

KENNETH DUANE EPEMA

Kenneth Duane Epema, 52, of Crookston, Minnesota, died unexpectedly Friday morning, July 31, 1998, at the Rice Lake, Wisconsin, while on vacation with his wife, Dianne. Kenny was born at Crookston, Minnesota on May 25, 1946, the son of Ted and Evelyn (Baird) Epema. He grew up in Crookston, was baptized and confirmed at the Trinity Lutheran Church, and graduated from Central High School in 1964. On May 15, 1965 Kenny was united in marriage to Dianne Frances Kiewel at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Crookston. Kenny and Dianne then moved to Anaheim, California, where he was employed as a meat cutter. After two years they returned to the area and Ken was employed in the meat departments of the Red Owl Stores, first in Moorhead, and then in Grand Forks. In 1970 the family moved back to Crookston and Kenny spent the next few years working as a meat cutter at Crookston Cold Storage, where he had previously had a part-time job while in high school. He then began to work for the Crookston Coca-Cola Bottling Company and also joined the Crookston Volunteer Fire Department. On January 1, 1974 Kenny became a full-time fireman for the City of Crookston, and was presently the assistant Fire Chief of the Department. Kenny was a very skilled carpenter, and throughout his life had worked in the construction field. He began with Broksma Construction of Crookston, then went on his own, and up to the present time was in association with Ideal Construction. In his younger days Kenny was a fiercely competitive forward on the Crookston Senior Pirate Hockey team, and also a referee for Minnesota's Section 8 high school hockey. For a number of years he was an avid participant in Crookston's softball association, both as a player and as an umpire. A favorite place for Kenny to spend time, when not working on some project, was at his and Dianne's lake home on Maple Lake. For the last several years they had also been enjoying spending a little time every Winter in Cozumel, Mexico. Kenny was a very loving husband, father, grandfather, son, brother, and uncle. His family meant everything to him. Anyone who ever met Kenny became his friend. He was a member of the Trinity Lutheran Church, the Minnesota Fire Chief's Association, and Crookston Eagles Aerie #873. He had recently ended a term on the board of the Maple Lake Improvement Association.

Loving family members include his wife, Dianne, a daughter and son-in-law, Lori and Tim Gustin of Billings, MT; two sons and a daughter-in-law, Brad and Jana Epema of Moorhead, MN, and Brent Epema and his friend, Nikki Fiorini, of Crookston; seven grandchildren, Justin, Danika, and Keith Gustin, and Sydney, Hayley, Parker, and Taylar Epema; his parents, Ted and Evelyn Epema of Crookston; a brother and sister-in-law, Bob and Shari Epema of Union Lake, near Erskine, MN; two sisters and a brother-in-law, Bonnie and Art Oliver of Black River Falls, WI, and Shirley Epema of Wichita, KS; and many nieces, nephews, and other relatives. Ken was preceded in death by a brother, James L. Epema, who died on November 19, 1969.