

Ronald R. Martel, Sr., 73, longtime Mobridge resident, passed away Monday, March 14, 2022 at Avera Eureka Healthcare.

Ronald Ray Martel, Sr. was born on April 1, 1948 to Helmuth and Erna (Rieger) Martel. The family lived on a farm east of Wakpala. He was the fifth oldest of seven siblings. In addition to farming, the family raised a few chickens, cows, hogs, and geese. Ron and his siblings had daily chores which included taking care of the animals and tending the large vegetable garden. From the garden bounty, the vegetables were canned, and the pantry was always brimming with delicious homegrown produce, canned fruits, as well as meats from the animals they raised. The eggs were taken to Wakpala and sold at the local grocery store.



Ron attended Wakpala School and graduated from Wakpala High School in 1966. Ron was quite the all-around athlete during his high school years. He enjoyed running in track and playing basketball. He played fastpitch and was on the Kenel Jets softball team. He also joined other local softball teams and enjoyed being a member of a local independent basketball team. Also, throughout his early years, Ron participated in many horseshoe tournaments.

On September 16, 1966, Ron married the love of his life, Doreen “Donna” Chase Alone, at the Catholic Church in Kenel, SD. The most talked about memory of this special event was when Ron fainted at the altar because he claimed his true love “took his breath away”. Searching for a way to revive Ron, someone grabbed a bologna sandwich and wafted it under his nose. He regained consciousness and was able to kiss his waiting bride. Ron and Donna’s lifelong love was unconditional. Even when they had to be apart from each other, their love never wavered or faded. A testimony to their love, in 2016, on the joyous occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary, Ron and Donna had their marriage blessed at the St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church in Wakpala, where they attended and were actively involved. Beaming, Ron and Donna were overjoyed to be joined in this occasion by their family and many friends. Laughter rang out throughout the day as many people took a trip down memory lane to share stories about this beloved couple throughout their 50 years of marriage. Last September, they celebrated fifty-five years of



marriage. Ron and Donna raised their four children: Judy, Ron Jr. (Tut), Sam and Merri (Bear). They all reside in Mobridge.

People might remember that during the 70’s and 80’s, Ron and Donna ran the well-known Mobridge bar, Joker’s Wild. It was at Joker’s that Ron became acquainted with people who would become his long-life friends. As a sideline, he also drove a beer truck for a beverage company until a back injury prevented him from continuing the job. After deciding to sell the Joker’s Wild, Ron and Donna then purchased



The Cattlemen’s Saloon Supper Club in McLaughlin. The Cattlemen’s became Ron’s pride and joy. Throughout the fourteen-year ownership, he made many renovations and improvements to the club. Pool became a passion of Ron’s and in

addition to playing pool, hosting pool tournaments became a regular event at the Cattlemen’s. Ron enjoyed teaching people how to play and was a coach for many years. He sponsored a number of teams, including the teams of his children Tut, Sam and Bear who all had their own teams. At tournaments, Ron could be found right beside all these teams cheering them on while often giving team members that “What the hell did you do?” look. A friend to everyone, Ron enjoyed visiting, drinking a cold beer, and making sure no one ever starved. Ron was known to make the best burgers and fries in the area. His last place of employment was the Grand River Casino. Ever the hard worker, many would say he was the best hired man to run the campground and The Bay. Ron had a pure, genuine love and special bond for his grandchildren: Cindy, Collin, Kathan, RayAnn, Kaelyn, Samara and Theresa. and great grandchildren, Liam and Laisha; a feeling that was mutually shared by them. Ron was proud of each and every one of his grandchildren. Spending time with them would always put a smile on his face. Grandpa Ron would do anything for his grandchildren whether he was cheering them on at their sporting events, or helping them fix their car, or taking them for a ride in his blue pickup, (even when he wasn’t supposed to be driving); and even teaching them how to cook. During his last couple of months of life,

his wife, children, and grandchildren were constantly on his mind, and he missed them dearly.

Ron made friends and bonded with people whom he got to know throughout his busy life: whether it was from driving the beverage truck to local and surrounding businesses, while owning the two bars, or while working at The Bay. He had a wonderful, one-of-a-kind sense of humor, and if a person found themselves in the hot seat of one of his jokes, they felt kind of lucky. He just had that knack of making people feel special. Ron had the biggest heart and always greeted friends and family with a hello and a smile, and if they were especially lucky, even a big bear hug. Many people throughout the area looked up to him as a beloved father figure, a grandpa, and uncle, a brother, and a friend.

Ron battled many underlying health issues and late stages of Alzheimer’s. However, he never forgot his true love, Donna, and always wanted to be with his family.



Ron is survived by his love of 55 years, Donna; four children: Judy, Ron (Tut), Sam, Merri (Bear); grandchildren: Cindy, Collin, Kathan, RayAnn, Kaelyn, Samara, Theresa; great grandchildren, Liam and Laisha; brothers, John and Robert Martel; sister, Faye (Leo) Rookey; and sisters-in-law, Margie Hawk and Lila Martel. In his life, many called him “Pops”: Nancy Hepper, Kenny Jensen, Kim Hollenbeck, Brad Bearsheart, AJ Agard, Dawn Davis, Gail Uses Arrow, Dawnette Azure, Muriel Marshall, Tomee Brown, Renee Vermillion, and the Weinger Family, just to name a few, (but we know that there are many more to mention); godchildren, Dion Yellow Horse and Kasey Starr.

Ron was preceded in death by his parents; his dog, Chewy; brother, Herb Martel; sisters, Darlene Gay and Betty Fischer; and many other relatives.

In Loving Memory
Ronald Ray Martel, Sr.

April 1, 1948

March 14, 2022

McLaughlin, South Dakota

Eureka, South Dakota

PRAYER SERVICE:

7:00 p.m., Friday, April 1, 2022

Wakpala School Gym

Wakpala, South Dakota

CELEBRATION OF LIFE SERVICE:

1:00 p.m., Saturday, April 2, 2022

Wakpala School Gym

Wakpala, South Dakota

OFFICIATING:

Pastor Kim Fonder

CASKET BEARERS:

Kathan Martel, Liam Ryan, John Jay Keller,
AJ Agard, Kenny Jensen, Anthony Vermillion,
Andy Nisbet, Dion Yellow Horse, Brandon Rookey,
Adam Rookey, Jerry Chase, Stan Sulzle, Jerid Martel

HONORARY CASKET BEARERS:

All Family, Friends, and Relatives that loved our Dad.
Ron had many, many friends and hunka family
that he cared for and loved.

VOCALISTS:

Lloyd Thompson

Kim Olson

DRUM GROUP:

Grand River Singer

All Other Musicians Welcome

Forever In Our Hearts



Ronald R. Martel, Sr.

1948 – 2022



When you lived your life for others

and you loved *without condition*

When you made so many laugh and your
smile won't be forgotten

When you left behind an empty place
that no one else can fill

When the friendships that you shared
long to be renewed

When you built your life on hope
and fulfilled it every day

The *footprints* that you left behind
will bring us face to face
So, *goodbye* is not forever,
You're only steps away.

Toska Ake

Celebrating
A LIFE



Gettysburg, South Dakota
www.familyfuneralhome.net