



Edward "Ed" Charles Perry, 73, passed away Monday, August 8 surrounded by loved ones at McLaren Northern Michigan Hospital in Petoskey following a sudden battle with lymphoma. Ed, a retired Great Lakes Captain, is survived by his wife Edna "Eddie" (Emerson), and his brothers Amos (Sandy Dunlap) and Mike Perry, all of Cheboygan, along with nephew David, (Kara) of Dahlgren, Virginia. While Ed didn't have children, he was a "dad" to his goddaughter Anne (Driscoll) Schwimmer (Nathan) and Elizabeth L. Driscoll (Michelle), both formerly of Cheboygan.

Ed was born in Cheboygan to parents Amos and Louise (Socha) Perry July 12, 1943. He graduated from Cheboygan High School, attended Alpena Community College and earned his Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Arts from Michigan State University. Ed met his beloved wife "Eddie" while teaching in Ida, Michigan. They married and moved to Cheboygan where Ed taught industrial arts at the junior high school and then in high school. Ed and Eddie, as their friends know them, celebrated 45 years of marriage last December.

The couple loved to downhill ski together. Ed coached the Cheboygan High School Ski Team in the late 1970's and early 1980's and was very proud of his team's accomplishments. Ed and Eddie were season pass holders at Nub's Nob and often traveled by train to ski the America West with their friends, "carving beautiful turns" at places like Telluride and Steamboat Colorado, and Fernie Alpine Resort in Canada. The couple bicycled together for many years too, and, just last summer, paddled a canoe to a local shipwreck in the Straits of Mackinac.

Ed took pride in his 50-year career sailing as a U.S. Merchant Mariner. He started his sailing career as a young man on the Straits Transit Mackinac Island ferries, earning his Captain's license at the age of 20. He also served on Great Lakes freighters and on the last hand-fired coal-burning steamship on the Great Lakes, the Chief Wawatam. He and his brothers owned and operated Captains Three, providing the first-ever night ferry service from Mackinaw City to Mackinac Island, and later a marina and rescue boat service in Cheboygan. Ed later captained ships in New York State for the Ann Arbor-based U.S. Fish and Wildlife, which later became part of the U.S. Geological Survey. Ed continued with the U.S.G.S., leading research trips for the Cheboygan-based office of the Great Lakes Science Center, which is dedicated to managing our lakes and their ecosystem. Ed served as Captain for both the R/V Grayling and the R/V Sturgeon. The latter, which Ed helped re-design and christen, can often be seen from the State Street Bridge.

While work took him out to sea for much of his adult life, Ed was always a champion for northern Michigan. He served as President of the Great Lakes Captains Association for some 20 years. He supported restoration of the Cheboygan Light Crib which now adorns postcards and attracts visitors at Cheboygan City Beach. As a former teacher and community advocate, Ed also served on the Cheboygan School Board in the 1980s.

Ed was a member of St. Thomas Lutheran Church in Cheboygan, where his mother was the organist for decades. As boys, their father, who sold Packard automobiles from Petoskey to Sault Ste. Marie in the 1950's, took Ed and his brothers on ferry rides to the Upper Peninsula before the Mackinac Bridge was constructed, which may explain Ed's love of boats. His passion for the lakes never waned; Ed often talked of how beautiful sunrises and sunsets were from aboard a ship on the water.

Ed was loved by all who had the pleasure to know him and earned a reputation for telling well-timed and engaging stories "over a tankard of ale." He was a caring and patient man who took delight in acting as a guardian angel to his loved ones. Even in his weakest moments in recent days, people who barely knew him made comment about Ed's kind manner, brave heart and humorous remarks. The people who knew Ed for any length of time are better having had him in their lives.