



John Duane Fitch

September 4, 1934 - May 21, 2014

John Duane Fitch age 79 passed away Wednesday, May 21, 2014 in Leesburg, Florida. John was born in Highland Park, Michigan and moved to the Leesburg area in 2011 from Houghton Lake, Michigan. He had a career spanning over 33 years with General Motors where he started as a Journeyman Tool and Die Maker and quickly moved into a management position eventually retiring as a Senior Methods Engineer. He was an active member of Morrison United Methodist Church in Leesburg, Florida and a former longtime member of Good Shepherd of the North United Methodist Church in Roscommon, Michigan. He was also a 32nd Degree Life Mason. He will be remembered by those close to him for being a wonderful husband, father, and brother and his kind and generous nature always willing to do for others. He was a lover of animals especially his dogs throughout the years; the outdoors, fishing, hunting, and keeping his hands busy with projects. He was an alumni of the Highland Park High School Class of 1952 where he met and went on to marry his high school "sweetheart" Beverly (Class of 1953) over 56 years ago. He was predeceased by his brother Bill Potts. Survivors include his wife Beverly, son – Michael John (Colleen) Fitch of Rochester Hills, Michigan; sister- Betty Jean Fitch of Leesburg; Grandchildren Joshua and Abigail Fitch of Rochester Hills, MI; Nieces – Susan Renny and Gail Otto both of Michigan; and many cousins and other family members and his special dog Katie.

The family will have a gathering on Sunday, May 25th from 1:00 – 3:00 P. M. at Page-Theus Funeral Home and Cremation Services in downtown Leesburg. A Memorial Service celebrating John's life will follow on Monday May 26th at 11:00 A. M. at the Morrison United Methodist Church 901 Main Street, Leesburg, Florida 34748.

The family suggests that memorial contributions be made in lieu of flowers to Morrison United Methodist Church or the Good Shepherd of the North United Methodist Church 149 West Robinson Lake Rd., Roscommon, Michigan 48653.

John Fitch
Eulogy

John's family has asked that I share some of their thoughts and feelings about the man they so loved. He was a man of integrity with a great heart who could always be counted on. He was loyal and faithful to his friends and family and a true embodiment of unconditional love. But all of these wonderful qualities fail to fully describe the person they loved so much.

John earned awards and received many throughout his General Motors career, as well as during his retirement, but he was very humble throughout his life. Many people use only words to convey what needs to be done, and while John was always effective in communicating with words, it was through his deeds and actions everyone could really relate to him. That is who he really was, a man of action who without fail would do exactly what he said he would do.

In earlier years, John enjoyed hunting. His favorite was rabbit hunting and that required good hunting dogs. He treasured those dogs. John also went deer hunting, but for all those years in the woods, never shot a deer. It wasn't because he wasn't a good hunter, he had a respect for deer and while he would say that he would wait for the conditions to be perfect, it had more to do with his love and respect for the lives of those beautiful creatures. He spoke of sitting against a tree quietly absorbing nature. As he got older, he stopped hunting. He never said it, but he valued those animals just as much as his beloved dogs. He really just liked to be in the woods and spend time there.

Another reason for hunting was it was special time each year to spend time with his buddies Chuck and Frank. All 3 ended up living close to each other in northern Michigan after retirement. They all had sons about the same ages who joined them on many outings. Hunting was a great excuse simply to have buddy time. Great fishing trips were part of this equation as well.

There were 3 words rarely ever spoken by John: "I don't know". This was not through arrogance; it was simply that he had a vast knowledge and experience of most practical things and could answer the question. Even if he didn't know the exact answer, he knew something about the topic, and soon you would too.

He had the mind of an engineer and that was where he really excelled. He knew how things were (or at least should be), put together and how things worked. He built many tables, clocks, cabinets, sheds, and ultimately his dream home on Houghton Lake. Woodworking, plumbing, and electrical were intuitive to him and that was enhanced in college. He completed an apprenticeship as a tool & die maker. John designed pieces of metal to fit together within a thousandth of an inch tolerance, and he got pretty darn close making pieces of wood fit together precisely as well. He was the central rock that made our family fit together too.

Those of you who spent even the smallest amount of time around John probably noticed

that little wink he would almost unconsciously give with his right eye. There was a twinkle in that eye and a soft gentle smile that accompanied it. It was just a simple gesture, but it meant so much to so many throughout the years.

Sometimes it was given to a stranger that he passed on the street or in a hallway or a clerk in a store or a co-passenger on an elevator. It was a simple, silent "Hello, how are you today?" It was his way of acknowledging people and letting them know they mattered. Sometimes that wink was a means of encouragement that showed his support and confidence in the recipient. And sometimes it was a wink of compassion letting you know he understood how you felt.

Often the wink was a sign of a shared moment of humor letting you know he knew what you were thinking.

The wink was like an arm around your shoulder or a pat on the back. It was a sincere form of communication between John and others.

Beyond the wink there was always a helping hand. One of the greatest frustrations he felt during his 14 year battle with COPD was the increasing limitations it put on his ability to help others. He was always the family member, neighbor, friend, coworker or stranger to eagerly lend a helping hand. Even as he struggled with his breathing and sometimes walking, he enjoyed delivering food to shut-ins.

It seems everyone looked up to John. When help was needed he was there. If questions needed answering, or advice was required, John gladly shared his thoughts on the matter and presented all sides and the pros and cons, not just opinion or what he thought was right. So many people simply knew that you could always count on him for anything. John spent so much time simply thinking, and planning, and preparing so that the people and things he cared about would be taken care of.

It was a family joke about going to the mailbox and finding it packed with donation requests. He read them all and almost daily responded to one or two. The family was sure he was on everyone's list. Our veterans and the hungry were the closest to his heart but each request got due consideration.

John was faithful to his family, his friends and his faith. He had a heart of gold and a tremendous love of life. He loved nature and animals. A good joke was never wasted on him.

Michael, his son, was the light of his life. It was a father and son relationship that should be the model for others. He was always proud of Mike as a child and youth, but even more so of the man, husband and father that he is today. John's grandchildren Joshua who is 15 and Abigail who is 13 are both all "A" students and a joy to be around. From the time Mike and Colleen, his wife, met and brought the families together they merged so naturally. Colleen lost her father on March 23rd of this year.

He was the best friend of his sister Betty. He was always the "big brother", protector and

guardian everyone should be lucky enough to have.

His life companion was his high school sweetheart Beverly. They shared almost 57 years of marriage and all the dreams and love that came with it. His biggest concern was that she had everything she needed or desired. He often said to her, "I'm not hard to live with, I'm hard to live without." Then they would share a laugh. They will always be together in spirit.

John was a "good guy". Not perfect and not a saint, but a man with a Christian soul. He was a humble servant of the Lord in the way he lived and conducted himself throughout his life.

All the family members here today, as well as those who were unable to be here, have enjoyed the luxury of being part of John's life. He held a special place for each of them in that big heart.

While they will all miss him immensely they know he is with family and friends who preceded him. He is healthy now and easily taking "great big deep breaths" as he watches over all of them.

The family wishes to thank you for joining them in this celebration of a wonderful life and they wish to close this statement with his favorite Irish Blessing.

May the road rise to meet you,

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

The rains fall soft upon your fields.

And until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

Events

MAY **Gathering** 01:00PM - 03:00PM

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Page - Theus Funeral Home and Cremation Services
914 West Main Street, Leesburg, FL, US, 34748

MAY **Celebration of Life Memorial Service** 11:00AM

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Morrison United Methodist Church
1005 West Main Street, Leesburg, FL, US, 34748