
Don J. "Apple" Yurgec(1939 - 2016)

Don Yurgec

Donald Joseph "Apple" Yurgec, 77, born March 12, 1939, in Belleville, Ill., died Sunday, Nov. 6, 2016 at his residence at Freeburg after a recent illness.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Louis A. and Myrtle M., nee Browning, Yurgec, both natives of Freeburg and his favorite little dog, "Stinky".

Mr. Yurgec was a lifelong resident of Freeburg and a descendent of one of Illinois oldest pioneer families. A graduate of Freeburg schools, he was a member of both the basketball and baseball teams. In baseball, he was known as an aggressive player, fast runner, and heavy hitter. In recognition of his accomplishments, he was inducted into the Illinois High School Association Sports Hall of Fame in 1978 for his batting average of .618 during the 1956 playoffs. He went on to play semi-pro baseball for the Boston Red Sox farm system in Florida, Nebraska, and Iowa from 1957 to 1961. He was a proud United States [Army](#) veteran serving at various posts including with the "Old Guard" at Arlington National Cemetery. An underground coal miner by profession, he worked at the Peabody Coal Company for 30 years. He was an active member of the United Mine Workers of America and served as secretary treasurer of Local 1670. He was also a member of the UMWA District 12 executive board. He was also a member of the Freeburg Sportsman's Club and the GWTA Motor Cycle Club.

He was known for his strong love of family, loyalty to his friends, and his beautiful flower gardens. He never knew a stranger and everyone was greeted with a smile and a cheery "hello". He always had time for anyone wanting to discuss coal mining, politics, or fishing. For many years, his passion was to be with his wife either camping, fishing, or on their motorcycle, while traveling the United States.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years Kathleen, nee King, Yurgec, two sons, Michael J. (Erica) Yurgec, of Sherman, Illinois, and Donald B. (fiance Heather Huffman) Yurgec of New Athens, and a daughter Kathy Jean Yurgec of Freeburg; seven grandchildren, August A. Yurgec of Sherman, Illinois; Ashley Brenning of Sparta, Alexis, Zack, and Lidiah Huffman, of New Athens; Jordan Oyler of Freeburg, Jessica (Chris) Flake of Highland; and four great-grandchildren, Alexis Crowe of Freeburg; Brayden and Natalie Flake of Highland; Troy O'Dell of New Athens; and brothers and sisters in-law and several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Freeburg Sportsman's Club or Hospice of Southern Illinois. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.rennerfh.com.

Visitation: Friends may visit from 4 to 8 p.m. Nov. 9, at George Renner & Sons Funeral Home, Freeburg, Ill.

Funeral: Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m., Nov. 10, at the funeral home. Interment with military honors will be at Elmwood Cemetery in Freeburg, or as Dad liked to call it, the "old marble orchard".

GEORGE RENNER & SONS FUNERAL HOME, Freeburg, Ill.

Funeral Home**George Renner & Sons Funeral Home**

206 South Richland Street Freeburg, IL 62243
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