

In Memoriam

Orland Arthur Nelson

Orland "Ole" Arthur Nelson, Dassel, Minn., 93, passed away on November 3, 2025, at Cokato Manor.

He was born on May 28, 1932, in Litchfield, Minn., to the late Arthur B. and Olga Nelson. He was raised on the family farm with a younger brother and graduated from Litchfield High School in 1950. He served in the Air Force from 1950-1951 and was stationed in England during the Korean War.

On June 14, 1952, Nelson married his lifelong mate, Mary Ellen, whom he continued to refer to as "his bride" until his death. The couple gave birth to 11 children in just under 15 years. All graduated from the Dassel-Cokato school district, and when the youngest graduated, the family hosted a reception for all the living teachers the children had ever had.

Second to his passion for his family was his passion for tending and showing cattle. Registered Jersey cattle took the family to multiple locations in the early years, including Wisconsin and New Jersey. Since 1963, though, Ole spent most of his time at the farm on the outskirts of Dassel and then at their home in Dassel, where they moved in 1996.

The farm was known as Marynole Farm and Nelson Farm. The family hosted numerous "premier" cattle shows and exhibited Registered Jerseys for decades at both county fairs and the Minnesota State Fair, a tradition continued by the grandkids in 4-H and now by the couple's son, Greg, and multiple grandchildren. For many years, Greg and Ole hosted the Midwest Spring Special Sale.

Ole and Mary Ellen were actively involved in the community, their church and the local school throughout their married life. They were known as "bleacher" parents and grandparents, rarely missing an event in which a local family member was involved.

He was a member of the American Jersey Cattle Association and sat on the board of the Minnesota Jersey Cattle Association. He was a 16-year member of the Minnesota Dairy Association, serving four years on the executive committee. He chaired the Meeker County American Dairy Association and was board president of the Meeker County Holstein Club.

Nelson sat on the board of the Dassel Fire Department for 21 years and was

fire chief for seven years. He was a board member for Dassel-Cokato schools and Dassel Lakeside nursing home. He was a member of the Litchfield American Legion. At his church, St. John's Catholic Church, he chaired the educational center building committee and was an active lector and usher.

In addition to his wife of 73 years, Mary Ellen (Fitterer) Nelson, and his son, Greg, and his wife, Sara of Dassel, he is survived by nine other children, Terry (Tony) Saber of Edina, Steve (Becky) Nelson of Dassel, Tom (Kerry) Nelson of Howard Lake, Mary Pat (Richard) Kusler of Dasesel, Susan (John) Alrick of Hutchinson, Michelle (Andy) Schoolmeesters of Litchfield, Barbara (Kurt) Bollman of Fargo, N.D., Chuck (Cindy) Nelson of Dassel, and Julie (Mark) Krause of Delano; 25 grandchildren; 55-plus great-grandchildren; and a brother, Wes (Kathy) Nelson of Stewart.

He was preceded in death by two still-born siblings, an infant son, Michael, and two grandsons.

Donations may be given to the Meeker County Dairy Club or the Dassel Volunteer Fire Department.

Tracy L. Sheesley

Tracy L. Sheesley, Canton, N.Y., 79, passed away on November 7, 2025, at Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital in Plattsburgh, N.Y., after a brief stay.

He was born on July 9, 1946, to Walter and Mary (Powell) Sheesley in Punxsutawney, Pa. He graduated from Jamestown High School in 1964 and enlisted in the U.S. Army on October 25, 1965. He served in Vietnam until he was honorably discharged on October 10, 1968.

Sheesley married Carol Hurlbut in the town of Potsdam, N.Y., on September 19, 1969. The couple purchased a 23-acre farm in 1970 and established Cowbell Acres, where they focused on breeding and developing show cattle. After a barn fire in 1996, the Sheesleys and their family moved the herd to a farm in Canton previously owned by Carol's aunt and uncle.

Today, Cowbell Acres is operated by Carol and their daughter, Christine Sheesley-Rozler, and her family.

Over the years, the Sheesleys found success on the tanbark trail at local, state and national shows across the country. Among the highlights are the Reserve Winner of the 2022 National Jersey Jug Futurity, Cowbell Shoes Cleopatra, and several All Americans or Reserve All Americans. A cow they

bred, Cowbell Acres Guapo Ricochet, was Junior National Grand Champion in 2015.

Tracy also had a 28-year career as a New York state trooper. After he retired in 1991, he did most of the outside tractor work on the farm. He also worked briefly at the post office and as a court security officer for the St. Lawrence County courthouse. Tracy was a mentor for his daughter, too, as she followed in his footsteps as a state trooper, retiring from the occupation in 2016 with 20 years of service.

Sheesley was a member of the American Jersey Cattle Association and served as a director of the New York Jersey Cattle Club in the 1980s. For several years, he helped coordinate the state youth show string that traveled to the All American Junior Jersey Show in Louisville, Ky.

Tracy was most proud of his family, especially his grandchildren, and the work put forth caring for the farm and its cows. He also had a love of antique vehicles and was the proud owner of both an Excalibur and a Triumph automobile.

In addition to his wife of 56 years, Carol, and daughter, Christine, and her husband, Matt, of Potsdam, he is survived by a son, Timothy (fiancé Jennifer Vanallen) Sheesley of Gloucester, Va.; four grandchildren; a brother, William Sheesley of Lakewood, N.Y.; and a sister, Dorothy Enlow of Ashville, N.Y.

Memorial contributions are suggested to Canton Fire and Rescue, 77 Riverside Drive, Canton, NY 13617.

Warren Gaby

Warren Gaby, Greeneville, Tenn., 82, passed away on November 13, 2025, surrounded by his best girl and family.

He was born on September 4, 1943, to the late Ralph and Mary Ann Gaby and grew up on a dairy farm that had been in his family since 1918 and had raised Registered Jerseys since the 1930s.

When he first saw his best girl, Alice Scott Gaby, in that yellow suit, and she said, "Hello," he knew that she would be his forever girl. They married in January 1965 and gave birth to two girls—Donna (Gary) Rose and Angie (Jason) Daniels—whom Warren said were worth more than 10 boys.

Warren worked on the family farm with his best friend and little brother, Johnny (Stephanie), and nephew, Henry (Chrissy), his whole life. Established as Twin Poplars Farm and then renamed Henry Gaby and Sons in the

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1940s, Warren and Johnny bought out other extended family members with the passing of their father and renamed it Gaby Jersey Farm.

The herd was known for production, longevity, and deep cow families. Gaby Jersey Farm ranked among the best in the country for production and genetic merit and consigned regularly to leading sales, including the All American Jersey Sale, National Heifer Sale and Pot O'Gold Sale. The Gabys sent more than 20 bulls to A.I. and marketed genetics across the globe. The herd was dispersed in December 2016, with buyers from 14 states and Canada making purchases.

While Warren was proud of the cows, his hardest work and pride came in the fields. He was able to help with this year's corn crop and worried about getting "the best corn in the county" harvested, but his nephew made sure that happened.

Warren and Johnny loved working with their kids and grandkids, taking the Gaby Jerseys show string to fairs. Today, Warren's niece, Rachel (Josh), and their kids work hard to continue that legacy.

His sister, Marie (Jim) Everhart, was his biggest fan and cheerleader. She kept him fed with his favorite soup and full of love. To his Mountain Valley Church family, Warren was known as Lucky the three-legged dog.

His world changed for Warren and Alice when their grandkids came along. If ever you had a conversation with him, even briefly, you would have heard about them. Granddaddy had a love that had no limits. From lacrosse fields to cheer competitions, football fields, golf courses, show rings, tractor rides, multiple song requests at church, go kart rides, gater trips across the creek, handyman and woodworking training, waking up to "Blood on the Saddle," phone wallpaper changes, and too many more memories to even attempt to list, Granddaddy already had a piece of heaven on earth.

Gaby was preceded in death by his grandparents and several aunts and uncles.

Jimmy "Jersey" White

Jimmy "Jersey" White, McKenzie, Tenn., 78, passed away on November 15, 2025, at his home.

He was born on January 22, 1947, to the late Leonard Ray White and Dorothy May Rumley White.

White operated a Registered Jersey farm with his family and was a member of the American Jersey Cattle Association.

He is survived by a daughter, Jennifer Sellers of Milan, Tenn.; two sons, Josh (Melanie) White of Huntingdon, Tenn., and Hayden White of Baltimore, Md.; a sister, Sandra (Rickey) Wilson of Huntingdon, Tenn.; a brother, Jerry (Brenda) White of Huntingdon, Tenn.; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

He is preceded in death by his first wife, Sandra Joan White Hones.