



Leonard "Lenny" Ralph Merdan

November 21, 1945 - June 16, 2022

Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10am on Tuesday, June 21st at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville for Leonard R. Merdan, age 76, of Albany, MN who passed away on Thursday, June 16th at the St. Cloud Hospital with his wife and children at his side. Burial will take place at St. John the Baptist Parish Cemetery in Collegeville at a later date.

Visitation will be from 4pm – 8pm on Monday, June 20th at the parish center in Collegeville and again from 9am-10am on Tuesday at the Abbey.

Arrangements were made by the Wenner Funeral Home, Cold Spring, MN.

Lenny was born November 21, 1945 in Collegeville Township in Stearns County, Minnesota to Andrew and Frances (Reisinger) Merdan. He was a 1963 graduate of St. Cloud Technical High School and later graduated from St. Cloud Vocational Technical College from the Carpentry program. In 1969, he competed and received an International Carpentry Apprenticeship Award in Chicago. Lenny began his carpentry career with Avon Lumber Yard (Lumber One) as their first carpenter and then as a foreman. In 1983 Lenny Merdan Construction was created. Later 1993, he began working for his son's company, Merdan Custom Builders Incorporated, where he continued until his passing.

He married Janet Skluzacek on August 20, 1966 and together had six

children. Since 1967 Lenny resided in Avon, MN having built six custom homes for their growing family before building a home and woodshop in Albany in 2004.

Lenny was an active member in the Stearns County Pioneer Club. During the annual Pioneer Days event he held numerous demonstrations in the woodshop, helped out in nearly every corner and enjoyed observing all the running equipment of the past. He was also a member of the Central MN Woodworkers Association and Mid-MN Association of Woodturners.

In recent years Lenny spent his time pursuing his passion of fine wood working projects. Lenny created everything from jewelry boxes, spinner tops, intricate bowls, and detailed vehicle models. He loved to share his works and talk about the steps to produce each project and the types of wood he utilized, especially with his grandchildren.

As a childhood member of the St. John the Baptist Church, he performed the duties of a mass server - continuing his membership and pursuit of the Catholic faith throughout his life.

Lenny is survived by his wife, Janet; children, Kenneth (Bridget) Merdan, Dean (Susan) Merdan, Curtis (Laura) Merdan, Lyle, Taunya (Trevor) Poser, MaryAlice (Peter) Faust; 12 grandchildren: Addison and Nolan Merdan, Elizabeth and Nicholas Merdan, Abigail and Clara Merdan, Cole and Brooke Poser, Riley, Lane, Trace and Tyler Faust; brothers and sisters, Chuck (Sandy), Lillian Edelbrock, Betty Lipinski, Marlene Thielman, Nell (Roger) Bechtold, Marita (Don) Schwinghammer and Imelda (Don) Allen, brothers in law Ed Koska and Larry Koltes and sister in law, Kay Merdan and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters, Judy and Carol; and

brother, Robert.

Memorials are preferred in lieu of flowers.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 20. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

St. John the Baptist Parish Center
14241 Fruit Farm Rd
Collegeville, MN 56321

Visitation

JUN 21. 9:00 AM - 9:45 AM (CT)

St. John's Abbey / University Church
2900 Abbey Plaza
Collegeville, MN 56321

Service

JUN 21. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. John's Abbey / University Church
2900 Abbey Plaza
Collegeville, MN 56321

Tribute Wall



“ Leonard "Lenny" Ralph Merdan

January 29, 2023 at 09:26 AM



“ I was at the thrift store a two days ago and was struck by this beautifully intricate wooden structure. I purchased it and it just occurred to me to see if there were any markings to indicate who and/or where it was made. Under it, it read "Handcrafted by LENNY MERDAN". Curious, I typed his name into Google and discovered the sad news of his passing. I can see how much he was loved by so many and the legacy he leaves behind. Now I have the pressure of finding the perfect place to put this special piece in my home. Thank you Lenny. My condolences to the Merdan family.



Liz - July 11, 2022 at 04:16 AM

TA

This is another piece that dad made that us kids have not seen before. I would be curious to find out which thrift store you found this at?

Taunya - July 18, 2022 at 11:25 PM

“ ... eulogy continued.

When my wife Kim and I decided to build our first house there was only one person to consider and that was Lenny. Over the years as we had remodels and decided to build another house, other buildings and a what seemed to be forever remodeling, it was always Lenny with his son Dean there to build them. I came to appreciate the difference between a house and a home as I witnessed how he put love in even before anyone lived there.

When I think about Lenny the first thing that comes to mind is his smile, then his love and passion for working with wood and then his love for people and sharing his passion with them and the amazing things you could build with the simplest of material if you put your mind to it. I always marveled at how if given enough time he could find ways to use up all the scrap wood on a building project and the waste was reduced to almost nothing. Lenny saw the beauty in all of it.

Lenny did not build houses, he built homes. He put warmth and love into everything he did, and it always made my family and extended family feel better about the places we lived. We all loved Lenny very much and his passion, smile and friendship will be greatly missed. I can say I am a better and more enlightened person for having known him and had his influences in my life. He will be sorely and dearly missed.” - Scott Blattner

“I had the wonderful opportunity of meeting my father-in-law, Lenny, 24 short years ago when I began dating Dean. When I married the second son of a second son, my blessings increased as Lenny welcomed me into his family.

To know my father-in-law is to know a good and kind man. Lenny was the epitome of patience to me. Never once did I hear him raise his voice. I never saw him frazzled. Not even when all 25 of us were

gathered in his house for the holidays and the Christmas tree teetered precariously as the grandchildren ran by. Instead, he chuckled and was just happy they were having fun. Over the years, Lenny ate all the meals I prepared and never once did I hear him complain. In fact, he was always pleasant and had a smile on his face.

Lenny was the true master over wood. His carpentry and woodworking talents were nothing short of pure amazement and artistry. But when complimented, he would just shrug his shoulders in his humble way. What I saw as tree debris to take to the compost pile at the edge of town, he instead saw as boxes, bowls, wheels and tables that turned into beautiful works of art. When he helped build our home, he was just as genuinely excited as we were. I'm sure there were times when my litany of questions and attempts to be helpful got on his nerves, but he never let it show. See what I mean? He was a good and kind man, indeed!

Lenny was more than a father to my husband. He was also his best friend and lifelong work partner. They were a true synchronized team and it seemed they shared their own special language. Lenny was a loving grandfather and incredible mentor not only to our children, but all of his grandchildren. There have been very few days that I can remember when the words "Dad" or "Grandpa" haven't been mentioned in our home. Lenny was the type of man who easily left a lasting impression on a person. I'm sure many of you will agree.

For all of this and more, I am grateful to have known this good and kind man. It has been my sincerest pleasure and honor to have had him as my father-in-law. He was dearly loved by many and is missed deeply." – Susan Merdan

(hit limit, continuation)

“ ... eulogy continued.

I can tell you that dad was gracious for all he had including his family and the skills of his hands. Our family has been lucky to have grown up in homes that he built - teaching us, at all ages, the How-tos and tricks of the trades. We were practically all born with hammers in our hands. I don't think it surprised the older kids when we would learn that we would be building a new home before the prior one was even finished; another kid was on the way. Why not just build on the next lot across the street in the Stratford-Upon-Avon addition; makes moving easy and a much shorter work commute. We did that (4) times; with two prior homes also on the south Avon countryside. When Janet and Lenny became empty nesters; he decided to build his last personal home and woodshop ... all the way to Albany; only 7 miles away. I guess that was a long distance as compared to across the street. Surely a big move for dad considering his first home was only 2 miles away from the Collegeville farmstead he was born and grew up in. Home-building was his life.

As a teenager, 15 yr. old exactly, dad and others at the time were building a new church priest house in Grand Marais when I experienced the first time, I knew my dad fully trusted me. On a Friday late day, they realized they were short some materials to complete a stage of the job and desired to finish on Saturday before returning home. I remember being chartered to stop by Avon Lumberyard after school to pick up the necessary material and drive up-north the next morning early. Remember, I did not have a driver's license but was able to drive a stick shift with no rearview mirror; only two side mirrors. It was a small white Ford Courier pickup with the Merdan Construction logo painted on both sides. So me, the kid without a driver's license, did exactly what the boss ordered and I delivered. I will always remember that moment of independence and the respect I had for dad from allowing me to prove myself on such mission and long drive. Such seminal experience has given me much confidence for all of my life.

I will forever value and cherish all our time together, including just

riding with him in his trucks to the job or the lumber yard, plus all he taught me to be like himself – skilled, authentic. I'm sure my brothers and sisters feel the same.

Next I would like to read a few tributes we received from others.

"My wife Jane and I moved to the Avon area in 1989. Two years later we set out to build a home in the Avon Hills. We had not built a home before and had a million questions. Lenny patiently answered all of them, assuring us that with his help all would go smoothly. He was right. Lenny, Dean, Curt, and Steve Bell built us a lovely home. We will remember Lenny for his deep faith, his devotion to family, his unparalleled craftsmanship, and most of all, his essential kindness. We were blessed to have called him a good friend." - Steve and Jane Stromme

"I first met Lenny in 1970 when I was 10 years old and my brothers and I would pester him as he worked to build my parents' first new home. Lenny had a funny story where he and his partner would leave the house at the end of the day, and we would try and hang on to the bumper of his truck and be pulled down the gravel road, sliding behind. Lenny would have to hold on to us as his partner started driving away and then he would run to the truck and hop in. Over the years as I was growing up he seemed to almost always be around as he built homes, office additions, remodels for my parents, uncles and our company. As far as I am concerned Lenny was the father of measure twice - cut once.

(hit limit, continuation)

Ken Merdan - June 22, 2022 at 10:39 AM



“ ... eulogy final.

Dad, you have touched the lives of so many people and made the world a better place.

As father, grandpa, father-in-law, uncle, teacher, & friend – Lenny, you were a man of great integrity and compassion - in your trades and in family. You are our solid foundation upon which we can all build a strong "home" and a great life on earth - all based on your teachings and guidance, leading the way to eternal life.

No more slivers, no more saws, no more sawdust, no more hammers & nails. It's break-time!!

Fortunately, in spirit, we can take such break with you today, but we have much yet to accomplish and perfect like you taught us. Plus, you left a few unfinished projects for us to complete.

We know you have reached the Lord as you surely built enough stairs with utmost perfection to reach heaven.

Dad, we will miss you. – Ken Merdan

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I want to briefly highlight some comments expressed from friends and family as they confirm what we know of dad.

Uncle Lenny touched so many with his talents. So very grateful for all the opportunities to spend time with your dad. He always seemed to have a smile when I saw him. Lenny was a 2nd dad to me - wonderful man, father craftsman. I hit the jackpot having you as my father-in-law. Every time I saw and talked to Lenny; he had a smile on his face. Great guy. Wonderful cousin. I always had fond memories of him. Everywhere I look there are little reminders of his craftsmanship. Lenny's true legacy will be the things he made but the knowledge and skills that will be passed down through his children & grandchildren, & their children.... We love you.

Ken Merdan - June 22, 2022 at 10:38 AM

FO

“ Janet & all the family: prayers, thoughts and condolences to all of you on the death of your husband and father, Lenny. You have all been a part of the larger St. John's Family for many years and we are with you in your moment of sadness and grief. Blessings to all of you,
Fr. Tom Andert, OSB

Fr. Tom Andert, OSB - June 21, 2022 at 09:31 AM

LM

“ Grandpa, you've been there for every step of my life. You were present in all the special moments of my life. I loved being able to stop over any day of the week while school was in session. You would unlock the door right away in the morning so it would be ready when I was finished with school. You got to see me dressed up for prom and walk across the stage at graduation. Grandpa you helped make me into the woman I am today with your compassion and kindness. I'll never forget all the desserts we made and puzzles we did with Grandma this past year. I love you and miss you so much already. You'll always be with me everywhere I go. I love you Grandpa, Liz.



Liz Merdan - June 21, 2022 at 09:05 AM

NS

“ Rest in Peace, Lenny, Condolences to the family

Norb & Joanie Schramel - June 20, 2022 at 06:17 PM

LE

“ Lillian Edelbrock sending these old time family pictures, Lenny age 3-7 yrs
Photos taken for Betty's First Communion, Judy's First Communion,
Lenny's First Communion



Lillian Edelbrock - June 20, 2022 at 02:30 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Leonard "Lenny" Ralph Merdan.



June 20, 2022 at 11:09 AM



“ Sincerest Sorrow - All White was purchased for the family of Leonard "Lenny" Ralph Merdan.



June 20, 2022 at 10:13 AM

NA

“ We are very sorry to hear of Lenny’s passing. He was a very talented and vibrant man. We lived up the hill from them to the north and watched when his wood shop lights were on and went over to see what he was creating. He showed us many things that he made with wood. Here are a couple beautiful things that he made for us and he used the wood that came off the Beutz farm. We will miss him. John and Nancy Beutz (neighbors)



nancybeutz - June 20, 2022 at 09:11 AM

EL

“ Our sympathy to the Merdan Family ,
Lenny & Dean built our beautiful home in 2004 not a detail
overlooked ! I also recall being in scouting Lenny was a mentor to
many taking the scouts into his home teaching wood working skills .
He was a patient good humored man always willing to share his
knowledge . In todays times we need more Lenny's to shine and
mentor !

Rest In Peace Lenny 🙏🔨

God Bless the Linn Family
Eric Joyce Spencer & Kallie



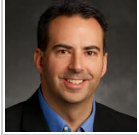
Eric Linn - June 20, 2022 at 08:35 AM



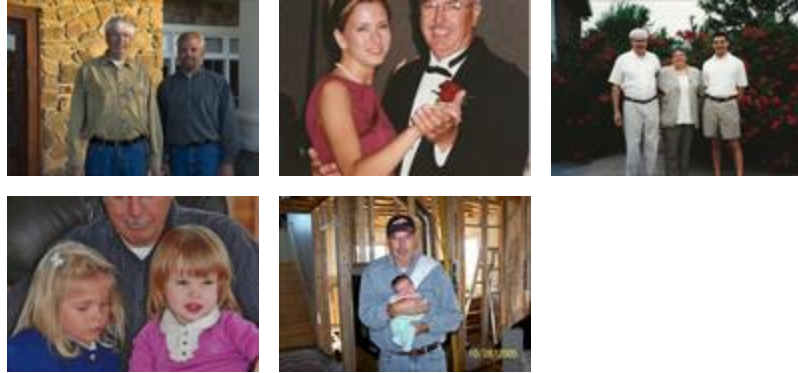
“ Classic Sympathy Dish Garden was purchased
for the family of Leonard "Lenny" Ralph Merdan.



June 20, 2022 at 08:11 AM



“ A few of his life moments; graduations, time with grandkids, friends, German potatoe salad, etc.

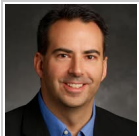


Kenneth Merdan - June 20, 2022 at 12:47 AM

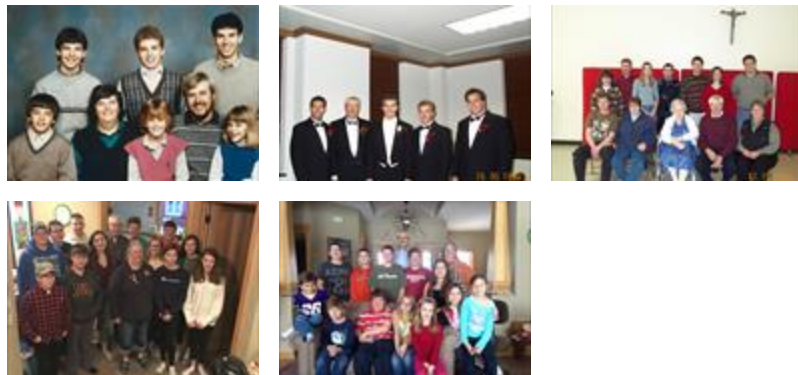


Love the photos

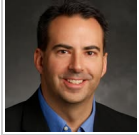
Taunya Merdan Poser - July 18, 2022 at 11:16 PM



“ Lenny's immediate family - how quickly the siblings: Ken, Dean, Curt, Lyle, Taunya, and MaryAlice added (12) grandchildren: Riley, Abby, Cole, Lane, Tyler, Trace, Elizabeth, Brooke, Clara, Addison, Nick, Nolan



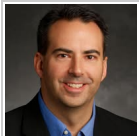
Kenneth Merdan - June 20, 2022 at 12:35 AM



“ Lenny with his siblings and spouses; a house full of (11) kids. He was the 'middle' child, 1 of 3 boys. Dad 'expanded' the farmhouse many times to accommodate.



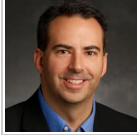
Kenneth Merdan - June 20, 2022 at 12:23 AM



“ Lenny and his wife Janet through the years.



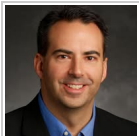
Kenneth Merdan - June 20, 2022 at 12:16 AM



“ A few vintage photos of dad and his parents Andrew & Frances.



Kenneth Merdan - June 20, 2022 at 12:13 AM



“ Lenny in action ... when was he not. Until last year, dad was working with Dean regularly on the jobsites and continuing his craft just down the driveway in his woodshop.



Kenneth Merdan - June 20, 2022 at 12:06 AM



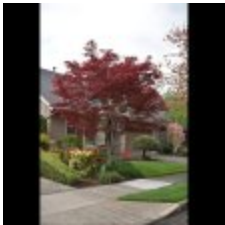
“ In 1969, dad won a carpentry award that was seminal moment of his life; setting him on the path of life we all have lived with him. The event took place in Chicago and upon winning was recognized locally in MN. He never turned back and became the master craftsman, carpenter, home builder, and artisan of which we will remember him. We will forever cherish the wood items he branded with "Hand Crafted by Lenny Merdan".



Ken Merdan - June 19, 2022 at 11:03 PM



“ Red Leaf Japanese Maple was purchased for the family of Leonard "Lenny" Ralph Merdan.



June 19, 2022 at 05:12 PM

NM

“ Grandpa, you have done so much for your family and others throughout your life. Every day I see all the wood in my home, which reminds me of you helping my dad build it. I loved every time you visited and I was able to see you. You always had a new project to show me in your shop or with you. I will miss you on the 4th of July because of all the fun yard games we played together.

Love, your grandson, Nolan Merdan



Nolan Merdan - June 19, 2022 at 03:52 PM

BM

“ 5 files added to the album Pictures



Bridget Merdan - June 19, 2022 at 02:32 PM



“ *Peaceful Wishes was purchased for the family of Leonard "Lenny" Ralph Merdan.*



June 19, 2022 at 02:26 AM



“ *Dish Garden with Fresh Cut Flowers was purchased for the family of Leonard "Lenny" Ralph Merdan.*



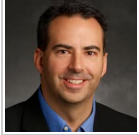
June 18, 2022 at 08:29 PM



“ *Blue & White Sympathy Basket was purchased for the family of Leonard "Lenny" Ralph Merdan.*



June 18, 2022 at 07:28 PM



“ 5 files added to the album Pictures



Kenneth Merdan - June 18, 2022 at 06:31 PM



“ Classic Sympathy Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Leonard "Lenny" Ralph Merdan.



June 18, 2022 at 03:35 PM



“ *Dad, you have touched the lives of so many people and made the world a better place.*

You are a man of great integrity and compassion - in your trades and in family. You are our solid foundation upon which we can all build a strong "home" and great life on earth - all based on your teachings, leading the way to eternal life. No more slivers, no more saws, no more sawdust, no more hammers & nails. It's break-time. We know you have reached the Lord as you surely built enough stairs with perfection to reach heaven.

Expressed with much love and admiration, your eldest son, Ken

Ken Merdan - June 18, 2022 at 02:33 PM