

**GILMANTON IRON WORKS --- Gary W. Stephan, 71, of Crystal Lake, passed away on Saturday, December 27, 2025. He succumbed to respiratory complications while battling lung cancer.**

**Gary was born on October 22, 1954, in Brooklyn, NY, the son of the late Frederick G. and Eleanor M. (Kopp) Stephan. He grew up in Selden, NY and graduated from Newfield HS, class of 1972.**

**Gary was a proud US Marine veteran. He served on the groundcrew of Marine One, the Presidential Helicopter Squadron known as HMX-1. He was a Sgt and recipient of the Presidential Service Certificate. Gary was honorably discharged June 1976 from Quantico, VA. He regularly attended the alumni reunions and enjoyed connecting his marine family.**

**Gary and Laura married August 1976. She was at his side when he passed. Gary was her husband, love and life partner for 50 Christmases.**

**Gary's career was in federal law enforcement. He worked in Northern Virginia and DC until hired by the US Customs Service as a Special Agent. In 1985, Gary and Laura moved to Merrimack, NH for his post in Boston. Over the next nineteen years Gary would assist or lead scores of investigations involving violations of US Customs Law. His expertise in the fields of Customs Fraud, Money Laundering and International Narcotics Smuggling would be recognized by federal prosecutors, other federal agencies and the Customs Service itself. Gary received numerous commendations, awards and recognition for his work. According to his colleagues, Gary was a mentor to the younger Agents, a true Gentleman and an Agents' Agent. He retired in 2004.**

**Gary was an avid HO train hobbyist. It was a passion of his as a young boy and he made sure his homes could accommodate his hobby. The layout grew every time his house did! Vacations inevitably involved visiting trains such as Horseshoe Curve in PA and collecting materials for his layout. His trains brought joy and awe to all who saw it.**

**Gary and Laura moved to their permanent home on Crystal Lake in May 2007 when their renovations were completed. He loved living on the lake; and was generous with "Uncle G's Boat". He enjoyed sharing his home with loved ones and introducing his lake to strangers. In the winter he enjoyed snowmobiling. Over the years he had many adventures riding with Eddie, which provided more material for his stories.**

To truly know Gary was to love Gary. He was not talkative, but he was easy to talk to. He had a sense of humor and interjected his two cents into ongoing stories. Gary loved telling visitors his stories of prepping the bean holes for Old Home Day. A transplanted New Yorker, Gary maintained his affection for the NY Yankees despite living in Red Sox Country. This encouraged much harassment from his co-workers.

Gary was a rock that you could depend on, like the sunrise and sunset. He lived his life serving others with the skills he had and showed love through acts of service. He was one of a kind. He had a high standard of excellence that was a big part of his personality. Those who knew him admired his love and devotion to family.

Uncle Gary was an honorary member of his nephew's hockey teams over the years. He was known as a problem solver. Whether it was finding his brother's cell phone, building a structure to dry Matt's hockey gear when traveling, or assembling bunk beds for Declan.

For many years Gary and Laura had Golden Retrievers. They were devoted to their beloved pets, Partner, Misty and Karma. Gary has reunited with them at the Rainbow Bridge. Over the years they welcomed the pets of family and friends as well. Dog toys and leashes were always at the ready along with a fresh bowl of water. Matt and his dog Baker were a special addition to their home when Matt moved to NH to play with the NE Wolves in Laconia and to attend college at St Anselm.

Gary loved his family most of all. He drove thousands of miles to attend events celebrating his family's life achievements, for holidays, hockey tournaments and road trips. One of his proudest moments was watching his nephew graduate from the Suffolk County, NY police academy.

Gary is survived by his wife Laura L. (Schrader) Stephan; sister Kim S. Phipps and her husband Kelly; brother Bruce F. Stephan and his wife Karen; nephews Johnathon A. Toto and Matthew J. Stephan, nieces E. Brooke Phipps and Amanda L. Stephan. He was Uncle G to many including Declan Gaudet, Fiona, Gwen and James Barcellino, and Wesley Indruk.

How blessed we are to have had something so great that makes saying goodbye so hard. Our family and friends will miss Gary deeply.

There will be no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made in Gary's name to GILMANTON'S OLD HOME DAY, PO Box 423, Gilmanton, NH 03237 or to UNCLE GARY'S GOALIES, c/o NE WOLVES, PO Box 762, Laconia, NH 03247.

A Graveside Service with military honors will be held at the NH Veterans Cemetery, Boscawen 11a.m on March 20, 2026. This will be followed by a luncheon off-site where Gary's favorite foods and signature Bourbon drink will be served.

Wilkinson-Beane-Simoneau-Paquette Funeral Home; 164 Pleasant St., Laconia, NH, 03246, is assisting the family with arrangements.

For more information and to view an online memorial, please visit [wilkinsonbeane.com](http://wilkinsonbeane.com).