



## Westley Jerome Toepke

December 23, 1940 - March 30, 2012

Glendive, Montana: Westley Jerome Toepke, age 71, of Glendive, passed away peacefully on March 24, 2012 at St. Vincent's Hospital in Billings, Montana due to complications of diabetes and pneumonia. Loving members of his family surrounded him. A Memorial service will be held at 2:00 P.M. on Friday, March 30, 2012 at the Zion Lutheran Church in Glendive with Pastor Avis Anderson officiating. These services will also be broadcast via live webcast at [www.zionglendive.com](http://www.zionglendive.com). Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements. Wes was born in New Salem, North Dakota, the son of Ted and Evelyn (Vollrath) Toepke on December 23, 1940. He started school in Judson, North Dakota and later the family moved to Montana. They lived in Miles City and Terry before moving to Glendive. Wes was born to be an entrepreneur and at an early age he began mowing lawns, delivering newspapers and held many other jobs. He graduated from Dawson County High School with the class of 1958 where he participated in football, basketball and baseball. Wes wrote sports articles for the Ranger Review, broadcasted games on the radio for KXGN and wrote press releases for the 1961 Babe Ruth World Series, which was held in Glendive. In the fall of 1958 he went to University of Montana in Missoula, Montana for one quarter and continued his education at Dawson Community College in Glendive where he also played basketball. He joined the United States Army, but received an honorable discharge upon the death of his father. He served in the United States National Guard for six years. Wes coached Little League

and Babe Ruth baseball teams and was a basketball referee for many years. Wes taught the 1960-61 school year at Marsh, Montana and in addition worked nights as a bookkeeper at Industrial Engine Service in Glendive. He purchased this company in the early 70's; it was originally an oil field business and later farm equipment was added. It evolved into a car dealership, HKT Big Sky Motors, in the 80's. He was also a co-owner of Eagle Country Ford in Sidney and owned a farm and ranch on Belle Prairie. He was president of the Dawson College Foundation for many years and was on the board until his death. Receiving an honorary degree from DCC in 1996 was a highlight of his life. Toepke was president of the Montana Auto Dealers in 1995 and was named Time Quality Dealer of the Year for the state of Montana in 2000. He had been a director of the Montana Auto Dealer's Insurance Trust until 2011. Wes was one of the original founders of First Fidelity Bank in 1979. It became known as Community First Bank in 1994 and he continued to be one of the directors until his death. He was a past president of the Glendive Medical Center and the Glendive Chamber of Commerce, a member and past church council president of Zion Lutheran Church, and a member of the Glendive Elks and Moose lodges. Wes was a firm believer in giving back to his community. Through the years he supported Dawson Community College, ABC Little League, Glendive Girl's Softball, the Boys and Girls Club, Cottonwood Country Club, Glendive Tennis Association, Grandview and the Senior Citizen's Center. Wes met and later married Debra Schaffel on July 31, 1994 at Happy Hollow near Glendive. Wes retired in 2007 and they spent the winter months at their home in Florida where he enjoyed golfing, boating and watching spring training games. Wes and Debra really enjoyed spending summer months at Happy Hollow on Belle Prairie. They recently spent winters in Billings. He enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren, especially watching their basketball games. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother-in-law, Ross Major. He is survived by his wife of seventeen years, Debra of Glendive; his four children, Lindsay (Jennifer) Toepke, of Glendive, Heide (Jeff) Grant of Olympia, Washington, Cary (Elaine) Toepke of Ft.

Collins, Colorado and Camy Popiel of Post Falls, Idaho; stepson, Eric Knudson of Glendive; three grandchildren, Mikal, Kendel and Kennedy Wilkerson; two sisters, Correen Major of Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Cathie (Doug) Mann of Payson, Arizona; his father-in-law, Ralph Schaffel of Glendive; brother-in-law, James (Louise) Schaffel; several great aunts, nieces, nephews, many cousins and special friends. Through all Wes' health issues in his later years he continued to remain positive and enjoyed life. In lieu of flowers memorials may be given to: The Dawson College Foundation, a local charity of your choice or The Toepke Fund, c/o Montana Community Foundation, Box 1145, Helena, Montana 59601. This fund helps support Glendive's little league baseball and girls softball programs. A Celebration of Wes's life will be held for family and friends this summer at Happy Hollow. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: [www.silve-rnale-silhafuneralhome.com](http://www.silve-rnale-silhafuneralhome.com).

# Tribute Wall



“ *Westley Jerome Toepke*

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December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM