



Dennis "Denny" Struck

September 12, 1944 - August 18, 2012

Does anybody really know what time it is
Does anybody really care?
If so I can't imagine why
We've all got time enough to die
(Chicago, 1969)

Marana resident Dennis "Denny" Struck, 67, died on Saturday, August 18, 2012, from complications following knee replacement surgery. In his final hours, he was surrounded by loved ones including his wife of thirty-five years, Patricia A. Struck. Several family members and friends held vigil at Tucson's Northwest Medical Center during the weeks of his hospitalization. Denny had been in excellent health and many friends expressed shock at his unexpected death.

Denny was well known for always putting his family first. In addition to his wife Pat, who he married in 1977 in Chicago, he is survived by four children: Derrell J. Struck, 47, of Madison, WI and Dean J. Struck, 44, of Pasadena, CA (sons from Denny's first marriage to Sandra); and Tanya L. Casper, 48, of Mesa, AZ and Monica J. Casper, 45, of Tucson, AZ (Patricia's daughters from her first marriage). Dean will remember Denny as "funny, thoughtful, and full of honor, a father that any son would be proud to have. I am blessed to have had him to call Dad." Derrell said, "Dennis left a lasting impression on all that he

met. He was friendly, down to earth, open and honest. Not only was he a beloved father, he was my best friend. Thanksgivings and Bear/Packer games will never be the same.”

Tanya recalls that Denny was always worried about everyone else. She said, “When I was in high school, having the usual high school struggles, I would open my lunch and find a note from Denny, handwritten on a paper towel, telling me he loved me. He just seemed to know when somebody was having a hard time. Even in the hospital, when he was being prepped for that first surgery, he turned to me and asked ‘Are you okay, honey?’ because I don’t like needles and tubes, and he knew that.” And Monica said, “Denny was the greatest dad; he was funny, supportive, wise, and ‘old-school’ in all the best ways. For thirty-five years, he was there for me when I needed him, every single time. I really can’t imagine my life without him.”

“Grandpa D” also leaves behind six wonderful, boisterous grandchildren, all born since 2001: Burke, Fletcher, Griffin, and Mackenzie of Delavan, WI, and Mason and Delaney of Tucson. Granddaughter Mason, 10, said: “He was the best grandpa I ever knew. Nobody can ever replace him. I miss him.” Denny is also survived by his sister, Arlene Dellamano, of Tinley Park, IL and her extended family. Niece Linda LaChiana-Olson remarked, “I will never forget Denny’s mischievous smile and the fun we had. I loved him and will miss him always.”

Denny was born September 12, 1944, in Evergreen Park, Illinois, to Paul Struck, a chef on the New York Central Railroad, and Mary Struck (née Lesondak), a homemaker. As a child he worshipped his older brother, Paul Jr. (known as Rip for his ability “to fall asleep on a dime”), who died when Denny was just nine years old. He attended Evergreen Park High School, graduating in 1962. He then studied at Greer Technical Institute, graduating in 1963 and embarking on a long, productive career as a truck mechanic. He was a

member of the Automobile Mechanics Local 701 and the International Association of Machinists (IAM).

Throughout the 1970s, he worked for Norbran Leasing, a division of Chas. Levy Circulating Co., in Chicago, and it was there that he met Pat. He then worked for Northern Illinois Mack in Rockford, Illinois for two years, but returned to Norbran from 1981 to 1987 as a service foreman. From 1987 to 2006, until his retirement, he worked for Chicago Mack Sales and Service in Summit, Illinois. At Mack, Denny was both a role model and a prankster. He had a terrific sense of humor and loved few things more than putting one over on his coworkers.

His friend and colleague George Adeszko recalls, “Denny did that all the time. He’d come by and ask me, and I’d say ‘Yeah, let’s do it.’ Me and him, we were like two peas in a pod. We thought the same. We’d look at something, he’d throw something out there, then I’d throw something out there and we’d laugh! He was just a guy I really liked to laugh with. We had such a good time when we were together. There’s a guy at work, in the body shop, and your dad used to give him such a hard time. He’d walk in and say ‘Hello Jimmy,’ like ‘Hello Newman’ on Seinfeld. Jimmy came over today and saw me, and he started crying and then I started crying. Man, it’s just so hard. You don’t expect something like this to happen to somebody you know, and someone who so many people loved.”

A lifelong Chicago Bears and Cubs fan, Denny was frequently disappointed by his teams’ performances. (And he was heartbroken when half of his grandchildren migrated their loyalties to the Green Bay Packers.) He often voiced passionate, profanity-laced opinions about how the Bears and especially the Cubs could earn more wins. (Team owners never fared well in these pronouncements.) A street racer back when cars had fins, Denny was

also an avid fan of drag racing, and he and Pat enjoyed attending the races in Pomona, Las Vegas, and the Midwest with their family and friends. In 2010 in Las Vegas, Denny fulfilled a dream of driving a racecar; the plaque and photo from that day hang proudly in his garage.

Denny took to retirement like a kid in a candy store—or like a man released from six decades of shoveling snow. After moving to sunny Tucson in 2007, he and Pat bought an RV and enjoyed numerous trips, some with their grandchildren, to camps and lakes throughout California, Arizona, and Nevada. Denny also relished frequent travel to Las Vegas; this year, he and Pat celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary there. A member of the Audubon Society, Denny enjoyed bird watching on their many trips, and he also took good care of the local birds near his Marana home. He loved to work in the yard, planting succulents and native trees and relishing the incredible mountain vistas.

Throughout his life, Denny made friends easily. He was witty and could quickly sum up a person's character. Although a relative newcomer to the Tucson area, Denny had already expanded his circle of friends considerably. Weekends often included breakfast at the Cattlemans Cafe at the Marana Stockyards, owned by friends Mike and Cindy McGee. Neighbors Anna and Tony Magaña said, "The friendship that evolved between Dennis and Tony would always start with a handshake and a 'What's happening, brother?' His presence in our lives was a comfortable one that can never be replaced, easy like Sunday morning."

Paul Ristau, a friend from Denny's youth in Evergreen Park, remembers what fun it was to be part of a group of teenagers who called themselves the Pit Men. The men even had special jackets made, and on Denny and Pat's visit back to Chicago in June, Paul brought out his old jacket and they shared fond memories and stories. Paul remarked, "Denny was a great pit man back then

and that was a very special time in our lives. Now he's working on the best crew he could be part of, as one of God's pit men in Heaven."

Memorial visitation Saturday, Sept. 8 11am at Heartland Memorial Center, 7151 183rd St, Tinley Park. Memorial service 12pm at funeral home.

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 8. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Heartland Memorial Center (183rd just off Harlem Ave)
7151 183rd St
Tinley Park, IL 60477
(708) 444-2266

Service

SEP 8. 12:00 PM (CT)

Heartland Memorial Center
7151 183rd street
Tinley Park, IL

Tribute Wall



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with the family at their time of loss. I had the pleasure of working with Denny at Chicago Mack he was truly a great person and a pleasure to work with he will be missed greatly.##imported-begin##Anthony Zielinski & Patricia DeWane##imported-end##

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