

Dale E. Boss, Charlevoix's "Mr. Petunia," peacefully went to meet his Lord and Savior on May 28, 2016, surrounded by his family.

Dale was born June 8, 1931, in Charlevoix. He was the eldest son of John E. Boss and Lola (Crew) Boss. Dale was a fourth generation lifelong resident of Charlevoix and graduated from Charlevoix High School in 1949. In his yearbook he was voted, "boy most likely to succeed." Dale's life reflected the importance of family, faith, hard work, and community involvement. Dale began working at the age of 12 as a door-to-door milkman for Maxbauer Dairy in Charlevoix.

At the age of 14 he met his childhood sweetheart, Marilyn Ikens. Dale knew that she was "the one." He married Marilyn on June 23, 1951, after Marilyn graduated from high school. They convinced their parents that they were old enough to get married by building their first home together at North Point in Charlevoix. The couple won the Mechanix Illustrated "Golden Hammer Award" for the construction of their house. The home was built in its entirety by Dale and Marilyn and was pictured in the pages of the national magazine. Dale tore down an old barn and recycled the lumber to build the house. Dale and Marilyn began raising their family in this first home, until the seven children outgrew the space. The couple worked on the construction of their current home on the same block at North Point, and moved the family into "The Chalet" in 1964. Throughout his life, Dale loved construction. He enjoyed building things with his own hands and observing other building projects. Dale worked as a full-time milkman and also owned and operated the Boss Insurance Agency.

In later years, Dale bought the Maxbauer Dairy and opened a new business, The Village Milkhouse, which was known for its huge home-made ice cream sundaes. Dale was always interested in civic affairs and the continuing improvement of Charlevoix. At the age of 21, he began several years of service as trustee on the Charlevoix Township Board. During the same year he became the youngest juror to serve on a murder trial in Charlevoix. In 1956, at the age of 24, Dale convened the first meeting to establish the Mount McSaubia ski area. He also served on the original board of directors. All of his children and thousands of Charlevoix children through the years learned to ski at Mount McSaubia. The Boss family has managed the ski hill for the past 40 years. Dale ran the concession stand for 20 years. On a daily basis, he gave food to hungry children who didn't have money to make a purchase. In recent years, Dale would keep the fire going in the fireplace of the lodge.

Dale served several years as deacon of the Community Reformed Church. He was chairman of the building committee when the current church was built in 1961. Dale had a "gift for gab" and negotiated with 18 different property owners to purchase the 32 lots on which the church currently stands. In the early '60s, Dale developed the concept of a "Sunday School" bus. He talked to many families in Charlevoix to see if they were interested in sending their children to Sunday School. For many years, Dale drove the bus, picking up children throughout the city and countryside,



and dropping them home after Sunday School. Dale served as treasurer of the Charlevoix School Board from 1962-1970. He was instrumental in building the Charlevoix Elementary School, negotiating the sale of property from the owners where the school was built. He was also proud of his role in the purchase of the first and second luxury "Rayder" buses. Dale also drove a school bus for several years. He was also instrumental in the building of the former town library, which now is home to The Charlevoix Circle of Arts. Dale was an active member of the Charlevoix Historical Society. In 1978, Dale negotiated the gift of the Harsha House from Anne Harsha to the community. He was personally involved in most of the restoration and expansion of the Harsha House, which became the new home of the Charlevoix Historical Society.

Throughout his life, Dale was a tireless ambassador for Charlevoix. Wherever he found himself in his travels, he would find an opportunity to engage complete strangers in conversation, and extol the virtues of the community which he so dearly loved. In 1980, Dale was chairman of Michigan Week, and was responsible for arranging the docking of the Steamship Medusa Challenger in the downtown Charlevoix Harbor. They raised \$20,000 for new band uniforms for the Charlevoix High School Band by offering tours through the boat. This was the largest ship to ever dock in downtown Charlevoix. Dale spent his life thinking "outside the box." In 1982, Dale pioneered Operation Petunia. His idea of planting 5 miles of petunias entering and exiting Charlevoix met with mixed reactions. People either thought the concept was crazy, or was the greatest idea ever! The idea came to fruition as Dale enlisted the help of his friend, Bruce MacArthur, and they organized all the logistics of the operation. As a result, Charlevoix is well known for its beautiful flowers. For years Dale and Marilyn oversaw the color scheme, preparation, and planting of the flowers. Dale also volunteered his time to arise at 4 a.m. to water the flowers for the past 34 years. The watering truck featured lettering and colorful petunias along the sides and back, hand painted by Marilyn. Dale, together with his two sons, built and maintained two floats for the Charlevoix Chamber of Commerce. To promote Charlevoix, Dale drove the petunia truck, towing one of the floats behind, to parades around the state. The Venetian Queen and her court rode on the floats for many years. Dale brought home many trophies and awards for the beautiful entries. In 1986, Dale and Marilyn shared the honor of being Grand Marshall of the Charlevoix Venetian Parade. The following year, the Charlevoix Chamber of Commerce made Dale the first recipient of their annual Man of the Year award. In 2014, Dale was presented with the Charlevoix Kiwanis Club Distinguished Service and Appreciation Award. This award was a total surprise and all of his children were able to be in attendance for the event. Dale also received an award from the Governor of the State of Michigan for dedicated service to the

community. Dale served many years on the Board of Directors of Keep Charlevoix Beautiful. He loved the Charlevoix petunias so much that he had cards made up with his name and the title, "Mr. Petunia."

A favorite family story involves Dale talking his way out of a speeding ticket by pulling out his "Mr. Petunia" card and telling the downstate officer about Charlevoix's miles of flowers. By the time Dale finished his story the officer was laughing. He gave Dale a warning, and a promise to visit Dale's beloved home town. Dale was an avid car enthusiast and loved classic cars. He remembered his children's birthdays by the car that he was driving at the time of their birth. It was no surprise to his children that his first word as a baby was "car." Dale loved to go to the Detroit Auto Show, and took his grandsons multiple years to check out the new cars. Dale and Marilyn were often seen driving around town in a 1919 Model T Ford, or their classic 1973 red Cadillac convertible. Dale loved to travel and drove the family on many trips around the country. With seven children, some of the trips were taken using two vehicles. When Dale sold the businesses, he purchased a motor home and took the family on a month tour of the west coast.

Dale and Marilyn loved children and Christmas. Each December they would turn their house and yard into "Santa's Workshop." Marilyn used her artistic talents to cut out and paint countless elves, storybook, Bible, and movie characters. Dale would mount them in the yard and put up and decorated more than 30 Christmas trees, along with displays of animated toys and stuffed animals. Hundreds of children stopped by each year to visit Mr. and Mrs. Claus on Christmas Eve. Dale also loved to invite families into the house to see the decorations inside the house. After Dale and Marilyn found it too difficult to manage, the Christmas display continued to be set up by their sons. Dale loved his family, his Lord, and his community. He quietly and consistently supported people in need with gifts of food, his talents, or money. Dale often said that he loved putting smiles on people's faces. One of Dale's biggest joys was sitting on the front porch with his children and grandchildren at the end of the day discussing local news, current events, and politics. His children and grandchildren will never forget his frequent offers of pop and ice cream treats as they sat on the front porch. Dale loved to tell stories about people and places in Charlevoix — his long term memory of the community was amazing. As a teenager and young man, he observed and asked questions of his elders, such as Earl Young, the local banker, city workers, etc. As a result, Dale often received phone calls from residents requesting information on everything from the history of buildings to infrastructure of the city.

Dale was a wonderful father and grandfather. He built an in-ground swimming pool for his children because he wanted them to learn how to swim and have fun in the water, even though he never learned to swim himself. When his children were in grade school, Dale would help make birthday parties special. He would bring home a huge pile of sand, and bury pen-

nies he obtained from the bank. The children's classmates could dig and keep all the pennies that they found, which made for a lot of fun.

Dale loved to laugh, and was a very positive person. When his children inevitably locked their keys in the car while in a neighboring town, he would laugh and come rescue them. Sunday afternoons meant going on drives with the family and stopping along the way to buy his children pop and candy. When the grandchildren came along, he bought a miniature motorized firetruck which they could drive around the yard. As they got older, Dale encouraged his grandchildren to drive anything with a motor all around the property. Dale also maintained a healthy supply of "building materials," which he willingly gave so that his grandchildren could be creative. Four of the grandchildren became engineers as a result of the "inventions" they created at Dale and Marilyn's house.

Dale is survived by his two sons, Bo (Debbie) Boss of Charlevoix, Jim (Linda) Boss of Charlevoix; four daughters, Kathy Van Zant of Indian River, Sharon (Chuck) Eizinga of Albion, Diane (Dennis) Pries of Charlevoix, and Pam (Lane) Beatty of Naples, Fla.; 17 grandchildren; Beau and Sherry Boss, Connor and Ryder Boss, Carrie Purvis, Chris Castellein, Betsey Dunkel, Jordan and Adam Eizinga, Cody and Logan Pries, Chase and Tara Beatty, David and Ryan Faltling, Jennifer Kihara, Heather Marvin; 20 great-grandchildren; brother, Dean (Beulah) Boss of Spring Arbor; sister, Marlene Terry of Lubbock, Texas; sister-in-law, Joyce Boss of Charlevoix; brother-in-law, Glen Ikens of Brighton; sister-in-law, Sally (Tom) Paquin, of St. Ignace and many beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Dale was preceded in death by his parents, John and Lola Boss; beloved wife, Marilyn Boss; brother, Dwight Boss; daughter, Kay Howard; infant son, Thomas Boss; brother-in-law, Rev. James Terry; sister-in-law, Pauline Boss; sister-in-law, Kay Empey; brother-in-law, Norm Empey; and sister-in-law, Betty Ikens.

The Boss family is so grateful for the wonderful medical care and support that Dale received from Dr. Janet Talmo and her nurse Lisa from Physicians Clinic of Charlevoix. Dale was able to remain at home, which was his request, due to the loving in-home care provided by Anne Marie Kaulzrich of Amazing Care, and his family.

At Dale's request, there will be no public funeral service or viewing. Because the community of Charlevoix was such an important priority in Dale's life, his family would like to invite anyone wishing to honor his life to a community celebration. The time and location of the celebration will be announced later.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to "Keep Charlevoix Beautiful" (to continue the petunia legacy) at P.O. Box 1, Charlevoix, MI 49720; Community Reformed Church Breakfast Club (free breakfasts which Dale so enjoyed) 100 Oak St., Charlevoix, MI 49720; or the Charlevoix Historical Society, 103 State St., Charlevoix, MI 49720. Sign Dale's guestbook at [www.winchesterfuneralhome.com](http://www.winchesterfuneralhome.com).

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