



DUANE WILFRED ERNSTER

January 15, 1940 - December 20, 2022

Duane Wilfred Ernster was born January 15, 1940 in Caledonia MN, to Linus and Pernilla (Klug) Ernster. Duane died Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at the Caledonia Rehab and Retirement Center.

Duane is survived by four brothers: Larry (and wife Kris Best) in Richfield MN; John (and wife Ilene) in LA Crescent MN; David in Apple Valley MN; Mark (and wife Barbara) in Lewiston MN. He is survived by his three sisters: Alice Ernster in Chatfield MN; Rita Duda (and husband Ed Duda) in Rochester; and Jane Meisch (and husband Kenneth Meisch) in Caledonia MN. Duane is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Duane was preceded in death by his parents, Linus and Pernilla.

Duane graduated from Loretto High School and farmed west of Caledonia. There he raised Ayrshire dairy cattle and Arabian horses.

Duane was a member of Saint Mary's Catholic Church; a 1990 officer in Knights of Columbus 1198; and a 13-year member of the Caledonia Champion Racers 4-H Club. Duane was the Lion Tamer for the Caledonia Lions for 30-years, and received a certificate of appreciation from the Lions International president. A trophy was presented to Duane for "Hearing Research Fellow." He received another plaque for "We Serve" in 2002.

Duane received many trophies for winning the Founders Day parade and in Eitzen and Spring Grove. He also received the Johnny Appleseed Award two years in the La Crescent Apple Festival Parade on this horse.

Duane was the winner of Armin Schutte-meier Memorial Award for his horsemanship. Duane rode almost every day and has helped many kids get started on horses. He was a member of the Circle-A Saddle Club and a friend with Armin. The award committee felt Armin would be very happy with Duane receiving the award.

Duane was also honored as the 1997 Woodland Industries Employee of the Year.

Duane will be missed by all who knew him.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11 am, Thursday, December 29, at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Caledonia. Father Tom Jennings will officiate and burial will be in Calvary Cemetery, Caledonia. Visitation will be from 10 to 11 am before the service at the church.

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 29. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Mary's Catholic Church
513 S Pine St
Caledonia, MN 55921
(507) 725-3804

Mass of Christian Burial

DEC 29. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Mary's Catholic Church
513 S Pine St
Caledonia, MN 55921
(507) 725-3804

Tribute Wall

AH

“ Duane was a very special person.
All three of my daughters and some of their friends met Duane and were allowed to ride his horses.
Duane was kind, respectful and attentive to his guests and his horses.
It was an honor to have known him.
Allen Heimerdinger

Allen Heimerdinger - April 02, 2023 at 07:59 PM

JM

thx Alan. I first saw this and it warmed my heart! ❤️ hope u get this.

jane Meisch - April 15, 2025 at 09:15 PM

MG

“ Hey Jane, my family loved Duane! He always said you and he were the family bookends :) Duane was a wonderful man who taught my daughter Kelsey the magic love of horses. I appreciated his trail rides with the classic snickers and root beer at the end of the ride. Duane touched so many hearts in ways you will never know- I love him for the joy he brought to my family.
Mary Krenzke Grosskopf

Mary Grosskopf - January 03, 2023 at 09:41 PM

JM

Gez Mary, I first found your loving comments!
Yeah! Duane was like that! Thank you! Thanks for your snickers and pop comments. Jane!

jane Meisch - April 15, 2025 at 09:20 PM

GY

“ Duane was a good neighbor and took great care of his home with Pernilla. He was such a friendly person and our kids had fun riding with him. We missed him when he moved to town. our sympathy to his family. Anne and Greg Yakle

Gregory A Yakle - December 27, 2022 at 06:23 PM

JM

Ohh my, I first saw this two years later. I so appreciate the time you took to tell us what a good person you said Duane was. He was a Saint! Or, Not all Angels have wings!



Thank you Greg and Anne.

jane Meisch - April 15, 2025 at 09:25 PM

BL

“ Our deepest sympathy to the entire Ernster family! As neighbors we have great memories of horseback riding on your farm! Duane was so generous to our kids as well, teaching them all the skills, sharing his knowledge & of course treats when they were done riding! He was such a kind & gentle guy! His activities in the community & his presence in all the parades have left lasting memories for so many! Please know you are in our thoughts & prayers during the coming days!



Bob & Pat Lemke

Bob & Pat Lemke - December 27, 2022 at 12:59 AM

KG

“ Deepest Sympathy to the Ernster Family.

Kathy Link Gill - December 23, 2022 at 08:07 PM

BK

“ I believe and know that anyone that met Duane, was better because of it. Duane was and always will be remembered as a gentle, witty man, you cared for others. As a Lion he was devoted to the mission of "We Serve". May he rest in peace, and our condolences to family and friends. Bruce and Laura Klein

Bruce Klein - December 22, 2022 at 08:31 PM

DK

“ Deepest sympathy to the Ernster family. We are very sorry for your loss.

Duane & Paulette Kinneberg - December 22, 2022 at 06:23 PM

TM

“ What a wonderful and kind man Duane was. Will always remember him riding his horse in the parade and him driving what I called his Pope Mobile. He was a true treasure to us all. To Duane's family, I am very sorry for your loss. God bless you all!



Teresa MacLeod - December 22, 2022 at 11:18 AM

JG

“ To All the Ernster family,
So sorry to hear this. Duane made everybody smile, especially the kids on his fun horse rides~ he always had a big candy bar for them at the end of the trail. Always doing good for others....a true hometown hero with a heart of gold. RIP DUANE 🙏.
Hugs to the family. 🤗

Jeanne Gade - December 21, 2022 at 10:01 PM

BS

“ I will always cherish the memories of the trail rides with Duane at the helm, especially in the Black Hills with the Nemo Rough Riders. He always had such patience and loved his horses. Ride high Duane!

Brenda Steele - December 21, 2022 at 09:25 PM

HZ

“ Will never forget him riding in the parades with his beautiful horses. His obituary describes him and all his great accomplishments. My sympathies to the family. It would be nice to see pics of him on his horse. He knew how to ride.

Heather Zastrow - December 21, 2022 at 07:56 PM

LG

“ Loved going to ride horses at Ernster farm always got a candy bar and a root beer at the end thanks for the great memories Duane!!! I think you might have started my love of horses

Leigh Schaller Goetzinger - December 21, 2022 at 05:00 PM