sheraton Hotel, where she was commended for her skill and work ethic, and personally throughout her life.

She met a spirited young man named Darrell Gildemeister when introduced through mutual friends on a blind date. They were married November 25, 1960 and had three children. Buff and Darrell were devoted to one another and were married for 60 years until Darrell's death in November 2020.

A dedicated wife and mother, Buff left the workforce to direct her full attention to raising the family. In 1974, Buff and Darrell purchased a small farm north of Dell Rapids which would be their beloved home for the next 43 years. Buff used her considerable mechanical, electrical, and book-keeping skills to care for and improve the farm for the family she loved. Buff was an expert in many areas, from refacing cabinets to creating delicacies such as wild game, jam and apple cake from her fruit trees, vegetables from the garden, or butter and yogurt from the milk of their dairy goats. Buff was an avid fan of the Twins and Vikings and enjoyed all sports especially when played by her grandkids. She remained sharp to the end, managing her personal affairs in detail.

Buff was a member of the Reformed Church in Dell Rapids over 50 years and was active in the women's ministries there. Her faith was extremely important to her and she loved to listen to Gospel music, read her Bible, and faithfully prayed for her family and friends. She brought to her family a habit of reading the Bible aloud at the table following family dinner every evening.

Buff will always be known for her kindness, her brilliant blue Van Wyhe eyes, amazing determination, indomitable positive outlook, her tremendous love for her family and friends, and her grandchildren in particular.

Buff was preceded in death by her parents Gerrit and Albertha Van Wyhe, brothers Gerrit and Elmer, sisters Wilma (Brower), Jan (Selles), Joyce (Dornbush), and her cherished husband Darrell Gildemeister. She leaves behind her daughter Kim (Jeff) Larsen of Hudson, WI and grandchildren Zoë and Ava, son Bryan of Baltic, SD and grandchildren Hans, Fritz, Greta, and Richard, son David (Teresa) of Phoenix, AZ and Grandchildren Kirstie and Drew. She is also survived by brothers Willis and Marvin Van Wyhe and sister Muriel Plooster, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Sincere thanks to so many that helped and cared for Mom over the past several years particularly the staff and friends at the Inn at Westport. Thank you for the many prayers and condolences. We know that Mom was well-loved and is celebrating a life well-lived in heaven even as we miss her here on earth.

*Funeral Arrangements by Kahler-Brende Funeral Home  
Dell Rapids, South Dakota*

*In Memory of*  
**Darrell and "Buff" Gildemeister**



*Memorial Service*

Reformed Church  
Dell Rapids, South Dakota  
Saturday, May 22, 2021 ~ 11:30 a.m.

*Clergy*

Pastor Brogan Mohlenkamp

*Music*

Pianist: Elaine Hoftiezer  
Soloist: Max Merry

*Inurnment*

Logan Reformed Cemetery  
Dell Rapids, South Dakota