



Virginia "Ginny" Benson

December 29, 1935 - September 28, 2021

Virginia A. "Ginny" Benson, 85, of Iron River, was called home to be with our Lord on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at the Iron County Medical Care Facility in Crystal Falls, while in the caring and loving arms of her granddaughter, Sari.

She was born December 29, 1935, in Minneapolis, MN, daughter of the late Ann Lane. She was raised by her grandmother Katherine Grabrick in Ewen, Michigan, while her mother and Aunt were regular musicians with the Grand Ole Opry as the "Lakeland Sister's."

Ginny was very involved in school events, she was in school plays and other programs, she won a gold cup in oratory competition, and she was a cherry pie winner all the way to the State finals. Ginny attended Girls State. She was elected prom queen, was the Senior Class President, and was editor of the yearbook staff. She was a student council member and was a member of chorus and band. Ginny was born with a compromised immune system and during her school years, Ginny had poor health with serious lung problems.

Ginny graduated from Ewen High School in 1954, and later married Chester "Chet" Benson on July 14, 1956, in Ewen, MI. She had her first major lung surgery in October of 1960, and a second surgery in May of 1961. In spite of her poor health, Chet and Ginny had several children and continued to play

for local and national venues, along with both private and public parties. In May of 1973 she had her final major lung surgery, leaving her with two partial lungs. What a miracle to have been able to sing and yodel the way she did with partial lungs. We always said, God found favor with her as she was so vocally gifted! She won several voice competitions with yodeling being her signature in song. She was an accomplished seamstress and made her children's outfits for numerous parades and family events. She was fantastic in the kitchen. Every cake, every loaf of bread and every meal was made from scratch. No box cakes or pre-packaged food was a part of any meal served in her kitchen!

Ginny and her husband 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 founded 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. Ginny attended the U.P. River Church for a time with her husband. They performed on the "Midnight Jamboree" at the Earnest Tubb record shop in Nashville. They cut their first 45 record in 1983 with the "A" side as an original yodeling song.

Of all her accomplishments and having such a joy-filled life, her proudest accomplishments were that of raising seven children, all of whom know the Lord. "No greater accomplishment than that!" she used to say.

Ginny is survived by seven children, Barbara Moncivais (Mike) Stafford of Iron River, Ed (Hydee) Benson of Iron River, Rosemary (Donie) Malitz of WI,

Punner (Mike) Franzene of Iron River, Lynda (Wade) Cross of Crystal Falls, MI, Amy (Mark S.) Johnson of Iron River and Heidi (Jim) Barron of IL.; her siblings, Sharon White of Gladstone, MI, Diane (Jim) Gibula of WI, Anita (Mike) Brass of OH, Eugene Lane of White Pine, MI, Judy (Allan) Anderson of Ironwood, MI, Terry (Bruce) Brzoznowski of Iron River, and Gary (Mona) Lane of Iron River, MI; in-laws, Cornel (Pauline) Benson of Iron River, Carol Erickson, Donald Sarder & Avie Powell, all of Iron River, and Anncille (Bob) Engel of Oconto Falls, WI; 11 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

In addition to her mother and husband in 2011, Ginny was preceded in death by an infant daughter, Virginia; son-in-law, Robert "Bob" Moncivais; great-granddaughter, Kaylea Mylchreest; in-laws, Mona Sarder, Jean and Lindy Lindbeck, Keith Erickson, Ronald Powell and Joann Lane.

Ginny's celebration of life will be held Friday, October 22 at the U.P. River Church with Pastor James Pellizzer to officiate. Public visitation at 10:00 A.M. followed by the celebration service at 11:00 A.M. Burial will be in the Bates Township Cemetery.

Condolences may be expressed to the family of Ginny Benson online at www.nashfuneralhome.net.

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

Cemetery Details

Bates Township Cemetery

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **22**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

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

Celebration of Life

OCT **22**. 11:00 AM (CT)

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

Tribute Wall

SA

“ Thanks for visiting in my dream last night. Miss you so much! Xoxo

Sari - September 10, 2025 at 08:02 AM

SA

“ I miss you so much. You will never know dear, how much I love you. You were my sunshine. It's dark on earth without you.

Sari - September 21, 2023 at 08:38 AM

PU

“ Hello Mom! A year ago already today, you went to your eternal home. We miss you more than words can say. I still feel your presence throughout each day. We talk and laugh often about our journey together as your kids. How you raised seven of us is still beyond me. Gosh I wish I could hug you so tight. I miss your smile and your gut laughter. I miss your cooking and I just miss YOU! I hope you and dad have settled in your eternal home where there are many mansions. We will meet up again when the Lord calls each one of us home. Until then, I will continue to write long distance but keep you close in my heart. Gosh, I love and miss you mama! Lots of bugs warm hugs sent your way.

Punner - September 28, 2022 at 01:12 PM

SH

“ Sherryl and Ron Hellenga purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Virginia "Ginny" Benson.



Sherryl and Ron Hellenga - October 21, 2021 at 01:15 PM

DN

“ Sorry for your loss. I knew your mom when I lived in Bates years ago. She was a very talented person who will be greatly missed.

Again sorry for your loss

Dave Nelson

Dave Nelson - October 20, 2021 at 02:09 PM

PU

Dave, thank you for taking a minute to post and share. She is a loss for sure, we miss her tons yet we are happy she is reunited with our dad and home at last! Thank you again for sharing.

Punner - October 24, 2021 at 07:43 AM

LM

“ I am so sad to hear of her passing. The times spent at her home were some of my favorite memories growing up. She was a beautiful lady inside and out. Hugs to your whole family. “ when someone you love becomes a memory, that memory becomes a treasure.”. Lisa Meleski

Lisa Meleski - October 14, 2021 at 08:35 AM

PU

Lisa - thank you for reaching out. We sure did have fun didn't we. " when someone you love becomes a memory, that memory becomes a treasure." I love this and it will be a reminder of just how rich we are. Thank you - loved hearing from you.

Punner - October 24, 2021 at 07:41 AM

AS

“ So sorry to hear of Ginny's loss and know of her last few years and the difficulties she had to have experienced. I have many fond memories of events like Snaps with Santa promotions when they made the event with their music. Also remember "trying out" for one of the Great NORthern Operies and being nicely told by Ginny that I couldn't sing! She was so right! It was a "celebrity" special with mayor, newspaper editor (me) and other IR "celebrities" performing - provided they had some talent. But I was not meant to sing except maybe in the shower where no one could hear! - Arlene Shovald

ARlene Shovald - October 12, 2021 at 04:29 PM

PU

Arlene, your story is so funny! I don't know how you sing but I know you are/were a fantastic newspaper editor. Even I didn't know that there were "try out's" for the Opry, Well hopefully it didn't leave you with lifetime scars. Love your story - thank you for sharing! We miss her tons for for those you know and believe in salvation, will be with her again. She is now playing music and catching up with dad.

Punner - October 24, 2021 at 07:38 AM

TO

“ *Super great lady!! Always remember going to Bates and staying next door at my Grandparents. Her door was always open to everyone including fresh baked cookies!!
My sincere sympathy to al the family*

Love Tod

Tod - October 11, 2021 at 11:23 AM

PU

*Thank you Tod - we have many memories of growing up for sure. 🤝
Always had fresh cookies available! Hugs!*

Punner - October 24, 2021 at 07:33 AM

CS

“ *Sympathy to Ginny's family and friends. She was beautiful on the inside and outside,
Her dimpled smile could light up a room, along with those big brown eyes!
She and Chet played at our wedding reception 60 years ago. She had just
given birth to Rosemary, who was born with one tooth!!!!
Her greatest accomplishment were her children and rest of her family.
My children are life-long friends with hers, like family!!
Now, she is resting in the arms of her beloved husband, once again,
and they are making heavenly music together for the Lord!
She will be missed, by all who were blessed to know her.
Rest in peace, Ginny. GOD BLESS!*

*Connie Stoychoff-Waldvogel
Hilbert, Wis.*

connie stoychoff-waldvogel - October 09, 2021 at 12:29 PM

PF

Connie - your words made me cry - happy/sad tears of course. Your story is so well remembered and we LOVE your kids still today. We laugh and reminisce often about Rosemary being born with a tooth, mom used to tell that story ALL of the time. Lucky for Rosemary - she still has teeth today! Hahaha. I had to laugh, or I will continue to cry. Thank you for sharing your remember -when's. We love hearing from everyone and appreciate you taking the time to share. We love you!

Punner Franzene - October 09, 2021 at 02:09 PM

MW

“ *My heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends with the loss of Ginny in our daily living. I remember so well when she and Chet with a big heart came to entertain our Multiple Sclerosis support group picnic at Lake Ottawa. I enjoyed their entertainment so many times in Iron River. I'll think of her as singing with the Angels. Love and Prayers.*

Mary Wall - October 09, 2021 at 11:34 AM

PF

Thank you Mary for such kind words. We never realized just how many lives they touched playing for the many venues, both public and personal. We are proud of them both and are rejoicing that they are once again together in the arms of Jesus. The choir of angels are backing them up in song! I can picture it now. I can almost hear them! Thank you again for sharing your story with us, this means more than you know and is very comforting.

Punner Franzene - October 09, 2021 at 02:05 PM

PH

“ *Your mother was an amazing woman. You are all in my thought and prayers.
Our loss, heaven's gain. Love, Hugs and God's Peace. Paulette Hytinen*

Paulette Hytinen - October 08, 2021 at 08:05 PM

AJ

Thanks Paulette. You and mom spent countless hours following us girls in basketball. Good memories. She will be missed. Thank you for sharing.

Amy Johnson - October 26, 2021 at 06:41 AM

AJ

Thank you for sharing Paulette. You and mom spent countless hours following us girls in basketball. Good times. She will be missed.

Amy Johnson - October 26, 2021 at 06:43 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Virginia "Ginny" Benson.*



October 08, 2021 at 05:24 PM

PF

“ Dear Mom! I am so happy for you that you are now able to be wrapped around the arms of dad, he's been waiting for you for so long and I know you talked about him daily. I'm so glad that Jesus came to take you home, you are now in your final resting place and Heaven is so beautiful. I miss you though! It hurts deeply and I am so lonesome for you. I know what you expect of us, I know that you want us to move forward and live the way the Lord would have us live. We know all of this but I will need some time to be able to process. You took such wonderful care of us kids, you were such a Godly example of what a mother's job is. Time would bring the circle of life around so that we would care for you as you were no longer able to care for yourself. It was a privilege and an honor to do so. You taught selfless sacrifice, in return we gave that. My heart misses you so much right now, and in time, we will laugh at the MANY memories you gave us, in the meantime, let me cry, let me be sad and lonesome, just a little time needed, then we will move forward and continue to live life and serve the Lord until such time we too are called home. Give dad a big hug, give Bobbo a big hug and let them know, it's all good! I love you so much! Job well done mom!

Punner Franzene - October 08, 2021 at 02:26 PM

JG

“ Our last and most memorable visit with sister Ginny. Rest In Peace as you join your beloved husband, Chet, in heaven.



Jim & Diane Gibula - October 08, 2021 at 01:09 PM

PF

Absolutely love this! We miss her so much already! Happy for her now that she is in her final resting place with dad and others who are there as well, but we sure miss her smile, her laughter, her BIG and warm hugs and her, "I Love you's." Thank you for sharing these pictures.

Punner Franzene - October 08, 2021 at 02:00 PM

LK

“ Auntie Ginny was a little lady with a big smile and a soft voice, but when she and Uncle Chet sang she could be heard with a big voice! A really busy mom raising seven cousins of mine, she was always going. She endured major health issues but still kept a smile and showed such kindness. She and Uncle Chet came to our rescue for our wedding reception as our DJ we had booked was a no show. They offered to go home and get their instruments and played the whole reception and it was even better than we planned! They were truly a blessing to Rod and I and our family. Her love for the Lord was evident and something to respect. She will certainly be missed. I hurt for her children and families but rejoice for her! I loved Auntie Ginny.

Lori Kaye - October 08, 2021 at 12:25 PM

PF

Thank you for sharing, we appreciate you taking the time and for sharing such kind words. Yes rejoice for her - but why does it hurt so bad for us. Ugh!

Punner Franzene - October 08, 2021 at 02:02 PM

NA

Ahh, Auntie Ginny. Such a bundle of energy in such a tiny body. She was someone that presented such joy and love, rarely saying no or I can't. How we loved to hear her yodel... even now Grace referred to this great, great Auntie as the lady that could really yodel. So glad she passed that on to Sari. May you have a wonderful celebration of her life. I'm sure there will be tears of joy and tears of sorrow! She was a blessing.

Nanc - October 08, 2021 at 08:23 PM

PU

It was a beautiful celebration. A lot of tears but laughter the same. Loved seeing the auntie's. I wrap myself in the blue HUGS blanket all of the time. Sari got the gift to yodel, I'm taking the blanket. When I wrap up in it I think of mother every second and feel liked I'm wrapped in Jesus' blanket of peace. Best gift ever! Hugs, love you all!

Punner - October 24, 2021 at 07:49 AM



“ *I am so very sorry for your loss! I loved pictures and videos of her shared by her family on Facebook. Cherish those memories and hold them close! I am sending lots of love and prayers!!!!*

Stacy Sucholl - October 08, 2021 at 11:44 AM

PF

Thank you Stacy! She was my hero, a hero to all of us. Great example of love and what a mother should be. Never did she run out of her big hugs or did she forget to say, I Love You. Rejoicing for her, bud so sad for us. We have so much footage of her just laughing and singing away. We will cherish forever!!

Punner Franzene - October 08, 2021 at 02:03 PM



“ *Thinking of your family with love. Your mother was truly a special woman to so many. My mom, Roxanne Goodney, wanted me to extend her condolences to her family as well, as she remembers Ginny from Ski Brule and how kind she was, and how she was so good with the children.*



Sincerely,

Starr & Vince Ferrara

Starr Ferrara - October 08, 2021 at 10:30 AM

PF

Starr - thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and kind words. So hard to believe the day has come. Jesus knew the timing but never a good time it would seem. Rejoicing for her but hurts so bad, so empty and so lonesome. Will cherish the 7 months that she stayed with us. Never can take that time away. Nothing but wonderful, challenging and gifted memories.

Punner Franzene - October 08, 2021 at 02:06 PM

DM

“ *I’m so sorry to hear of Ginnys passing. My heart goes out to her wonderful family who cherished her and she cherished them. I think of her often and all the good times when she and Chet played at Losey’s Landing and I worked. Such a talented lady. Hugs and prayers to all. Rest In Peace sweet Ginny 🙏🙏❤️*

Dawn Margoni - October 08, 2021 at 10:00 AM

PF

Thank you Dawn, many people will remember her (and dad) with memories of their own, so happy people are sharing, it's good medicine to know what impact they had on others as well.

Punner Franzene - October 08, 2021 at 02:09 PM



“ *I truly share your loss. Ginny was a super person, caring, loving, and so proud to call my friend. ❤️ She and Chet sang for our wedding and reception. We enjoyed the many programs they were a part of as well. She has left her mark and won't be forgotten. One of Iron County's finest. My sincere sympathy to all of you. May it help to comfort you to know she is now in the arms of her beloved Chet and her heart is full once more. I am comforted by the many memories I hold of both of them.*

Sue Passamani, Bates

Sue Passamani - October 08, 2021 at 08:33 AM

PF

🙏 Thank you for sharing. It seems we are finding out about how many weddings/anniversaries they actually played for. Warms our hearts knowing they had such love and respect in the community. Thank you for sharing.

Punner Franzene - October 08, 2021 at 02:12 PM

PS

I first met Ginny while at 4-H Camp Shaw where she was, as I remember, crowned queen. Anyway, I had a photo of her and some fellow which I sent to Ginny decades later. My late husband and I enjoyed dancing to Ginny and Chet's fine music at Club Bolero on Chicagoan Lake. They were so very talented. My sympathy goes to all of her family for this very sad loss.

Phyllis (Aho) Smith Cary, NC

Phyllis Smith - October 23, 2021 at 02:47 PM

PU

Phyllis, talking about Club Bolero - that sure brings me back, I'm pretty sure I was in diapers but heard stories about the Bolero and of course the name changes through the years. Yes she was crowned queen or homemaker of the year, something like that. We are enjoying the many memory books she possesses. Thank you for sharing your kind words.

Punner - October 24, 2021 at 07:52 AM