



## Dennis R. DeMerse

April 24, 1943 - August 1, 2021

Dennis R. DeMerse, 78, passed away on August 1st, 2021, surrounded by family at Bellin Hospital in Green Bay, WI.

Dennis was born on April, 24, 1943, in Marquette, MI, son of the late Irwin and Rhoda (Smith) DeMerse. He graduated from John D. Pierce High School in 1961 and attended the Soo Tech (now Lake Superior State University) for two years. Dennis transferred to Northern Michigan University and in 1966 earned his degree in education. On October 11, 1963, he married the love of his life, Michele Miller in Marquette.

Athletics and basketball were a huge part of Dennis' life. In 1961, his high school team went undefeated and won the Class D State Championship with Dennis garnering All-State honors. He also enjoyed teaching the game he loved to many future Mountaineers. He was instrumental in starting up the community school's elementary basketball program and summer basketball camps with his childhood friend, Rick Olds. He coached the Iron Mountain girls varsity basketball teams for twenty one years and was a Michigan high school official for over fifty years.

As a teacher, mentor and basketball coach, Dennis touched countless lives in the Iron Mountain area. His patient, compassionate ways with people and quick wit endeared him to many. Dennis loved to entertain others and make

them laugh but seemed to laugh the most in the process. He loved spending time with family and friends and has created many memorable experiences for and with his grandchildren over the years.

Dennis is survived by his wife of fifty seven years, Michele; daughter, Jodi McDaniel of Clermont, Florida; son, Jeff (Maria) DeMerse of Iron Mountain; brothers, Irwin (Ethel) DeMerse of Mesa, AZ and Richard (Edith) DeMerse of Marquette; sister, Margaret Olivier of Marquette; grandchildren, Trevor and Allison McDowell, Toni and Nick DeMerse; brothers-in-law, Alan, Bill, and Richard Miller and many nieces and nephews. Dennis was also blessed with many lifelong friends, including Madelyn and Paul Dooley, Rick and Maureen (Cookie) Olds, Scott McDonald, Gerry Pirkola and his Lake Anna friends. He also leaves behind his faithful companion, his dog Ziggy.

In addition to his parents, Dennis was preceded in death by his in-laws, William and Virginia Miller, and brother-in-law, Joe Olivier.

A memorial gathering and celebration of life for Dennis will take place on Sunday, August 15th from 4:00 until 7:00 pm at the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home of Iron Mountain.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made in his memory to Northwoods Air Lifeline or Baycliff Health Camp.

Condolences to the family of Dennis DeMerse may be expressed online at [www.ernashfuneralhomes.com](http://www.ernashfuneralhomes.com)

The family has entrusted the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home with the arrangements.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

AUG 15. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Erickson-Rochon and Nash Funeral Home

901 Carpenter Avenue

Iron Mountain, MI 49801

(906) 774-7676

[nashfuneralhome@gmail.com](mailto:nashfuneralhome@gmail.com)

<https://www.ernashfuneralhomes.com/>

# Tribute Wall

KB

“ *Mr. DeMerse taught me and my fourth grade class at Central Junior High School in IM to play chess. he allowed us time every day to develop that skill. It was great training for a young person’s mind. I’ll always remember him for his patience and wisdom.* ”

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**Kevin Belhumeur** - August 23, 2022 at 07:04 PM

BC

“ *On Behalf of Bay Cliff and all of our campers, we would like to thank Dennis and his family and friends for their generosity in supporting our work. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.* ”

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**Bay Cliff Health Camp** - August 17, 2021 at 04:26 PM

BR

“ *Sending prayers and comforting thoughts. Praying for strength for Michele and Family in the days ahead. Sincerely, Bonnie and Richard Reedy* ”

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**Bonnie (Maves) Reedy** - August 15, 2021 at 01:44 PM

NF

“ *Dennis will be missed by so many. He was always around for family functions, and was always fun to be around. My mom and dad, Bobby and Anna Fletchers eyes would light right up when he came for a visit. They are all together now, which brings comfort to me and my sisters. We love you Dennis. Our condolences to Michele and family.* ”

*Love Nancy, Laura and Chris*

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**Nancy Fletcher** - August 14, 2021 at 07:30 PM

BR

*Sending thoughts and prayers to you, Michele and Family. Wishing you strength in the days ahead! Bonnie and Richard Reedy*

**Bonnie (Maves) Reedy** - August 15, 2021 at 01:33 PM

CY

“*‘Dennis is awesome. He let me drive his tractor and I almost bumped into a tree. He just laughed. And one time I went to his house and he gave me 5 shark teeth!’*

*- Kira Yonts (8)*

*From her dad: When we got the news, we asked Kira if she remembered Uncle Dennis. She paused for half a second, while she thought about it. Then her eyes lit up, she gave a huge smile and said the above (btw - ‘tractor’ means ‘golf cart’). I think that reaction - light up, smile, laugh - is probably what just about everybody did when they thought of Dennis.*

*We saw far too little of him, but seeing Dennis - sailing the high seas of lake anna on his pontoon boat, trying out some new grill tricks, stalking wolves with Zoe back in the barrens, or showing off smooth dance moves with his lovely wife - was always a high light of our summer trips home to Spread Eagle. We will miss him terribly, and feel lucky to have known him.*

*To Michele - Dennis would have something sweet and witty to say, but for me... no words come close. Million hugs and we can't wait to come, commiserate and relive memories soon.*

*Charlie & Jane*

**Charles Yonts** - August 14, 2021 at 01:23 AM

AY

“ I have so many fond memories of Dennis at the lake and Rancho Mirage. I'm grateful for them all. It saddens me deeply to think of his passing, I'll miss his warm concern and contagious smile. Even as I write this, I'm in disbelief. Michele, I wish I could be there to share my condolences and support to you and your family. Sending love,  
Amy Yonts

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**Amy Yonts** - August 13, 2021 at 02:45 AM

MH

“ What a great guy's guy, the Big D. A fabulous all around athlete and a great guy to be around. Paul Santoni and I enjoyed playing tennis with and against him for years.  
We all lost a great friend and Old Milwaukee lost a key customer.

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**Mike Harvey** - August 10, 2021 at 01:12 PM

EL

“ Deepest condolences to the DeMerse family and to Dennis' numerous friends, colleagues and to those who played for him. Even though our paths have not crossed for many years, the picture displays the consistency of his character: a smile with a determined look. He took the time to help people and left them better off than he found them.

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**Eric Luttinen** - August 09, 2021 at 09:55 AM

JA

“ So sad to hear of his passing. Coach DeMerse was such an intelligent player and coach and an even better person. As a young high school basketball player spending the summer with my brother Burt in IM, I had the privilege to learn from him and Coach Olds at the IM summer camp. What an education!! I was so appreciative of the time Coach D took to help another player not wearing the Mountaineer uniform. Such a class individual! Rest in peace coach! Jamie Angeli

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**Jamie Angeli** - August 09, 2021 at 03:32 AM

KR

“ So very sorry to hear about Denny. He was a gem of a guy! Thoughts and prayers during this very difficult time.

*Deepest Sympathies,  
Kris*

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**KrisSolda** - August 08, 2021 at 04:11 PM

RZ

“ So sorry, Michele, to hear of the loss of your husband. My sincere sympathies.

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**Robin Zini** - August 08, 2021 at 01:31 PM

SP

“ Dear Michele and family, We were so sorry to hear about Dennis' passing. I remember him so well from our days at John D. Pierce together. I followed him thru all the basketball games and fun things thru high school. It was a wonderful time. He was such a great guy. I am proud and happy to have known him. Our deepest condolences to you all..

*Sharon Hanford Petrella*

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**Sharon & Jim Petrella** - August 08, 2021 at 01:10 PM

CL

“ To Michele and her family my sincere sympathy for the passing of Dennis. As a kid growing up in Marquette we would have pick up games of basketball at Hurley Field..Dennis would give us advice on the finer points of the game. He always shared himself with others, never selfish, I always enjoyed seeing Michele and Dennis during class reunions. A loving couple who will leave a tremendous legacy to their family.  
Rest in peace my friend.

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**Chuck Langlois** - August 08, 2021 at 11:03 AM

JF

“ Dear Demerse Family  
My condolences and prayers for your loss. A good man!  
With sympathy,  
Jimmy Fornetti

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**Jim Fornetti** - August 07, 2021 at 11:58 PM

RK

“ Michele and family: We were so saddened to hear of Dennis' passing. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

*Ron and Darlene Kulie*

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**Ron Kulie** - August 07, 2021 at 08:08 AM

JD

“ Michele, Jodi, Jeff and families,

*Am saddened to learn of the loss of “Denny”. We shared many years as teaching and coaching colleagues. He always gave his best to the kids.*

*My condolences to you all.*

*Jim Debelak*

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**J Debelak** - August 05, 2021 at 08:18 PM

KD

“ So sorry to hear of Dennis’ passing. He was a great guy and always showed his love for Michelle. He also always reminded me of my mom, Elinor. They had a special kind of “teasing” relationship and had so much fun together. Both are/will be greatly missed!

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**Karen Pultz Duffrin** - August 05, 2021 at 05:33 PM

MP

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Melissa Porta** - August 05, 2021 at 03:04 PM

JO

♥ *this! Thanks for sharing, Miss!*

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**Jodi** - August 06, 2021 at 06:58 PM

MP

“ Michele, Jodi, Jeff, and family

*We are so sorry for your loss. I have many great memories of him starting in 4th grade as my teacher. He taught us multiplication using homemade blocks and made it into a competition, recording our points after every session on the chalkboard. Maybe this was my start in a math-based career. When I saw him last year, he talked about our class.*

*My last visit with him will always be a happy memory; lunch in a remote part of the desert with Mary and Jerry Parrott and a stop at Lake Pleasant.*

*Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this very difficult time.*

*Love,  
Melissa Porta and Greg McAllister*

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**Melissa Porta** - August 05, 2021 at 03:03 PM

BN

“ I am sorry for your loss and prayers are sent by me Bobby

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**bobby nordell** - August 05, 2021 at 02:20 PM

TM

“ We met Dennis about a year and a half ago. What an impression he left on us along with his wife Michele. We lost a good person who was loved and will be missed. We at least have the memories of our brief visit. Condolences to the entire family.



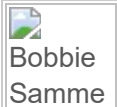
Tim and Michelle McNeil - August 05, 2021 at 12:38 PM

HS

“ Herb And Bobbie Samme lit a candle in memory of Dennis R. DeMerse



Herb and Bobbie Samme - August 05, 2021 at 10:18 AM



Michelle, Herb and I were devastated to learn of Dennis's passing. You both have been such amazing friends to my parents and to us as well. We will always remember Dennis's infectious smile and kind heart. You are both such good people and we will miss him so very much. May God bless you and bring you much comfort 🙏

Bobbie Samme - August 05, 2021 at 10:22 AM

DM

“ My heartfelt condolences—  
May you find comfort and peace in treasured memories that live in your hearts forever  
Diane McKinnon

Diane McKinnon - August 05, 2021 at 10:16 AM

DM

“ *Diane McKinnon lit a candle in memory of Dennis R. DeMerse*



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**Diane McKinnon** - August 05, 2021 at 10:14 AM

CP

“ *My husband's Stan & I met Dennis and Michele A few years ago as seasonal renters in Rancho Mirage, Ca. And we loved both of them after they said "hello". Dennis smile was so wonderful and sincere. As we get more acquainted throughout the years Dennis and I would play a lot of tennis together in the desert and he has the most frustrating topspin I've ever dealt with in my life!!! And he would laugh about it and I actually found myself laughing at it. I'm sure all of you know him know exactly what I'm talking about. His laugh is so contagious. Although we live in Leawood, Kansas we still stay in touch with Michele and Dennis and will miss him so very very much. God bless you Dennis and we love you!!*

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**Carol Penner** - August 04, 2021 at 10:42 PM

AM

*My grandpa spent many long hours over the course of many summers teaching me -- his granddaughter, Allison -- tennis. I am very familiar with the topspin and even more familiar with that laugh. It brought me joy to read your comment and bring back these memories. It's comforting (and unsurprising) to know the extent of the number of lives he touched. Thank you.*

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**Allison McDowell** - August 05, 2021 at 02:53 PM

CP

*Thx Allison! Your note is so sweet. Must run in the family! We visited and Michele and Denises home about four years ago ,were you the one I play tennis with that time?*

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**Carol Penner** - August 05, 2021 at 07:01 PM

NL

“ Michele and family We are so sorry about your loss of Dennis. He was a friend to all of us and his presence will be sadly missed. Walt, Nancy, John and Derek Lakari

nancy lakari - August 04, 2021 at 09:44 PM

TS

“ So, so,so sorry. We was such a wonderful man. I always felt so comfortable around you both. Just down to earth wonderful people. I praygod will give you and your family some comfort during this difficult time. Dennis is fine, happy and free from any pain. You will someday be together again. Tons of hugs,love and prayers are sent.

These Mike SEDA - August 04, 2021 at 09:00 PM



“ I can still remember walking down the hall at Central Elementary School.....Mr. DeMerse would "high-5" every kid that walked by. I watched him be a teacher, coach, and referee my entire life. He did it all with such class. What a tremendous man!!! My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

Robin & Jen Marttila

Robin Marttila - August 04, 2021 at 08:52 PM

C(

“ He was a really good guy! He was so friendly and good-natured. He made me smile and laugh every time I saw him. He surely had a full life of teaching and coaching! My sympathy to you, Michelle & the rest of the family. Your friend,  
Carole Brandt (Mack)

Carole Brandt (Mack) - August 04, 2021 at 07:28 PM

JT

“ I am so sorry for your loss. Mr. Demerse was my favorite teacher. I had him in fourth grade. Teaching us our times table with milk cartons cut to be dice. He encouraged me in so many ways. When my father “The Colonel” passed away Mr. Demerse consoled me better than anyone. He words were positive and his compassion was great. Sending prayers for your family to find peace. Much love and prayers ❤️

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**Jane Trebilcock-Carlson** - August 04, 2021 at 07:05 PM

AR

*Michele, Jodi and family, Jeff and family: We send love and prayers to all of you. What a wonderful obituary you have written. Dennis's legacy lives on through all of you, his beloved family, the students he taught, his friends, co-workers, and the athletes he coached. We will always treasure our time spent in his company. So many things are reminders of him, especially his recipes which are treasured and enjoyed. We don't recall him without his ever present smile and good natured "kidding". I remember him telling one of his many jokes that he had a hard time telling because he was laughing so much. Dennis will be missed by all who had the fortune of knowing him.*

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**Alice and Gordy Reed** - August 04, 2021 at 10:25 PM

MS

*Michele, and family, My heart aches for all of you, I was so sorry to hear about Dennis. I met Dennis in 1961, and immediately found a new friend, that was just what Dennis was all about. So happy we got to dance at the last reunion. Memories are the legacy of love, and Dennis sure left enough to go around to all those that were fortunate enough to meet and know him. Thoughts and Prayers, Michele please keep in touch.*

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**Mary Lou(Buzzo) Shimon** - August 07, 2021 at 04:03 PM