

Richard LaVern Schmitz, 63

Jan. 13, 1955 - Aug. 30, 2018



GILLETTE, WY – Richard LaVern Schmitz was born on Jan. 13, 1955, in Harlan to LaVern and Mary Schmitz. Rick was the oldest of seven children.

Rick graduated from Harlan Community High School in 1973. After high school Rick attended Iowa Wesleyan College where he met and fell in love with Crystal LeAnn Kuhlmann. They were married on August 30, 1975 and got to celebrate 43 years of marriage on the day of his passing.

They were blessed with five children, Aaron, Benjamin, Noah, Sarah, and Matthew. Rick truly was a jack of all trades as he tried numerous trades throughout his life, from beekeeping with his father LaVern, to working construction with his good friend Tom Powers. He later was employed at Jacobs Corporation, working his way up from laborer in the machine shop to salesman. Never one to shy away from adventure, he packed up the family and moved to Canon City, CO, where he and son Aaron started a construction company, Homebuilders Construction. From 1996 to 2008, Rick and Aaron, along with his two sons Noah, Ben, and several employees, prided themselves on building quality, custom homes. Rick always said those were the best years of his life, "getting to work alongside his boys."

In 2008, they packed up again and moved to Gillette, WY, where Rick worked for Wyoming Machinery, a CAT dealer, until his death. Rick, or "Smitty" as most people knew him, was a man after God's own heart. He was an honest, hardworking man who loved his family dearly. You could not find a more devoted or selfless husband and father. He often worked more than one job to support his growing family, while also making time to do special things with them. His family will always remember the ski trips, motorcycle outings, and other activities they did together. He was always quick to lend a hand to anyone in need.

Rick was also a teacher, always imparting his wisdom and skills onto the next generation, whether it was to his own children, grandchildren, or other kids from his time as a volunteer youth group leader and Royal Ranger leader. Rick loved building things, they were in the process of building a new house. He also enjoyed doing woodworking, automotive work, and photography.

Rick passed away from this life and into eternity on Aug. 30, 2018, after a short battle with cancer. Rick leaves behind to cherish his memory, his wife, Cris; children, Aaron (Starlitt); Benjamin (Lisa); Noah (Melissa); Sarah (Jonathan); Matthew (Lindsay) and 19 grandchildren along with his siblings; Sally (husband Ron Weihs), Doug (wife Cindy), Ed (wife Susan), Rosemary (husband Mike McCoy), Cindy (husband John Auffart) and Paul (wife Shelley) and many nieces and nephews.

Rick was preceded in death by his parents, LaVern and Mary Ellen Schmitz.

A gathering was held Thursday, Sept. 6 at First Assembly of God Church for friends and family. A funeral service was held Friday, Sept. 7 at 10 a.m. at First Assembly of God Church, 601 Carey Ave., Gillette, WY.

Condolences may be sent in care of Gillette Memorial Chapel, 210 W. 5th St., Gillette, WY 82716 or on line at www.gilletteremorialchapel.com.