



Chester "Chet" Benson

December 23, 1933 - December 23, 2011

Chester D. "Chet" Benson, 78, of Iron River, went home to be with the Lord on Friday, December 23, 2011 at the Northstar Health System in Iron River.

Chet was born on January 28, 1933 in Stambaugh, MI, son of the late Norman and Betty (Lindeman) Benson. He graduated from Iron River High School in 1952 and was a lifelong resident of the area. Chet married Virginia "Ginny" Meyers on July 14, 1956 in Ewen, MI. He owned and operated Snowmobile City Arctic Cat dealership and restaurant in Iron River for many years, earning top sales credentials for Arctic Cat snowmobiles in the Midwest several times. He attended Reisch Auction College in Mason City, IA in 1964 and was a well known auctioneer in the area. Chet also was a real estate broker and owned Riverland Real Estate for many years. Most recently he was affiliated with Century21 Goldwood, Inc. in Iron River. He was a member of the Iron County Search and Rescue and a board member for the Iron County Chamber of Commerce. Chet enjoyed flying and was a small aircraft pilot and member of the Civil Air Patrol in Eagle River, WI. He and his wife were well known musicians, Chet and Ginny, who played all over the Midwest and Texas. They made appearances on the nationally syndicated radio program, A Prairie Home Companion. They were the live entertainment at the U.P. Championship Rodeo for 42 years and played at several Iron County Museum functions, including the annual pie social, for over 40 years. They also developed the Great Northern Opry in the U.P. in the early 1970's as well as producing

several Country Western and Gospel recordings. They also spent many years performing "A Country Christmas with Chet and Ginny" for the local Snaps with Santa program. Chet was an active member of the U.P. River Church in Iron River where he played his guitar every Sunday. His kindness and generosity were evident in many ways. He donated his auctioneering services to the Iron County 4-H Fat Steer Sale at the fair for many years and he also spent one night each week for over 20 years speaking and ministering at the Mission Bible Training Center in Gaastra. Chet was a devoted husband, father, grandfather & great grandfather. He enjoyed going to camp, hunting, fishing and most importantly time spent with family. One of his greatest joys was serving as a founding member of the exclusive DSC.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Ginny; seven children, Barbara (Bob) Moncivais of Iron River, Ed (Hydee) Benson of Iron River, Rosemary (Donie) Malitz of Pearson, WI, Punner (Mike) Franzene of Iron River, Lynda (Wade) Cross of Crystal Falls, Amy (Mark S.) Johnson of Iron River and Heidi (Jim) Barron of Woodstock, IL; a brother, Cornel (Pauline) Benson of Iron River; five sisters, Jean Lindbeck, Carol (Keith) Erickson, Mona (Donald) Sarder & Avie (Ronald) Powell, all of Iron River, and Anncille (Bob) Engel of Oconto Falls, WI; 11 grandchildren; 10 great grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Chet was preceded in death by an infant daughter, Virginia; an infant brother, Norman; and his brother-in-law, Lindy Lindbeck.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday from 11:00am until 2:00pm at the U.P. River Church in Iron River. Funeral services will follow at 2:00 pm at the church. Pastor Jim Pellizzer will officiate. Burial will be in the Bates Township Cemetery in the spring.

Pallbearers will be his son, Ed Benson, and sons-in-law, Bob Moncivais,

Donie Malitz, Mike Franzene, Wade Cross, Mark S. Johnson and Jim Barron.

Condolences may be expressed to the family of Chester "Chet" Benson online at www.nashfuneralhome.net.

The family has entrusted the Nash Funeral Home of Crystal Falls with the funeral arrangements.

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 28. 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CT)

U.P. River Church
317 W. Maple
Iron River, MI 49935

Funeral Service

DEC 28. 2:00 PM (CT)

U.P. River Church
317 W. Maple
Iron River, MI 49935

Tribute Wall

TB

“ I grew up down the street from Chet and Ginny. I often wandered into his shop and watched as he worked on snowmobiles. He gave me a ride in his J-3 Piper Cub. I loved aviation from a young age, and I remember that flight clearly to this day. We flew down to Land O Lakes for fuel and came back. Now over 40 years later I have spent a whole career flying airplanes. Those early experiences surely impacted the trajectory of my life. Thanks Chet.

Timothy Buck - August 16, 2023 at 04:07 PM

BM

“ Happy Birthday Dad. We sure do love and miss you! We have suffered so many recent losses with Auntie Mona, Auntie Jean and Uncle Ronny. We know that you're altogether. What a homecoming I'm sure. We think of you everyday. We still go to camp and we take the river trips to honor you! Love you, Bee

Barbara Moncivais - January 28, 2018 at 04:50 PM

 Amy Johnson

“ December 10th, sitting with Mom 😊 she still misses you Dad! I sure do too. So much has happened since you've left us. XXOO Poor Mom is so confused. 😞 All of us kids continue to take care of her. Thanks for being such a great dad. 🥰

Amy Johnson - December 10, 2017 at 02:41 PM

PD

“ Hello Dad,
missing you this Christmas, sure wish you were here to join all of us in the Christmas Caroling. We got mom to pick up the accordion to accompany our voices. You would have been proud. She played and sang. It was obvious though - we missed your "bass" voice. It was fun but sad all the same. We gave thanks and expressed appreciation for who are here now but paused in remembering you, Bob and Donna. 2 years yesterday you went home, but 3rd Christmas celebrating our Lords birth. Sure miss your voice and hugs.

Punner Franzene - Iron River, MI - daughter - December 25, 2013 at 12:00 AM

PD

“ Hey dad did you come with the angels to take Bob home on October 3rd? We miss both of you so very much. Why does good bye have to ache so much?

punner - iron river, MI - daughter - October 06, 2013 at 12:00 AM

PD

“ Hey dad as you know.

punner - iron river, MI - daughter - October 06, 2013 at 12:00 AM

HD

“ I think about you all the time.

Heidi - Chicago, IL - Daughter - September 18, 2013 at 12:00 AM

HD

“ Happy Father's Day. Miss you.

Heidi - Chicago, IL - Daughter - June 19, 2013 at 12:00 AM

HD

“ Alomost spring again. Miss your voice

Heidi - chicago, IL - daughter - April 04, 2013 at 12:00 AM

HD

“ R.I.P Daddy wish you were here to make everything better. Miss you lots.

Heidi barron - IL - Daughter - December 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CI

“ Sure do miss you Grandpa. I love you. Please keep Grandma warm and watch over her.

Chelsea - IL - September 02, 2012 at 12:00 AM

HD

“ Hi, Dad. Remember, "To the moon and back!" I know you're shining down on us. We sure miss you. . . Love, Heidi

Heidi Barron - Chicago, IL - Daughter - August 31, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DL

“ Not a day goes by that I dont think of you. I miss you more than you will ever know. I listen to your song "Super Pension" , and remember how you told me there would not be any politicians in heaven. Boy its sure got to be great...No politicians... pure heaven! Love ya Dad! Dog

Da Dog - Woodstock, IL - Son in law - July 16, 2012 at 12:00 AM

HD

“ Hi Dad. You've gotten more good company up there lately. Make sure you look for Donnie's dad. We sure miss you. Amy made a memory stone and put it at your favorite spot. Looks very perfect. Hope you are warm and snuggly up there. I've been trying to dig deep and lean hard on Jesus, but everything in this world is broken. Hey, there's gonna be a full moon this year on your birthday. Love you lots. Heidi

Heidi - IL - Daughter - July 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

HD

“Happy Easter, Dad!! it’s been over three months since you have been gone though it feels like yesterday. Your contagious smile, laugh and hugs are missed. I love and miss you. I dreamed of you last night, again, but this time it wasn’t a whisker-rub. I do remember laughing A LOT. You were holding me upside down by my ankles! Hey, I need a favor; I need you to look down from the sky and make mom laugh and smile again. She misses you terribly. I don’t know how to comfort her. Can you give me a sign? Thanks for watching over us. I know you are in a better place. I saw a car like the old yellow station wagon and I remember how VERY scary your driving was. I would roll side to side in the back of it, on the way down to Great America and you WEREN’T changing lanes!!! I think Amy was too afraid to sleep . I remember how you wanted to show-off on your four-wheeler and you tried to pop wheelies in the snow! Not good. Oh, and I know you are holding my “Maybe” up there, and dancing with him to music, in the kitchen--like you used to do with mom. Thanks for watching over him! I miss him deeply. He has some good company up there now! Me and Dog just watched the video of you and mom, with us speed-boating on the chain. That was an awesome day, with a million sparkles on the water. You always laughed and enjoyed a good time. Great memories! I liked when you’d pop out your dentures for me and be Gummy!! And.....wherever this gypsy-child landed, I could expect an encouraging note in the mail from you, and it always said the same thing, “Good luck!” Love, Dad. You are one of the warmest souls I have ever met. So my tears are happy because you are safe now and comfortable. I was talking to Mom last night, about what Heaven is like? She said it will be a wonderful place and when it’s her turn she wants you there waiting for her. So there’s the memo. We love you. You got a big job ahead of you... being a personal guardian angel to mom. Please watch over her. She is going thru a great deal. . She really misses you; I hope you feel that in your heart. You come up in conversation often. I’ll never forget our times together. Especially when I got stranded in Green Bay and you had to drive all the way down on NO NOTICE and rescue me; Then on the way home----- I never knew anyone could drive while falling

asleep at the wheel! You swerved to miss a deer and then blamed the deer!! I was crunched against the door, looked over at you--your hair was standing straight up! (Lotsa laughs) I drove after that, but I still I miss you making my heart race!! LOL .I will never forget that night! I always could count on a Daddy rescue. I sure wish I could give you one more hug. It's strange to comprehend that I can't call you up and talk to you. I miss your voice. Please keep looking after me. I can't wait to see you again. We all miss you soooo much. I'm far away but this condolence page is a huge comfort and support for all of us kids and Mom. It's a tribute and celebration of how you have touched so many lives. So, I was thinking of you today, like everyday. Love and miss you, Dad. You are a good soul. Remember to brush Maybe for me. You said his purrrr was comforting. He WILL snuggle by your head at night on your pillow. Love, Heidi

Heidi - IL - Daughter - April 06, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CC

“ *I was so fond of Chet - my Dad's (Jim Benson's) musical Iron River cousin - who encouraged and inspired me to pursue music from childhood. I will always remember Chet's deep booming voice and his strong presence. I wish we could have been together more often as it was always joyous.*

While he will be missed by his loving and growing family here on Earth, he will, no doubt, be welcomed by those who preceded him in heaven.

Peace to Ginny and family.

Cristin Patterson (Benson) - Highlands Ranch, CO - cousin - January 17, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CB

“ Dear Ginny and family,
We were so sad to learn of Chet's death just before Christmas. We have fond memories of our visits, and your performances. Loved hearing you on Prarie Home. Enjoyed his emails.
Our thoughts and prayers are with you.
Claire Benson and children, J.R. Benson and Cristin Patterson

Claire Benson - January 09, 2012 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ I Am So Sorry for Your Loss, My deepest Sympathy to the Benson Family. Our thoughts & prayers are with you. Life brings tears, smiles and memories. The tears dry, the smile fades, but the memories live on forever in the UP. God Bless.

Sincerely, The Porier Family

Terry & Duane Porier - Iron River, MI - friends - January 06, 2012 at 12:00 AM

KM

“ I will always remember hearing Chet and Ginny playing music around Iron River, Michigan. They will always be a staple for my hometown and I would like to say thank you for all the years of fabulous music and making so many people happy. Also, hearing Chet at the fair and rodeo...he will be sorely missed. Mine, as well as my father Harlin Haack's condolences, thoughts and prayers, be with all of you at this time.
Heaven is so much more musical now than before Dec. 23rd.
Much love and God bless.
Kathy~

Kathy Haack - Bloomington, MN - January 05, 2012 at 12:00 AM

HI

“ Love you, Dad. We miss you soooooooo much !

Heidi and Dog - IL - January 05, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DF

“ Our deepest sympathies to Ginny and the entire Benson family. I've know Chet since high school and Kay got to know most of the Bensons after we retired and moved back to Iron River.

Chet accomplished more in his lifetime than most people do in two or more lifetimes. His passing leaves a hole in all of Iron River. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all. God bless you.

Don and Kay

Don and Kay Autio - Marshall, MI - Friend - January 04, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ Dear Bensons,

I'm so sorry to hear about the loss of Chet. He's such a lovely man. He touched so many lives in Iron County and will be forever missed. May the face of God shine on your family and may His love embrace you all.

Sincerely,

*Sharon Mitchell
Formerly of Bates Township*

Sharon Mitchell - Boise, ID - Friend - January 02, 2012 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ Our deepest sympathy for your loss. Chet was an Iron River icon. He and Ginny shared their music, their family and themselves with our community. He always had a smile to share. We are blessed to have known him. Hugs to your family.

Mike & Kathy Sheehy - Iron River, MI - January 01, 2012 at 12:00 AM

PF

“ Dear Benson Family,
We want to express our deepest sympathy at the passing of Chet. We have many happy memories over the years listening to your mom and dad entertain at the rodeo. It was always such fun sitting out on our deck across from the fairgrounds listening to them sing. It was definitely a tradition for us and something we looked forward to. What wonderful peace you must have knowing that he is in heaven with the Lord, and how wonderful that by accepting Christ, you can all be reunited again someday. Praise God!
Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this time, and I'm sure he is missed so much.
God bless you,
Patty (Wernholm) & Rob Ward
and Lucille Wernholm

Patty Ward - Iron River, MI - Friend - January 01, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DR

“ To the Benson family...My deepest sympathies for your loss. Chet helped me find our wonderful wilderness property in Iron county and also his very capable son in law Mark Johnson who built our cabin. I didnt know him well but dropped in to chat occasionally over the years and tried to get to the Fair to hear him sing with Ginny. He was always so friendly and helpful...one time before we had cell phone service he drove the 40 miles to our cabin to let me know of that my wife had an emergency with one of her children ...way beyond the call of duty. It wont be the same driving thru Iron River and knowing he wont be there

David Kindig MD, PhD, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine

Dave Kindig - Madison, WI - he was our realtor - December 30, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ My deepest sympathy to Ginny and her family,

Chet will be sorely missed. He has been such an integral part of our community forever. I have very fond memories of working with Chet on Search and Rescue and of him demonstrating his mapping system to us and in other community matters. He was always willing to help in whatever way he could.

I always enjoyed hearing Chet and Ginny perform at many community events over the years.

Chet had a wonderful and full life, and was truly loved - he was a rich man!!

May time and your memories help to heal the pain you are now feeling. I know words are not enough.

Sincerely,

LaVerne Smith

LaVerne Smith - Alpha, MI - December 30, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ Ginny,

Our deepest sympathy goes out to you and your family. There is never any comfort when it comes to losing someone you love and cherish. Like you others will cherish their memories of Chet.

Marcella & Glen Davis - Titusville, FL - Friends - December 30, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TN

“ Dear Ginny & family...We send our prayers & blessings to all in loss of Chet...We will surely miss seeing/hearing your music again on our visits to IR..He will sadly missed...a good friend! Tom & Dorothy(Hajkowicz)Duplessie

Tom & Doroothy(Hajkowicz)Duplessie - Elyria, OH - longtime friends & neighbors - December 30, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TM

“ Ginny and family-My heartfelt sympathy to all of you. Know that you are not alone in your sadness. Your grief is shared by many people both near and far whose lives Chet touched many times and in many ways. His voice, his laughter, his jokes... He will be remembered, and missed. Sincerely, Thalei Burke

Thalei Burke - Crystal Falls, MI - December 29, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KF

“ There is a "Chet" shaped empty spot here at the Mission. Monday night was Chet's for many years. We probably would not be in Gaastra if Chet didn't find us the property so many years ago. Sincere love and prayers to all of the family. You are a tribute to your Mom and Dad. He is playing for Jesus now!

Kathy - Mission Bible Training Center - gaastra, MI - friend - December 29, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ To the Benson Family,
I was very saddened to here of your father's passing. I cannot find the words to express how sorry I am, you all are in our thoughts and prayers.
Chet, your father, was a community treasure. Talented, funny, caring and wise just to name a few of his many attributes. I enjoyed our conversations at the Search & Rescue meetings years ago. He alewyas had a way of making people smile. Chet, Godspeed my friend and may the angels make a place in their choir just for you.
Sincerely,
The Stephen Jones Family

Stephen A. Jones - Ishpeming, MI - Friend - December 29, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BF

“ We are sorry for the loss of Chet. He was such a great man. We will keep your entire family in our thoughts and prayers at this sad time.

Bud and Sherry Pangrazzi - Iron River, MI - friend of the family - December 29, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DF

“ Ginny and Family,

So sorry to hear about Chet's passing. He will be fondly remembered but sadly missed. God bless you and your family during this sorrowful time.

DAVE NELSON - Green Bay, WI - Friend - December 29, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ So sorry for your loss. What a wonderful part of the Iron County community was Chet! You have many memories to cherish.

Peace,
Jody Kirkpatrick

Jody Kirkpatrick - Palatine, IL - Friend - December 29, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ Words cannot express how truly sorry I am for your loss. Always I will remember Chet for his humor, his love of music and more, but mostly his love for all of you-his family! Know he truly will be with you all always! :-)

Dawn - Bates Twp, MI - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ I have fond memories from my youth of the hospitality shown by Chet & Ginny.

Chet will be greatly missed...

Marty Ball - Jackson, WI - Friend - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ I'm so sorry for your loss. Chet was a wonderful man. Always had a smile on his face when I seen him. I was so blessed to look out my window and see Chet and Ginny playing and singing at his sister Mona's house. What a talented family. God bless you all.

Lisa Harju - Iron River, MI - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ Ginny & family,

My heartfelt condolences to you and your family. I will always remember Chet and yourself playing at the wedding reception for Dlana (Nelson) and myself at the Memory Lane Resort back in '76. I always enjoyed my return trips to the UP especially when I got a chance to visit with Chet to catch up on his fishing stories and the memories of his times shared with my Father-In-Law Bob Nelson. He lives on in our memories.

May God's Peace and Love be with you and your family in your time of sorrow.

Steve "Buzz" Buzzell

Steve "Buzz" Buzzell - Fenton, MI - Friend - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

PF

“ GINNY AND FAMILY,

*SO VERY SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS, CHET WILL BE MISSED.
MY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU ALL,*

PHILLIP WESTPHAL

PHILLIP WESTPHAL - IRON RIVER, MI - FRIEND - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ Ginny & Family,

You have my deepest sympathy. I know that you have a very close family and that will help you all get through this difficult time.

Wishing you the best in 2012 and God Bless you and your family.

Sharon Polich

Sharon Polich - Iron River, MI - Friend - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

RI

“ Dearest Ginny and family -

Words can't express our deep sorrow with the passing of Papa Chet. We've been blessed to have all of you as part of our family for 30+ years, so we know all too well what an amazing & giving man he was and how deeply he loved each and every one of you.

May God be with you all during this difficult time, and please know that you are close in our thoughts and our hearts.

*With all our love,
The Moncivais Family*

Renee Moncivais Sutera - Aurora, IL - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

PF

“ Dear Amy and Family,
I was so sorry to hear of your father's passing. He sounds like he was a wonderful husband, father and grandfather with many talents, a huge heart and will be missed by many. I believe that those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, still missed and very dear.

Please know that you are all in my thoughts and prayers. May God comfort you in your time of sorrow and give His peace, love and understanding as you reflect and cherish the many joyous memories you all hold dear in your hearts.

With Deepest Sympathy
Pam

Pam Ihamaki - Negaunee, MI - Friend - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BF

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with all of the Benson family today. We are with you in spirit and would be there but are away from home. Chet was an inspirational community member that cannot be replaced.

-Bette and Dean Premo

Bette and Dean Premo - Amasa, MI - Musical friends - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DW

“ My thoughts and prayers are with the entire Benson family. May God watch over you all and give you strength at this time.

Dave Aregoni - Green Bay, WI - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CG

“ *It's been six days tomorrow
And I'm still holdin' on to one wish
That God above could let me borrow Grandpa
For one more afternoon and one more fish.*

Picture it, a hot summer day, fishing with my Grandpa. He said, "I got one," I said, "No, you got two!" As I got the net and scooped up the fish, here comes up two 19 inch bass on that same lure. He says, "I'm sure glad you were here with me because I know nobody would have believed me."

I will miss my buddy, my grandpa.

"Hey Chelsea, want a sammich?" - What he always asked me on the river.

Chelsea Benson - Iron River, MI - Grand-Daughter - December 28, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DF

“ Dear Chet,
I type this message with a tearful eye as words cannot express how much you will truly be missed. Jen and I have so many fond memories of you and our visits at the cabin. We shared stories and each visit was special when you came up to the cabin, it just won't feel the same without you there but we will keep you in our memories always and you will forever hold a place in our heart . We miss you dearly and are so sad that we will not have the chance to sit at the table and share our stories and laughs as we did in the past. We will take another trip down the Net where you showed us to put-in and stop at your old fishing hole on the Paint where Jen caught all those fish and come hunting season I am sure I will see you in the woods "You Betcha".
We loved you Chet.
Dave & Jen

Dave & Jen Rassel - Highland, IN - Our Dear Friend - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

GG

“ I'm so sorry to hear of your loss. My deepest sympathies go out to you and all of your family. Always enjoyed listening to you and Chet play and sing.

Gloria Grabrick Norby - MN - Cousin to Ginny - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ Ginny and Family,
Please accept our sympathy in the passing of Chet.

Tony and Dianne Wenos - Lakeland, FL - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ Grandpa,

This Christmas sure was different. You were and still are very missed. I think about how much I became closer to you the past couple of years. Im so blessed that Rory, (my daughter) got to meet her Great Grandpa Chet. It was always a joy to bring her to the house and watch you smile and clap with her. Unfortunately she will never know the feeling of storytime on grandpa chet's lap, and whisker rubs, but I will wont hesitate to tell her about them. I love you and miss you Grandpa, I always will, but no worries, I will take care of Grandma like I always do :) We will get a chance to go fishing when we meet again in Heaven. Forever in our hearts and the D.S.C., rest in peace grandpa!

Sari Franzene - Iron River, MI - Granddaughter - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

NF

“ *I have so many memories of listening to Chet and Ginny sing. I have thier tapes and we play them all the time.*

I babysat for Ghet and Ginny when they lived in thier first house in Bates.

My thoughts and prayers are with all of you and I will never forget that smiling face.

Chet and Ginny raised wonderful loving and caring children. I have had the pleasure of getting to know Punner last summer and still consider her a friend.

In Gods name, I bless all of you and wish you Gods speed.

Nanci Holzner

Nanci Nelson Contardi Holzner - Green Bay, WI - Friend - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

HM

“ We went to the Assembly of God church starting in 1992 when Pastor Kolenda was there- for many yrs it was a huge blessing to have our former pastor Kolenda (now deceased as well) playing at the piano and Chet always there, always faithful, playing his guitar along side pastor Kolenda- they made a great team!! I had a special privilege a few times over the yrs. to play my flute while pastor kolenda and chet did the piano and guitar. Even when there were times of changes in the church with a few different interim pastors, (now it is called the River church with Pastor Jim Pellizzer) but in yrs past in times of transition, when the attendance was very small off and on, still Chet was there every time, playing his guitar! Here he was, famous for this town and more, and he still sat up there and played for only 7 ppl! Then with the miracle of Pastor Jim arriving and the U.P. River church coming together, Chet was there, his faithfulness NEVER ceased any of those yrs!!! Our family has been blessed in so many ways by Chet and Ginny- and we fondly recall when Pastor Jim Pellizzer had the special July 4th service last summer in 2011- how Chet and Ginny did a few numbers, and they did so good, and we were teary eyed over the love they had, and the talent as they blessed us!! they have been 2 of the most kind, sincere, genuine ppl, true examples of godly people- always a smile and hug for everyone. We always enjoyed them and not only their musical talent, but the kindness they showed to all in the church. Even recently, it showed Chet's faithfulness to go every time with his oxygen tank, and still go up in his customary spot in the church and play his guitar. It has been sad to see the piano empty with Pastor Kolenda gone, and now it will be extra empty with Chet's spot now empty. We greatly admired him. We pray for Ginny at this time, and the entire family, and we loved him. What a legacy he has left behind!! Our deepest sympathies! Harris/Hoogenboom's

Harris/Hoogenboom family - Iron River, MI - fellow church members - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

WC

“ So sorry for your loss, my thoughts and prayers go out to you. (I'm ginny kuglers daughter)

wendy (Cronkright) Warnke - bruce crossing, MI - cousin - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KP

“ So sorry for your loss of a father. I know your family was very close. Remembering all of the get togethers at your house, good times. God Bless all of you. Your in my heart and prayers.

Kathy Pitts - Crystal Falls, MI - Sister in law to Punner - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ He was a wonderful man I remember always going to the rodeo and hearing him sing what a great memory so sorry for you loss he will be over watching and singing with the angels above

andrea gill - Gaastra, MI - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

AF

“ To my extended family I am so very sorry for your loss...Bates, The Rodeo, fair, earch and rescue, life, and so many other things will just not be the same without you around. You have left a little piece of yourself with so many people in this world that your legacy will live on forever! Your guitar may sit idle but your spirit will sing in our hearts forever! We love ya Chet!!

Anna Kegley - Iron River, MI - family friend - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ Dear Amanda and family,
Our hearts break for you. I know how much you loved your grandfather.
We are thinking of you - many prayers are coming your way.
Much love,
Nana and Grampa

Dora and Ron Bellefontaine - Bradenton, FL - Nana and Grampa Bellefontaine - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Aunt Mona, very sorry to read of Chet's passing. Sending my condolences to the entire Benson family. May he rest in peace.

Mike Sarder - Barnwell, SC - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ Chet and Ginny were always one of my favorite visits when the family got together. I loved the music and it is one of the reasons that I still run a small music company in my area. OF course Chet always had a kind heart and I still remember when he borrowed an old Artic Cat snowmobile to my dad when he was sick back in the 60'. I can still remember that old red and white snow-tank and the fun we had with it.
My condolences to Ginny and the kids on Chet's passing.

John Grabrick - Welch, MN - Cousin to Ginny - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

AF

“ Dear Ginny,

I am so sorry to hear you have lost your beloved soul mate. Sounds like you have lived a wonderful busy life and that Chet was a Christian and is now fully alive in the presence of His Lord Jesus.

I remember you from High School at dear old Ewen High. You were so cute. Have not seen you or heard about you since I graduated.

*Love in Jesus,
Anita*

Anita Kauppinen Hansen - Clermont, FL - Friend - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DC

“ On behalf of my mom (Eva Lindeman), and the rest of the Elvin Lindeman family, I'm writing to tell you how sad we are to hear of your loss with Chet's passing into Glory. Chet was very special to all of us -- a wonderful nephew to my mom and dad, and a great cousin to me and my brother Bernie. As a kid, and into adulthood, I always looked forward to visiting Chet and Ginny at their home, gathering over at the old Benson farm with the rest of the Benson relatives, or having y'all come to visit us in Winona. And, whenever Chet and Ginny were around, I knew there was gonna be some great music played/sung during the visit. I always loved it when Chet and my dad would take out their guitars, along with Ginny on the accordion, and we'd all sing a lot of nice old songs. The last time I heard him and Ginny sing was at my dad's funeral 7 years ago, and it was such a blessing to have them come to help send off Uncle Elvin with some beautiful music. But, as gifted as Chet was as a musician, there was a lot more special about him that went beyond just his musical talent. Yes, I'll truly miss hearing him singing and playing his guitar, and also I'll miss hearing him doing his auctioneering, but mostly I'll just miss him, because he was such a sweet guy, with a heart of gold -- always so gentle and kind to everyone around him. He had a true servant's heart, and was the kind of person who'd drop everything to help someone. I'll look forward to seeing him again someday in heaven, along with Auntie Betty, cousin Lindy and others. Oh, it'll be a really sweet reunion up there someday, that's for sure!

Deborah Jane (Lindeman) Anderson - Fairfax, VA - Cousins - December 27, 2011
at 12:00 AM

LC

“ I'm so sorry for the "Chet-shaped hole" left in the lives of every Benson; and everyone he's ever met. Chet always had a smile, a laugh, a story for "Alpha's grand-daughter", the city-mouse from Cleveland. Trips to Iron River were not complete without hearing Chet and Ginny sing somewhere; the fair, Losey's, anywhere! But, although we miss him so much here, he's whole, singing and spending eternity with God himself, Betty and all who've gone before. I feel blessed to have known him just a little bit. Our thoughts and prayers are with you Ginny and kids, Love, Linda, John and Jesse

Linda (Pascoe) Sayers - Cleveland, OH - Second Cousin - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ Sincere Condolences for the recent loss of your loved one.

Connie Conley - Bessemer, MI - Virginia's side of family - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BM

“ Dear Benson Family,
Brent and I are so sorry to hear of the passing of your beloved husband, father and grandfather. The first thing that came to mind when I heard was how glorious it must be for Chet to be in the midst of heavenly worship at this very moment. I know he is experiencing joy beyond measure and is singing his heart out. I have had the honor of spending a few moments amongst your family and in those moments it was so evident how much love you all had for each other and especially how much he loved each of you. It was especially obvious that Ginny is the love of his life and that He is hers as well. Brent and I have since been blessed to enjoy friendships with many of you and we are so thankful for that. Our thoughts and prayers are with each of you as you go thru this very difficult time. May you each feel the comfort of our Lord and Savior.

Brent and Angela Steinbrecher - Felch, MI - December 27, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LF

“ In the short time we have been privileged to become part of this wonderful community, We have come to realize how special the Benson's Family is. Chet was such a wonderful, warm, and caring human being, who along with Ginny, raised such a wonderful example of what the word ... ' family'... really means!

Annie & I extend our deepest of sympathies to you Ginny, and your entire family. May the Good Lord wrap all of you in his loving arms, through your time of sorrow and grief. God Bless!

Lenny & Annie Brezek - Crystal Falls, MI - friend - December 26, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ Linda,

I'm sorry we're going to miss your dad's funeral. I'll miss taking him for rides in the S X S at the Iron Co, Fair. A great guy for sure. You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers.

Mike Webster

Mike Webster - Green Valley, AZ - Friend - December 26, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ *The first time I met Chet was the day a little boy wandered away from home and got lost in the woods. Chet, other neighbors and the Iron River National Guard came out to help search but it was Chet, on his 4 wheeler, who found the little guy and brought him home.*

Everyone was so relieved and grateful for a happy outcome but Chet left before I had a chance to talk to him. I tracked him down at his home and he met me at the door. I introduced myself and then shook his hand to thank him for his efforts. He was teary eyed and told me he had grandkids so he understood the anguish a parent would have over a missing child.

Chet, you were a true friend to the community and we'll miss you.

Sue Webster - Crystal Falls, MI - Friend of Family - December 26, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KF

“ *I am so sorry for your loss - but along with you trust and know the joy and celebration that he is part of now. I pray you find peace and joy in the many memories you all share. His love for all of you and for the Lord was evident in him. God Bless.*

Karla Menucci - Iron River, MI - friend - December 26, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ *Mr Benson will be missed my many.
May God shine his love upon all of you.
Sincere condolences from Jp, Tammy, J.J. and Jessica Lewis*

Jonh & Tammy Lewis - Columbia, SC - Friend - December 26, 2011 at 12:00 AM

PD

“ *Dear Dad,*

I know you were taken home peacefully and have now reunited with Grandma Betty. You have no idea how much you are missed already. As us seven children grieve painfully from your absence we also rejoice in knowing you are home where God has prepared for your coming. As the angels trumpeted your arrival I have no doubt you already asked for a guitar to play along. We will take very good care of Mom and embrace her so tightly as you have asked us to do - no need to worry about her although there will be a hole in her heart that only you could fill. Right now she is weary and terribly lonesome but I know God will strengthen her every day and I know YOU will encourage her through her dreams and decisions, you were always the optimist. It will not be the same without "Chet and Ginny" or Mom and Dad but we will see to it that she remains special on her own. As your children, we witnessed your loving spirit and always giving to others giving unselfishly every time. We have learned to be who we are by who you were. We love you dad and cherished every second we had you. We give thanks to our Lord for the gift He gave us in you and miss you ever so deeply. The pain is deep but our laughter and memories will comfort us. As a family, we always said "I love you" . When I told you that today I did not hear your voice, but I felt your blanket of love wrap around me. We miss you dear 'ole dad and wish we could hear you one more time. Till we meet again. My deepest Love - Punner

Punner Franzene - Iron River, MI - Dad - December 26, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ *My sympathy for your loss. It was an honor to know him as a friend.*

Chip Whitaker - Chambers, NE - Friend - December 26, 2011 at 12:00 AM

GM

“ *Ginny and family we are sorry about your loss of chet. he will be missed by the community. What a great example he and your family have set for everyone...a wonderful christian family. our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.*

gale and sonne stowell - iron river, MI - December 26, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ *Dear Ginny and family, Our sincere condolences to you. Chet was a marvelous example of a Christian father, friend and community leader. His presence will be missed by all who knew him.*

Dennis and Pat Turner - MI - December 26, 2011 at 12:00 AM

RF

“ *So sorry for your loss ~ he will be missed by so many.....!*

Dave & Roly Jackson

Roly Jackson - Crystal Falls, MI - Friend of the family - December 25, 2011 at 12:00 AM

AF

“ *he will be missed by all . my condolance goes out to you all. ann lewis (ann waldron)*

ANN LEWIS - caspian, MI - friend - December 25, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ *My deepest sympathies for your loss! I feel honored to have spent time with your family while growing up you all always made me feel welcome. I loved sitting around hearing your parents sing! My thoughts and prayers go out to all of you at this time.
Your father will be truly missed!
Love the Urda family*

Chris (Buhro) Urda - Adairsville, GA - Friend - December 25, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ *I will truly miss this gentleman....I miss him already coming to the shop for a haircut...RIP Chet....will also miss our talks and the laughs with the customers...to all of the family members- sorry for your loss. Ta*

Josie the Barber - Iron River, MI - friend - December 25, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KM

“ *Our thoughts and prayers go out to Ginny and all the family on the passing of Chet. May all your wonderful memories help during this sad time. We have known Chet & Ginny for many years and have always known how special they are. Our sincere sympathy to all.
Ted and Karen Ivey*

Karen Ivey - Iron River, MI - December 25, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ Dear Benson Family,

We are so sorry to hear about the passing of your Husband/Father/Grandpa. Please know that your entire family is in our thoughts, hearts, and prayers as you face the coming days. We rejoice with you, knowing he is in the arms of Jesus, in his eternal home!!

Sending big hugs your way...God bless you all.

*With Love,
Cory, Lisa, Jordan & Paige Reimer*

Cory & Lisa (Tass) Reimer - Riverview, FL - December 25, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DF

“ *Our sincere sympathy to all of you on the passing of Chet. We enjoyed his friendship and will always remember his kindness to us. We have so many great memories of him. In friendship and caring,
Dan and Sue*

Dan and Sue Passamani - Bates, MI - Friend - December 24, 2011 at 12:00 AM