

Ernest “Bunky” Drift Sr.

Ernest “Bunky” Drift Sr., 76, Indian Point (Orr), passed away unexpectedly at the Cook Hospital on Sunday, May 23, 2010. He was born in Nett Lake on February 21, 1934; the son of Louis and Helen (Porter) Drift. He grew up in Nett Lake, and graduated from Orr High School in 1953. He excelled in high school baseball and basketball and loved all sports. He served in the Army in the Korean Conflict and was honorably discharged. After his tour of duty, he returned to the area, then to Cleveland, where he completed a course of study in electronics. Bunky was employed as a electronics technician by Univac in the Twin Cities for several years. He moved back to Nett Lake in 1979, and married his longtime companion, Betty Ballinger on May 2, 1997, in Bemidji. A widely liked man, Bunky was active, well known and respected. He was a member of the Nett Lake Baptist Church, served on the #707 (Nett Lake School District) School Board, a longtime school bus driver, a member of the Orr American Legion Post #480 and member of the Bois Forte Honor Guard. He was co-founder of the Indigenous Games, which helped Native American Youth in the 5 state area gain access into the National Indigenous Games in sports. He loved all sports and refereed youth basketball and umpired softball. He was an avid hunter, fisherman and guide. In latter years, when his knees gave him mobility problems, not deterred from playing sports, he took up pool as a hobby. He is survived by his wife, Betty of Indian Point (Orr); 4 sons, Ernie Drift Jr. of Orr, Mike Drift of Virginia; Jarrod Ballinger of Orr and Jason Drift of Orr; two daughters, Terri (Vinni) Hill of Indian Point (Orr) and Denise Poitros of Tower; one brother, Dennis (Joanie) Drift of Mpls.; 11 Grandchildren, 7 Great Grandchildren, along with numerous other special relatives and friends. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by one daughter, Judy Drift on August 9, 2007; a grandson, Devery Drift on July 7, 2009; three brothers, Carroll “Doy” Drift, Wendell “Jap” Drift and Clarence “Skim” Drift; and two sisters, Dolly Drift and Barbara Porter.

SERVICES: Funeral services will be at 10:00 AM Thursday at the Nett Lake School. Visitation will be after 5:00 PM Wednesday at the School. Rev. Kevin Lasley will be the officiant. Jackie The casket bearers will be: Frankie Villebrun, Louis Drift, Brandon Benner, Travis Morrison, Chris Day and Tom Drift. The honorary bearers will be Jason Drift, Jarrod Ballinger, Vinni Hill, Ernie Drift Jr., Mike Drift, Archie LaRose, Loren Connor, Craig Goodsky and Keith Roy. The interment will be in the New Nett Lake Cemetery (GEE-BAY-GAH-MI-GOONG) Military honors will be accorded by the Bois Forte Honor Guard, Orr American Legion Honor Guard and the Red Lake Honor.