

Jerome "Jerry" Niel Ida

Jerome "Jerry" Niel Ida, 83, passed away on Father's Day, June 21, 2026. He was born on December 2, 1942, in **Fairchild, Wisconsin**, where he was born and raised on the family dairy farm to parents Gerald and Bernice Ida. Jerry grew up working hard, living tough, and developing the grit and humor that shaped the rest of his life. He later served proudly as a Combat Engineer in the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

After his service, Jerry followed his love of the outdoors west to Montana, working for the U.S. Forest Service before marrying the love of his life, **Imogene Back**, on October 1, 1966. The couple lived in Washington before returning to Montana, where Jerry worked at the smelter and later owned a concrete business.



A lifelong outdoorsman, Jerry was an accomplished hunter, fisherman, and trapper, with animals recorded in Boone & Crockett, Pope & Young, and Safari Club International. He also enjoyed softball, archery, darts, and guiding hunters in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Known for his toughness, humor, and competitive spirit, he lived a full and unforgettable life.

Jerry was also a proud Green Bay Packers shareholder, never missing a game and cherishing the team that belonged to its fans - himself among them.

Jerry was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Constance. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, **Imogene**; siblings **Gayland**, **Bonnie**, and **Michael**; children **William** and **Carolyn**; grandchildren **Ethan**, **Abigail**, **Olivia**, **Andrew**, **Rebecca**, **Spencer**, **Cutler**, **Treyson**, and **Javen**; and great-grandchildren **Niko** and **Brayden**.

He will be deeply missed.

- William Ida, son

The party in heaven turned up a notch on Father's Day, June 21, 2026, when Jerry breathed heaven's air for the first time. He was 83 years young when he embarked on this, his best, adventure. His wit and charm are now part of eternity's celebration.

Jerome Niel Ida was born on the family farm in Fairchild, Wisconsin, on December 2, 1942, to proud parents Gerald John Ida and Bernice Mildred Ida (nee Tande). Jerry, or "Joe," fished in anything that looked like water and hunted about anything with fur or feathers. He was free-spirited - all boy - and his wild side was deeply connected to nature. Growing up, Jerry looked out for the underdog and would often gather the little kids in the area to beat his peers at baseball. Jerry graduated from Osseo High School in 1961. He worked building grain silos and often traveled to Montana, a state that captured his heart.

When he met his future bride, Imogene "Emmie" Back, Jerry was taken by her. His younger sister, Connie, introduced them, and they quickly fell in love. Jerome and Imogene were married on October 1, 1966. They moved to Puyallup, Washington, near dear relatives, and he secured a job with Boeing. Their son William, "Will," was born, and Jerry deeply loved him. He cherished the early adventures these three would share: digging for clams by the ocean, fishing, enjoying nature, and playing together. Jerry would want you to know that he caught a lot of really big fish there.

In 1969, Jerry, Emmie, and Will moved to Great Falls, Montana. There, his daughter, Carolyn, was born. Jerry secured a job at the Anaconda Company smelter, then struck out on his own as a concrete mason. He also tilled gardens with his son during spring and fall, leaving the months between those respective turkey seasons open for hunting and ice fishing with Will and friends. Jerry managed several softball teams and did a lot of fishing in the summertime. He and the family loved living out at Morony Dam, where they were surrounded by nature and opportunities for adventure.

Jerry and Emmie moved to Sun City, Arizona, in 2012, where he continued to participate in hunting, fishing, and sporting activities. He played a lot of softball and founded the archery, darts, and cornhole leagues in this city. He loved going to the Lakeview United Methodist Church to play Mexican Train with his friends every week. As in every place he lived, Jerry changed the dynamics of this city for the better.

Jerry remained actively connected with family and friends even as his health waned. Emmie's wonderful care for Jerry has no doubt extended his life by years, a testament to their love. Jerry and Emmie could do anything together - and they made a habit of doing things no one else thought was possible. 59 years of marriage - for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health - was a crowning accomplishment. They created a life of excellence and meaning. And, by the end of Jerry's life, he was in love with Jesus, Who had created his family, the wilderness he loved, and all the adventure his heart longed to explore and experience. Now, Jesus and Jerry are embarking on that final, beautiful adventure.

Jerry was preceded in death by his parents, Gerald and Bernice, and his beloved sister, Constance Fiore (Dennis). He leaves behind his beloved wife, Imogene; siblings Gayland (Antoinette), Bonnie Gilbert (James), and Michael (Janet); children William Ida and Carolyn Smith (James); grandchildren Ethan (Kyla), Abigail Fitz (Connor), Andrew, Rebecca, Olivia, Spencer, Cutler, Treyson, and Javen; great-grandchildren Niko and Brayden; and many beloved in-laws, nieces, nephews, family, and friends.

- Carolyn Smith, daughter