



Gerhard Martin Valentinsen

November 4, 1944 - December 14, 2021

Gerhard (Gary) Martin Valentinsen of Napa passed peacefully in the early morning on Tuesday, December 14, 2021, after losing his battle with cancer. Gary, born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, November 4, 1944, was the son of Gerhard and Ruth Valentinsen of Ventnor, New Jersey. He was the second eldest of five children, Ruth Advena of Ventnor, New Jersey, Barbara Mazzeo (D) of Galloway, New Jersey, William Valentinsen of Aston, Pennsylvania, and Robert Valentinsen of Egg Harbor, New Jersey.

He was raised in Ventnor, New Jersey and a graduate of Atlantic City High School Class of 1962. Gary enlisted in the U.S. Navy in September 1962; after completing Electronic schooling at Treasure Island was assigned to U.S. Naval Air Station in Lemoore, California. Gary was married to Janette Rae Stratton on September 12, 1965 at St John the Baptist Catholic Church in Napa. Gary and Janette had two children Timothy Martin Valentinsen and Mary Catherine Valentinsen. In May of 2008, Janette passed after losing her battle with cancer.

Gary had a successful career as a Customer Engineer with IBM from 1966-2006. During his career he traveled throughout the bay area repairing and maintaining equipment. He enjoyed meeting customers of all walks of life and seeing northern California, most days traveling at least 100 miles per day. A lifetime Roman Catholic, Gary was a devoted member of St. Apollinaris Catholic Church in Napa. He volunteered as an Usher and assisted with the security of the Sunday collections for the church.

Gary loved anything trains. He had a model railroad layout in his home and spent years traveling to and visiting train stations and museums. He was a longtime member and past president of the Napa Valley Model Railroad Historical Society. He was a docent with the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento, California, dedicating 2,000 hours each year to leading tours and working in the upholstery shop.

Gary was a loyal friend to many, his kindness, caring and compassion along with his great sense of humor made him a true joy to be around. He was strong, courageous, dependable and selfless. He will be greatly missed by all. Gary is survived by his children, Timothy Valentinsen and his wife Sara Valentinsen of Longmont, Colorado, and Mary Valentinsen of Vallejo. Gary was a proud grandfather of three: Ryan Valentinsen – son of Tim and Sara; Michael and Robert Rich – sons of Mary; and great grandfather to Thoren and Finley – sons of Michael and Ashley Rich.

Visitation will be held pm at Claffey and Rota Funeral Home in Napa on Monday, December 20, 2021, from 3:00 – 4:00pm, followed by the Rosary prayer service at 4:00 pm. The funeral Mass will be held Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 11:00am at St Apollinaris Catholic Church in Napa.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, the family would like donations be made to the California State Museum Foundation: <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E352471&id=7>

Cemetery Details

Tulocay Cemetery

411 Coombsville Rd
Napa, CA 94558

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 20. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (PT)

Claffey and Rota Funeral Home
1975 Main Street
Napa, CA 94559
(707) 224-5210
services@claffeyandrota.com
<http://www.claffeyandrota.com>

Rosary

DEC 20. 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (PT)

Claffey and Rota Funeral Home
1975 Main Street
Napa, CA 94559
(707) 224-5210
services@claffeyandrota.com
<http://www.claffeyandrota.com>

Mass

DEC 21. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (PT)

St. Apollinaris Catholic Church
3700 Lassen St
Napa, CA 94558
(707) 257-2555

Reception

DEC 21. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (PT)

St. Apollinaris Catholic Church
3700 Lassen St
Napa, CA 94558
(707) 257-2555

Tribute Wall



“ *Gerhard Martin Valentinsen*

September 29, 2022 at 04:54 PM



“ *Gerhard Martin Valentinsen*

September 29, 2022 at 02:55 PM



“ *Gary was the best he took the slings and arrows life throws at us head on and with a smile! He was a prime example of how they just don't make them like that anymore! Whether it was his wonderfully elaborate yard decorations and wearing a full conductor's uniform on Halloween or teaching people of all ages and from all walks of life about trains and railroads he did so with the same passion and vigor. He was a great neighbor friend and the finest example of what a human being should be. I will miss his smile and sage like advice hope he finds peace on that big train set in heaven!*

Guy James - December 21, 2021 at 04:28 PM



“ *My deepest sympathies and prayers to Gary's family. Gary would greet us with his beautiful smile when we entered St. A's for mass on Sunday. I would always say good morning to my "Mr. Usher", which would bring about a bigger smile. I will miss him.*

Anni Donahue - December 18, 2021 at 11:48 AM

KG

“ Gary visited my mother Reni Grubb on many occasions even though he lived in California
She loved seeing him as we all did and he was a joy to be around. My mom is now 102 and I think Gary helped her live that long. His spirit will live on and he will surely be missed by many. Kevin R. Grubb

Kevin Grubb - December 18, 2021 at 09:10 AM

CH

“ My cousin Gary was never without a smile and a joyful attitude. I loved the days my family visited our Valentinsen family - and family they were to us. I ran free and barefoot in Ventnor with my fun and exciting cousins. We sang and danced, and laughed. It was a good house to spend a little vaca time from city life. I treasure my memories with Gary, Ruthie and Barbara. Yes little Billy and Bobby were there too - but I was more Gary's age. As we all grew older - Gary visited NJ about every year. And when he did - he always made the effort of getting to Delaware and spending time with his Aunt Reni, my mother. They had a special relationship I believe. And Reni at 102 yrs of age, sends her love and prayers to Mary and Tim, Jeannette at this difficult time. The picture I am looking at IS Gary. Smiling and kind and helpful and caring always of those he was near. I will miss you Gary but so thankful for tons of good memories.

Carol Grubb Hirst - December 18, 2021 at 08:38 AM