

Dennis John Harris

Dennis John Harris was born January 29, 1939, in Viola, WI, to Ardellis Harris. He was active in sports and played the saxophone in high school. He graduated from the Gays Mill High School in Grove, WI. After High School, he and his mother moved to Sturgis, SD, and it was here that he met the love of his life, Arvetta Jeanette Speakman Watkins. They were married June 30, 1962, in Sturgis, SD. Dennis was content to help her raise her two sons Marley and Jerry Watkins.

They bought a service station up by Lead, along with a tow truck business. He had a lot of stories to tell from this part of his life, he would tell tow truck stories one right after the other. He was always remodeling the homes that they lived in, several times selling them after he had got them remodeled.

He worked for Barber Transportation during this time, where he got to know a lot of the business owners as he "peddled freight" to the Sturgis Main Street. He also worked for the Anderson / Stingley Funeral Home; mostly so he could drive fast! He always loved to tell a good story!

Then he transferred to Peter Kiewit & Sons, where he worked as a heavy equipment operator. He worked on many bridges both in Wyoming and South Dakota. He told many stories about the clean-up of the flood of 72. Then he transferred to the Amax Coal Company where he worked until he retired in 1995. He earned many belt buckles that he was very proud of during his time with Amax.

After he retired, they bought a campground by Tilford and worked it until Arvetta got too sick to handle the day to day activities of a campground and so they sold it, bought a camper and moved to Tennessee, where Arvetta had family. They lived there several years until Arvetta wanted to come back to the Rapid City Hospital in South Dakota for treatment. She passed away on November 25, 2005; and Dennis promised her he would take care of Jerry for the rest of his life. He did an amazing job of taking care of Jerry, taking him to rodeos concerts, parades, fireworks, along with the day to day chores and anything he thought Jerry would enjoy. They were seen together more often than not.

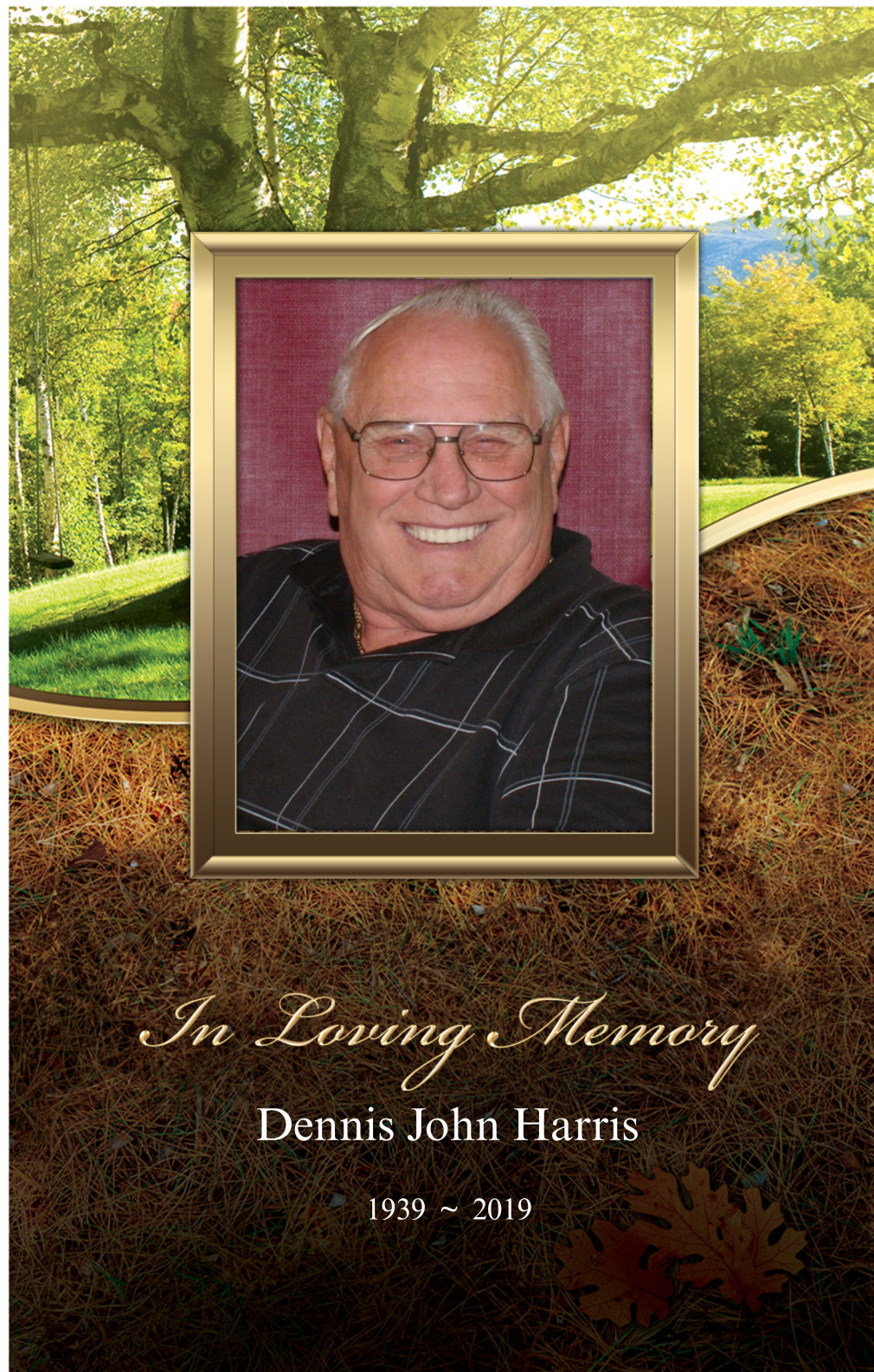
During his "retirement" he transported cars for a dealership in Rapid City, and traveled many different states. When he stopped doing that, he worked in Deadwood at Four Aces until "Grandma Gene" called for help. He and Jerry moved to Tennessee again to help her until she died, then he and Jerry moved back to Sturgis. He went to work for Tin Lizzies until he transferred to security at the Deadwood Mountain Grand. Finally retiring again in late 2018 after treatment of his lung cancer.

Dennis, 80, of Sturgis, passed away March 12, 2019, at Rapid City Regional Hospital after a courageous battle with lung cancer.

He is survived by his two half-brothers, Kenneth and Arthur Hodge; his two step-sons, Marley Watkins, Phoenix, and Jerry Watkins, Sturgis; step-nephew, Larry (Sarah) Watkins, Tennessee; step-grandnephew, Scotty (Laura) Waktins; step-grandnieces, Stephanie (Craig) Pirtle, and Lisa Watkins, all of Tennessee; along with many friends that will miss him greatly.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.kinkadefunerals.com.

The family invites you to join them for fellowship and lunch in the church hall following the committal service. We thank you for your presence and condolences.





May I go now?

May I go now?
Do you think the time is right?
May I say goodbye to pain filled days
and endless lonely nights?

I lived my life and done my best,
an example I've tried to be.
So can I take that step beyond the light
and set my spirit free?

I didn't want to go at first,
I fought with all my might.
But something seems to draw me now
to that warm and loving light.

I want to go, I really do,
it's difficult to stay.
But I will try as best I can
to live just one more day.

To give you time to care for me
and share your love and fears.
I know you're sad and are afraid,
because I see your tears.

I'll not be far, I promise that,
and I hope you'll always know.
That my spirit will be close to you
Where ever you may go.

Thank you so for loving me
and know that I love you too.
That's why it's hard to say goodbye
and end this life with you.

So hold me now just one more time
and let me hear you say,
"Because you care so much for me,
you'll let me go today.



In Memory Of ***Dennis John Harris***

Date of Birth

January 29, 1939
Viola, Wisconsin

Date of Death

March 12, 2019
Rapid City, South Dakota

Funeral Service

Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.
Open Bible Church
Sturgis, South Dakota

Officiant

Pastor Michael Smith

Musicians

Michael Smith ~ Robin Winder

Musical Selections

"Amazing Grace"
"The Old Rugged Cross"

Pallbearers

Mike Brandner ~ Greg Winder ~ Walt Winder
Alan Winder ~ Ryan Ficek ~ Dean Mehlhaff

Final Resting Place

Bear Butte Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota