

Geis was taken to St. Francis Regional Medical Center in Shakopee, where an emergency room nurse contacted her wide-awake wife to tell her about the accident. "When the nurse called and identified himself as being from St. Francis, I just asked, 'How bad is it?'" She asked me if I already knew about the accident, and I told her 'I told her I knew something had happened, because he hadn't come home,'" said Vicky Skoug Geis.

"Geis' injuries were serious, but as he and his wife acknowledge, they could have been a lot worse. His leg and elbow were badly broken, and required a transfer to Hennepin County Medical Center for lengthy orthopedic surgery. He also required well over 20 stitches around his mouth for an injury of which he wasn't even aware of as he lay in the ravine. He also lost one tooth, chipped another, and has several more loose teeth. And he suffered abrasions on his head."

But his foot was not frostbitten, as was originally feared, and he didn't have any internal injuries. He was even allowed to come home from the hospital Monday afternoon, and is now recovering at the home of his parents, Elmer and Larry Von Bank Geis, and their single-level home in Shakopee.

"Each day is getting better," said Geis, who is hoping for a full recovery, and now has some advice for others. "Wear your seat belt," he said. "If I had been wearing mine, I might have walked away from the truck, instead of laying in that ravine for nearly nine hours, and now lying in bed for weeks. I know I'll have my seat belt on after all this."

Five years later, Gary Geis, who was 40, went on a fishing trip with four friends when he apparently fell from the boat as he was cleaning it before heading out after camping in a remote site for five days, according to an article, *Shakopee man presumed to have drowned in Ontario* by the **Shakopee Valley News** on May 27, 1993.

After waiting for 15 minutes, his friend Tony Robling looked for Gary, but all he saw was an empty boat against the shoreline with the motor running. After searching for several hours, the group went back to their camp and found that Gary's life jacket was packed with his gear. And Gary Geis did not know how to swim, according to the **Shakopee Valley News** on June 3, 1993.



Survivors included his wife, Vicki, and sons Eric and Ethan. Fr. John Gilbert and Fr. Gerard Rowan officiated, with pallbearers included Mark Dellbow, Kenny, Tim, and Mark Geis, Brian Von Bank, and Steve Wermerskirchen. He was buried next to the Church of St. Mary of the Purification in Marystown.



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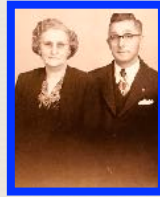


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Gary John Geis

1953-1993



Gary's grandparents

George Geis (1885-1954) and Anna Katherina Monnens Geis (1886-1961); and Hildegard Helen Busch Von Bank (1899-2004); Great grandparents Pvt. Adam Geis (1841-1933) and Barbara Brück Bruek (1845-1934); Margaret Maria Sarasin Monnens (1860-1930); John Peter Von Bank (1868-1952) and Anna Pauly Von Bank (1871-1948), and Andreas Andrew Busch (1868-1947) and Anna Maria Wolf Busch (1870-1958); and Great great grandparents Johann John Von Bank (1837-1901) and Anna Maria Thill Von Bank (1834-1905) and in the 2nd row, Martin Lorenz Lawrence Geis (1816-1907) and Henry Busch (1837-1948) and

The deer hunting season was in full swing on Saturday, November 18, 1989, but Gary Geis was not out to get one. So when a deer jumped out in front of his truck as he was traveling west on County Road 14, south of Shakopee, near the Minnesota Valley Garden Center, at around 7 p.m., Geis swerved to miss it, according to an article by Claire Robling in an article in the **Shakopee Valley News** on November 30, 1989.

That action nearly cost him his life.

According to the article, *Area man survives accident, nearly 9 hours in ravine* in the **Shakopee Valley News**, Geis lost control of his truck, and it apparently rolled end-over-end down a steep embankment into a ravine. During the decent, Geis was thrown from his vehicle, apparently going through the windshield on the passenger side. He was not wearing a seat belt.

Knocked unconscious, Geis estimates he woke up several hours later. He said he was aware of where he was, but he was also aware of the intense pain in his leg and arm.

“He tried to get up, but discovered he couldn’t move. He could see his smashed truck about eight feet below him. Its engine and lights were off, and he knew he was hidden from view in the ravine,” said Claire Robling.

He could occasionally see headlights pass by on the road, and he kept yelling for help. But none of the passing vehicles slowed down. Cold, and in pain, he took two lighters out of his pocket. Fortunately, he was dressed warm.”

“He had been helping his cousin fix some fence posts in his cow yard on a farm near Marystown before heading home toward Carver. Unfortunately, one of his boots had come off during the crash, and he could not locate it. And his gloves were still in the truck.”

Geis said he was using the lighters to keep his hands warm, when it occurred to him that perhaps he could gather some dry grass to make a fire, and signal for help. “I had a long branch right by me, and I thought maybe I could get it burning and wave it around so someone would notice,” said the 35-year-old, son of Elmer Geis and Valeria Von Bank Geis, and born in Shakopee in 1953. However, the grass and branch were too wet, and he couldn’t get a fire going.

“I was beginning to think I wouldn’t be found until at least daylight, and I know I must have been slipping in and out of consciousness,” he said.

He may have been unconscious when his wife, Vicky Skoug Geis, drove by the accident site at 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. looking for him.

“I was expecting him home earlier. We were planning to go to a movie, and I couldn’t figure out where he was. I was pretty worried,” said Vicky Skoug Geis, who learned from her husband’s cousin, Marvin Geis, that he husband had left their farm about 7 p.m. “I thought maybe he had stopped in Marystown, so I called the bar there, but they said they hadn’t seen him. Then I called his brother, Jim, in Shakopee, and he hadn’t been there either. That is when I went out looking for him,” she said.

But her searches were unsuccessful, and she went home to wait for the phone to ring.

Meanwhile, Geis said he prayed and kept waiting for an opportunity to call for help. At about 4:30 a.m., after lying in the ravine for more than eight hours, he saw a car moving slowly down the hill on County Road 14. It stopped at the mailboxes. He started yelling as loud as he could.

In the car were Larry and Barbara Pals, of Shakopee. They were delivering the Sunday Paper. At a top in the middle of the hill, Larry Pals said he thought he heard someone yelling. At their stop at the bottom of the hill, he said he was sure he heard someone, and he shut off his tape, and he and his wife listened, according to Sarrasin: A Family History by Margaret Elftmann.

The couple quickly discounted their original thought that it might be some kids playing a joke. “They were desperate cries,” said Barbara Pals.

The couple took a flashlight and looked down in the ravine, and saw the truck and Geis. Geis cried out for them to get an ambulance, and Barb Pals headed for the nearest house, which was Emily Fahrenkamp’s home, to call for help. Larry Pals stayed and talked to Geis, according to the Shakopee Valley News.

The ambulance arrived, and the rescue workers had to get down the ravine, strap Geis on a board, and carry him out. Geis remembers being removed as the most painful experience he’s ever had.