



## Frank Rutherford Gartside Jr.

April 11, 1940 - December 9, 2020

Frank Rutherford Gartside, Jr., 80, passed away peacefully December 9, 2020 at his home in Naples, Fla. Frank was born April 11, 1940 to Martha (Baker) and Frank Rutherford “Rudy” Gartside, Sr. The young “Buddy” Gartside grew up in Memphis, Tenn. where he worked at his father’s general store, showed an aptitude for mechanical vehicles, and got into general mischief.

My brothers and I became a part of Frank’s story when he married our mother, Marilyn, in 1980. What we know of Frank’s early years came from Frank himself. He could tell a story, and although we’re pretty sure he exaggerated, his stories were always grounded in some truth. He told us he was friends with a young Elvis (yes, that Elvis); married the same woman three times (the first time at a ridiculously young age); spent time riding with the Hell’s Angels; and got in serious trouble with the law. I leave it to you to confirm any of these things.

Here’s what we really know and witnessed about Frank:

\*He worked mostly as an auto mechanic at various businesses in the Ann Arbor/Chelsea/Dexter, Mich. area. He finished his working days as an owner/operator truck driver.

•He was a fantastic, down home cook! Everything from steak on the grill to chicken quarters over a fire pit to slow-cooked spicy Italian spaghetti was A-MAZING! Special requests were often made for his “Sunday” breakfasts...the real artery clogging type. Cooking them left such a mess that he taped newspaper to the surfaces to combat it.

•His concept of time and money was warped. He could turn a 20-minute, \$20 trip to the local market into a 3-hour, \$300 trip to Sam’s Club. We called these his “Wally World” trips and still use the phrase when we travel on an unintended journey.

•Dogs held a special place in his heart. Socrates, Sean, Timmy, Suzie, Baron, Rambo, and Bear were adored by Frank while we knew him.

•He was the kind of person to give you his last dollar if you needed it. He was a good egg, a kind soul, a loyal friend. If you knew him personally, count yourself lucky. There aren’t many out there like him.

•He loved our mom fiercely and doted on her always. His beloved, Marilyn, left him three years ago. He never really recovered from her loss. We are comforted that those missing

pieces are now together and whole.

Frank is survived by his sister, Mary Seigler, Blue Ridge, Texas; his daughter, Pam (Matt) Kuzel, Ann Arbor, Mich.; his stepchildren, Rick (Julie) Zerkel, Anchorage, Alaska; Steve Zerkel, Cape Coral, Fla.; Cris (Don) Shankleton, Boyne City, Mich.; and David Zerkel, Naples, Fla.; his grandchildren, Gregory and Jeffrey Kuzel, Sarah (Eric Francisco) and Austin Zerkel, Madi Zerkel, and Cassidy, Rece and Simon Shankleton.

Rick, Steve and Cris would like to give special thanks to David for the love and care he gave Frank in his remaining years.

Arrangements were made by Gendron Funeral & Cremation Services, Ft. Myers, Fla. Memorial contributions may be made to a humane society of your choice.

# Comments

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“ At the beginning of December we lost my grandpa. It was a surprise... and it wasn't. My grandma and grandpa absolutely adored each other, and he never fully recovered from her passing. They were the perfect image of two people in love - the kind of love that a younger me found gross (I mean it's a little embarrassing when your grandparents are slow dancing around the living room). But an older, wiser me is thankful to have these memories and to have experienced a part of their love story.

My grandpa was a rascal in his youth. He wrecked his mother's car as a teen, huffed gasoline with Elvis Presley, rode with the Hells Angels, and sported some pretty bad tattoos. But I remember a gentle man - an inventor of words, a phenomenal chef, and a lover of dogs. He sneezed when he was too full, had a gravelly laugh and a toothy (toothless?) smile. He was kind to everyone and loved his friends and family fiercely.

Whatever lies beyond, whether he found grandma again or not, I know he's at peace. So long Grandpa Frankie! I'd love to think you're kickin' it with Elvis and ridin' Harleys in the great beyond~ (with grandma at your side, of course)



**Cassidy Shankleton** - December 30, 2020 at 04:13 PM

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“ Frank, I was so Blessed to be called your friend. You were one of the kindest, and the most patient person I have ever known. You and Marilyn were always the best hostesses, you were the best cook and bar tender, especially the vodka sours, made as if I were a king. We shared many great times at the Hide-A-Way RV Park, at the top of the hill, and here in Naples. Thank you for sharing your life with me, you will always be in my heart.

**Tim Hoffman** - December 25, 2020 at 11:25 AM

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“ Frank was the most honest, generous, hardworking, kind, and just plain fun person I've ever known. One of my first memories of Frank was on my (our) birthday. I had asked for a rabbit, but he didn't just build a cage for it, he built a rabbit hotel. He bought me my first motorcycle, taught me to hunt and fish, taught me how to drive (age 12) and how to fix my car, and let's not forget, how to split wood. He helped raise me and showed me how to be a good person. I was always proud to tell my friends that he was my stepdad when he picked me up from school on his Harley. You could hear him coming from a mile away. I was lucky to know him and I'll never forget all the good times. Thanks Frank. You're the coolest. I'll miss you.

**David** - December 24, 2020 at 11:05 AM



“ I worked with Frank in the early 1980's at the Buick Olds dealership in Chelsea. A great guy, I remember him convincing me I needed to go to Houghton Lake one (early cold) spring weekend to put a dock in for a friend that owned a resort so it was ready for the walleye season. It was darn cold, but of course Frank was in the deeper water. Great times. He was one of the good guys.

Keith Johnson

**Keith Johnson** - December 24, 2020 at 07:00 PM



“ Say hi to Mom

**David** - April 03 at 01:15 PM