



Fred Ronald Laitinen

August 10, 1939 - May 14, 2024

Fred Ronald Laitinen, 84, of Oneida passed away on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at St. Vincent Hospital in Green Bay. Fred was born on August 10, 1939, in West Allis, Wisconsin to Fred Andrew Laitinen and Mabel (Pajari) Laitinen. Fred grew up in the Milwaukee and Medford areas and worked in his teens and early twenties as a cook, truck driver, and drywall hauler. Fred started coming to the Oneida area with his friend, Jerry Baird, in the late fifties, and during these trips, he met Rose Cornelius. On February 25, 1961, Fred married Rose in Waukegan, Illinois, as Rose was working in Chicago at that time.

In 1965, Fred became an ironworker, working under a permit through Local 8 with Roger Nawrocki, until being initiated as a journeyman in 1967. Fred was very proud of his career as a structural ironworker and was a lifetime member of Local 8. Fred worked mainly as a “boomer” working throughout Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Fred and Roger were best friends from 1965 until Roger’s passing in 2010.

Fred and Rose raised four children and the family lived in several areas of Wisconsin including the Milwaukee area, Mellen, Saxon, and Oneida. Fred loved the outdoors and enjoyed hunting and fishing. A dog lover, Fred bred, raised and trained coon and bear hounds. Fred has long had a love of songbirds and in feeding them. He had long battles with the squirrels to keep them away from the feeders, but a few years ago, he gave that battle up and began feeding the possum and raccoons that would come to his yard, making sure they had separate bowls to keep them behaving.

Known for his charm and sense of humor, Fred was fierce in standing up for what he believed was right and just. Family always came first, and during his children’s sporting and other school events, Fred was often the only father who took off work to attend the events that took place during normal business hours. Fred instilled in his children a strong work ethic and the importance of education. Fred quit high school after an altercation with a teacher who kicked him in the shins after Fred fell asleep during a reading of Shakespeare. While in his forties, Fred took the GED exam without studying and passed with flying colors.

Fred was full-blooded Finn, or as he liked to say, “110%”. He embraced his culture and taught his children the history of Finland and loved the saying, “You can always tell a Finn, but you can’t tell him much.” Fred was the personification of Sisu, the Finnish word with no English translation to one word, but a combination of the following: stoic determination, hardiness, courage, bravery, willpower, tenacity, and resilience.

Fred's wife, Rose was the founder of Oneida Preservation Singers, a group organized with George Ninham to teach the Oneida Hymns to all who wanted to learn. Fred provided transportation and support to these efforts and helped finance the recordings this group made in the mid to late 80's. Fred became a part of the Oneida Community when he married Rose.

Health issues challenged Fred for years, and in November of 2023, he had to move to a skilled nursing facility while awaiting a surgical procedure. Fred enjoyed his community of new friends and caregivers at Anna John, his coffee and ice cream group with the ladies, and sharing meals with Darrel, Ken, and his new friend, Staber.

Fred's trait of saying exactly what was on his mind, and his sense of humor and desire to make people laugh will be remembered by all who knew him. At the time of his passing, Fred had celebrated over 54 years of sobriety.

Fred was preceded in death by his son, Robert, who passed away in July 2021 and his wife of sixty years, Rose, who passed in October 2021, and his beloved dog, Mr. Biscuit, in January 2022. Fred was further preceded in death by his parents, his step-father, Orin "Andy" Anderson, his Oneida Godfather, George Ninham, Baptismal Godfather, James Belan, parents-in-law Julius "Joe" Cornelius and Alice (King) Cornelius, favorite cousin, Jerry Bartlein, siblings Donald Laitinen, Gary Anderson, Dorothy Prudlow, Robert Laitinen, Dennis Anderson, and in-laws, Ron Prudlow, Doris Laitinen, Isaac Cornelius, Alice Denny, Barb Cornelius, Shirley La Fleur, and Paul Cornelius.

Fred is survived by his children, Jennie (Mike) Thewis, Mellen, Fred (Jane) Laitinen, Green Bay, and Laura (Breck) Laitinen-Warren, Green Bay; grandchildren; Peter (Kendra) Thewis, Jeremiah Laitinen, Whitney (Josh) Ciatti, Justin Laitinen, Christopher (Betsy) Thewis, John Laitinen, Jacob Laitinen, Lucas Warren, and Charlotte "Charlie" Warren. Great grandchildren: Starr Thewis, Skyler Thewis, Twins Arielle and Dominic Ciatti, Cole Thewis, Adelyn Thewis, and Isaac Thewis.

Fred is also survived by his brother, Kenneth (Joanne) Anderson of Brookfield, special Cousin, Ronnie Laitinen, in-laws, Christine Anderson, Thelma (Wendell) McLester, Merlin (Pat) Cornelius, Eugene Cornelius, Emily (Steven) Johnson, and Edna (Scott) Grosskopf, Goddaughter, Susan Prudlow, special niece, Terry Doxtator, and several nieces and nephews.

The family would like to extend thanks and appreciation to Dr. Simil Gala, Dr. Rishi Subbarayan, Dr. Scott Schinschke, and Dr. Chan of Prevea, Dr. Rupp of Bellin, and the staff at Anna John Nursing Home, especially CNA Appalonia.

Friends may call to Ryan Funeral Home, 305 N. Tenth Street, De Pere, WI 54115 on Saturday, May 18, 2024 with visitation starting at 5:00 PM. The Oneida Hymn Singers will begin their song service at 6:30 PM with a memorial service to immediately follow at 7:00 PM, with Deacon Dale Hutjens officiating. Private inurnment will take place at Church of the Holy Apostles Cemetery, Oneida.