



## Clifford F. Afton

August 31, 1932 - January 20, 2020

Clifford Frederick Afton (87) of Bear Lake Township, Kalkaska, Michigan passed away unexpectedly on Monday, January 20, 2020.

Cliff was born on August 31, 1932 in Sparta Township, Kent County, Michigan. He was the youngest son of Courtney G. Afton and Ella Mae (Kenney) Afton. He is preceded in death by brother Harold and Richard and a sister, Aurelia (Earl) Bills. Surviving are his sisters Agnes (Robert) Rivett and Patricia (Paul) Thumser.

He will be greatly missed by his children: Penny Sage, Clifford J., Jeffery (Kris) and Russell (Deb); grandchildren: Randy (Dana) Sage, Whitney ((Dan) Peters, Heather (Jake) Chapman, Cortney Afton, Nick (Lindsey), Phillip, Katherine, Michael and Elizabeth Afton; great-grandchildren; Lincoln, Eden Chapman, Anya Chapman, Charlotte (deceased) and Maggie and special friend Erica Mudry and his Eagles brothers. He had a special fondness for nieces and nephews and spent as much time as possible in their company.

Cliff retired from Robinson Cartage Company of Grandville, Michigan after 40 years of heavy hauling but continued working as a pilot car driver for an additional 22 years. After 62 years and millions of miles he never tired of driving. In 1987 he was awarded a Million Mile Safety Award. He was known by other drivers as a king among pawns. His memory never failed as he remembered every load, every route and mileage between any cities.

His favorite pastimes were traveling, camping, restoring old trucks and showing them and offering a helping hand when needed. Likely everyone who knew him was helped in some way by his kindness.

Visitation will take place at Kalkaska Funeral Home and Cremation Services, 152 S. Cedar Street, Kalkaska, Michigan on Sunday, January 26 from 1-3 P.M. A celebration of life will follow at the Kalkaska Eagles, Aerie 4496 on M-72 east of Kalkaska, just west of the Manistee River.

In lieu of flowers please donate and support the Kalkaska Eagles in their various charitable projects at 15854 W. M-72 Highway, Grayling, Michigan, 49738.

Arrangements have been entrusted to the Kalkaska Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

# Events

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**JAN**   **Visitation**                      01:00AM - 03:00PM

**26**

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Kalkaska Funeral Home

152 S Cedar St P.O. Box 1457, Kalkaska, MI, US, 49646

# Comments

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“ Thinking of your family with deepest sympathy.  
The VanDerBos Family  
Shirley, Jim and Laura

**Jim VanDerBos** - January 25 at 09:34 PM

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“ Sorry to learn of Uncle Cliff’s passing...Our sincere condolences to his family, Penny, “Jim” (Clifford J), Jeff and Rusty. Most of my memories of Uncle Cliff are from when I was just a kid and he was a young man just starting out. Even way back then I remember that he was patient, hardworking, and genuine (“the real deal”).

Bob and Kim Afton

**BobAfton** - January 25 at 03:08 PM

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“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



**cortney** - January 25 at 08:32 AM

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“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Clifford F. Afton.



January 24 at 10:43 PM

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“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Diane Simancek - January 24 at 10:09 PM

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“ We had so many entertaining dinners with 'Grandpa' Cliff while staying at Penny's cabin. He was quite the story teller! When visiting he would help us haul canoes/kayaks to drop our Playgroup bunch at the Manistee River. He had fun teasing Bob about the big bell that he rang so loud that it fell off the pole. We always enjoyed touring his vehicles and hearing where he was at with the restorations....along with a particular story about how he had to visit "Stinky" at a certain junkyard and endure his dog giving him sloppy kisses in his car as they drove deep into the yard to find the specific part Cliff needed. It was a delight to see him driving the Model T (or was it Model A?) that he restored for Whitney & Dan's drive following their wedding. He was all dressed up complete with a special chauffeur's cap -- what a sight to see! He was a back woods guy & explained "Back Woods Code" to Bob when we were building our home in Bellaire. Good laughs!! I'm going to mpresenceiss his when we visit Penny. Such a nice and humble man! Love, hugs & condolences to the entire Sage family.  
Diane & Bob Simancek

Diane Simancek - January 24 at 09:57 PM

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“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Diane Simancek - January 24 at 09:44 PM



“ Cliff showing his motorized bike to Bob Simancek. Boys & their toys!!

Diane - January 24 at 10:08 PM

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“ We are very sorry for your loss, family of Gordon and Sharon Cook (1st cousin) from Rockford, Michigan. Note: Son of Arthur and Ethel Cook (Afton).

**gordon Cook** - January 24 at 04:03 PM

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“ Cliff was a great father in-law that enjoyed the outdoor and working on his old vehicles, and always had funny stories.  
Love, Barb Groh

**Barbara Groh** - January 24 at 11:54 AM

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“ I am so sorry to hear of Cliffs passing.  
I had the good fortune to work with him and also share a cold beverage now and then.  
He will be missed by many .

**Bob Armstrong** - January 24 at 11:13 AM

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“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Clifford F. Afton.



January 24 at 10:57 AM

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“ Sweet Liberty was purchased for the family of Clifford F. Afton.



January 24 at 09:50 AM

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“ Frank, Joe and Mike purchased the Vivid Recollections for the family of Clifford F. Afton.



Frank, Joe and Mike - January 23 at 06:37 PM

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“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Clifford F. Afton.



January 23 at 04:26 PM

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“ Jeffrey, Nannapat, Allen, and Jesse Sage purchased the Basket of Memories for the family of Clifford F. Afton.



Wifi Jeff - January 23 at 09:04 AM

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“ Cliff will be missed, he always had a story to tell. I have many memories of sitting around a bonfire and listening to him and my dad talking. I have a lot of good memories of Cliff, K.C, Earl and Rosie and my Mom and Dad, Chuck and Johanna Whiteford. Snowmobiling for hours, going up and down the “ gas line” hill. Cliff was as my Dad would say, A “good egg”. Sorry for your loss! Lisa Whiteford

Lisa Whiteford - January 23 at 07:32 AM

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“ My sincere and heartfelt condolences on the passing of Cliff/Dad. He was a patriarch in the family and a true to life engineer. Any challenges the family faced throughout our time together, he would design a solution that many times did not seem possible to create. But he did it with patience and perseverance. Always, always willing to help one and all without asking for anything in return. One addition to the Obit was in the year he was awarded the "Million Miler Safety Award", he was also selected as the "National Driver of the Year" in that same year, all in the same event in Palm Springs, CA. I once witnessed him threading a needle with the largest and longest of loads that everyone believed was impossible. He will, without any doubt, be missed.

Jeffrey Sage

Wifi Jeff - January 22 at 09:08 PM

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“ Mike, Jo And Rodney Hosman lit a candle in memory of Clifford F. Afton



mike, jo and rodney hosman - January 22 at 04:19 PM

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“ the stories you could tell. you always welcomed us with open arms whenever we came to you're ranch. lots and lots of good memories that we won't forget. you were a great man uncle cliff. tell del and donna we said HI. rest in piece. mike, jo, and Rodney hosman

mike, jo and rodney hosman - January 22 at 04:18 PM

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“ Cliff was the salt of the earth. I didn't work with him much, but saw him often at Robinson's yard during my time working there. It was always fun to listen to the stories of some of the loads he had hauled, good & bad and to hear what it had been like in "the good old day's".  
I guess my favorite memory of him was at the truck show in 2016 & 2017. In '16 while at the show, he bought the "old" Pete that he drove for Robinson & drove it in the Parade of lights. Then the next year 2017, after he had restored it he brought it back to the show and again drove in the Parade of lights.  
Cliff, you will be missed, truck on ,my friend, truck on !



Wendell VanEtt - January 22 at 11:52 AM

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“ 9 files added to the album Memories Album



Mike Beahan - January 22 at 11:43 AM

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“ 9 files added to the tribute wall



Mike Beahan - January 22 at 11:40 AM

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“ 4 files added to the album Grandpa



Cortney - January 22 at 10:49 AM

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“ Cliff always was a great conversationalist. I'll miss his good humor and gentle good nature. Our family reunions will never be the same without him.



Mike Beahan - January 22 at 10:09 AM



“ William Ream lit a candle in memory of Clifford F. Afton



**William Ream** - January 22 at 10:05 AM

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“ One of my favorite childhood memories is Uncle Cliff trying to make enough pancakes to keep up with us kids; and our determination to stay ahead of him! So glad to have spent quality time with him the last few summers. Such a kind and generous man, who will be sorely missed. Love to all....

**Debbie (Rivett) Beahan** - January 22 at 09:44 AM

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“ Mike, I want to send condolences to you and your family. This is Jim Southworth. I worked with Cliff for 30 years and it was a pleasure to have known him. As time goes on it seems sad that us older drivers are becoming a thing of a past. Mike , I hope you are doing well. Any more all we have is our memories . They were good ones of your dad and you Mike. So long Cliff.

**Jim Southworth** - January 21 at 09:44 PM