



God saw he was getting tired  
And a cure was not to be,  
So He put His arms around him  
And whispered "Come with me."

With tearful eyes  
We watched him suffer  
And saw him fade away  
Although we loved him dearly,  
We would not make him stay.

A golden heart stopped beating,  
Hard working hands to rest.  
God broke our hearts to prove to us  
He only takes the best.



*Remembering*  
THE LIFE OF  
**Gary "Smokey" Kopecky**  
February 10, 1950 - April 18, 2015





Gary "Smokey" Kopecky, 65 years, 2 months, 8 days, of rural Orient, passed away Saturday, April 18, 2015 at the Avera Dougherty Hospice House in Sioux Falls following a year-long battle with stage IV colon cancer.

Gerald Gordon Kopecky was born February 10, 1950 to Gordon Gale and Winnie Fae (Morford) Kopecky in Faulkton, SD. Better known as Smokey, he grew up on the family farm in northern Hyde County, and attended Eden School. As a skinny, little kid he saved up his money and sent away for the Charles Atlas Bodybuilding System. He was a Golden Gloves boxer, champion arm wrestler, and bull rider. From the age of 16 he worked construction for Hines Construction and Johnson Construction running the scraper.

On October 16, 1971 he married the love of his life Janet Louise Zilverberg. They lived and worked on the Mac Zilverberg farm north of Holabird until the fall of 1979 when they moved to the Lloyd Zemlicka Ranch in northern Hand County. Two daughters were born to their family, Michelle and Jennifer. Smokey and Janet bought the Kopecky home place in 1991 and the Zemlicka Ranch in 1995.

Smokey loved animals of all kind, especially taking great pride in his cattle herd. He worked hard and loved his land. He was an inventor and builder. He always knew how to fix something, and whether it was a good idea or a bad idea, somehow it would work. In 2012 he built his dream shop.

Not only was Smokey a hard worker, but he liked to have fun. Sharing jokes he had heard on the radio that morning doing chores or telling stories of the good old days.

He was an entertaining story teller and his laugh was contagious. He loved fishing, boating and taking his nephews hunting. Everyone would joke about not catching many fish because he liked driving the boat too fast. Slowing down was not on his agenda. You knew you would be in for a wild ride when he would yell "HOLD ON!" and off you would go chasing a cow or being pulled in a sled behind a 4-wheeler, snow mobile, or pick up. He also had fun giving family and neighbors rides in his RV, even when it had mechanical difficulties.

Smokey loved life and he enjoyed time with all family. He was proud of his daughters and always looked forward to having fun with them. His granddaughter, Chloe, brightened up his last days bringing big smiles to his face.

Survivors include his wife Janet; children: Michelle of Pierre, and Jennifer (Ryan) Hammons, and one beloved granddaughter Chloe Lillian of Raleigh, MS; two brothers: Ron Kopecky of Long Lake, SD, Jerry (Cindy) Kopecky of Faulkton; six sisters: Bonnie Wilson of Sturgis, Sharon (Dennis) Serfling of Aberdeen, Linda (Tom) Johannsen of Warner, Judy (D.C.) Craft of Aberdeen, SD, Kathy (Bill) Savage of Camdenton, MO, Leasa Ortmeier of Faulkton; numerous nieces and nephews; loving and helpful neighbors: Mike, Staci, Andrew, Joe, Nathan, and Oliver Aesoph; and countless friends.

Proceeding him in death was his father, Gordon; mother, Winnie; grandparents, Will and Mayme (Bouzek) Kopecky, Ivan and Ann (Olive) Morford; and niece, Jodi Lynn Johannsen.

Arrangements Entrusted To  
Luze Funeral Home - Highmore, S.D.  
[www.familyfuneralhome.net](http://www.familyfuneralhome.net)