



## John Cootware

December 25, 1956 - December 25, 2012

John Edwin Cootware, 56, of Ralph, Michigan, was pronounced dead December 25, 2012 at Dickinson County Memorial Hospital in Iron Mountain.

He was born December 31, 1955 in Iron Mountain to John "Jack" and Donna Mae (Blomquist) Cootware. He was a lifelong resident of Ralph. John was a member of North Dickinson High School's 1974 graduating class. He went on to attend Michigan State University. He graduated from MSU in 1978 with a Bachelor's of Art in Agriculture. On October 24, 1992 he married Cheryl Rae Hammerly in Wisconsin Dells. John worked along side his wife and parents, on Cootware Family Farm, where they raised cattle and potatoes. In addition to farming, he also worked as a Michigan Certified Seed Inspector; he served as Township Supervisor for West Branch Township; he was a lifelong member and leader with 4-H; he was on the Zion Lutheran Church Council where he also served on their Evangelism board & taught Sunday School. John enjoyed gardening, canning, cooking, and singing almost as much as he loved being a good neighbor and baking almond crinkle and making caramel corn for those he loved. He leaves behind a legacy of kindness.

John is survived by his wife, of more than 20 years, Cheryl Cootware of Ralph; his parents John "Jack" and Donna Mae Cootware of Ralph; his son, Michael Cootware of Ralph; his daughter, Anne Cootware of Harvey; his granddaughters Andraya Manthe and Tiana Juul; his sisters, Deanna (Richard

"Smitty") Smith of Ruskin, FL; Paulette (Michael) Holmes of Randville; Donna (Greg) Stahlmann of Ishpeming; Suzette (Neil) Stenfors of Norway; Michelle (William) Schirtzinger of Denmark, WI; brothers in-law, Leonard (Susan) Hammerly of Delavan, WI and Jay Rian (Michele) Hammerly of Wisconsin Dells; many nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins, and special friends.

Visitation will be on Saturday, December 29, 2012 from 10:00AM-1:00PM at Zion Lutheran Church in Metropolitan. The funeral service will begin at 1:00PM; Rev. Joel Smeby will officiate. The family invites all to join them for a reception following the service at the Felch Community Center. Burial will take place in the Ralph Cemetery this Spring.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to the Furnace Fund at Zion Lutheran Church.

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

The family has entrusted the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral home of Iron Mountain with the funeral arrangements.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **29**. 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church  
W4703 Metropolitan Rd.  
Felch, MI 49831

## Funeral Service

DEC **29**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church  
W4703 Metropolitan Rd.  
Felch, MI 49831

# Tribute Wall

DF

“ Dear Donna, Jack, Cheryl, and the entire Cootware Family, I was so shocked and saddened when my family told me of John's death. It still doesn't seem possible, and my heart aches for all. I have so many, many great memories of John through 4-H, the Fair, and all our rides back and forth to Michigan State. I remember vividly how mad some of the other kids that rode to and from MSU with us, when I would drop John off at home in Ralph before dropping them off in Norway! We had a lot of fun, and John is one person I will fondly remember for many reasons - his smile, his sense of humor, his curly hair, and his love of family and farming. You are all in my thoughts and prayers. Hugs to all, Donna

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**Donna Skog Grey - Dallas, PA - Friend** - January 19, 2013 at 12:00 AM

VF

“ We are very sorry to hear about Johnny. What a great loss for us but a great one for the Lord. Donna our prayers are with you and your family. THinking of you so much with this loss.

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**violet and brian bongi - phoenix, AZ - family** - January 07, 2013 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ Dear Donna, Jack, Cheryl and entire Cootware family...

*Our community has lost one of it's finest. I was saddened to hear the news of Johnny passing away. He was one of the best. Always GIVING...always DOING and always happy to see you. I can still picture him as a friend with my older brother Buddy and their blue Courdory FFA (Future Farmers of America) jackets being sooo proud and wearing them to school ...well..he lived his dream and he lived it well.*

*I could go a year with out seeing Johnny and he was always happy to see me (or anyone) and catch up on their lives and tell about his. I can picture him serving up Brats at the Ralph picnic just beaming at the turn out of people.*

*I am sorry for your loss! He truly was a kind soul. He was the best of the best. God's blessings to you all.*

*Mary R. Oman*

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**Mary R. Oman - Iron Mountain , MI - Family Friend** - January 02, 2013 at 12:00 AM

SS

“ Everyone should have a brother as wonderful as mine was. Johnny was so kind, caring, loving and patient. He wasn't afraid to try anything. I was out of shape and needed to drop a few pounds. He not only encouraged me but he joined right in with no complaints. Richard Simmons was very popular at the time and yes I did it, I bought the tape. Every day I would look forward to see what hilarious get up Johnny would show up in. His hair, as you know, had the tendency to look much like Richard Simmons. He would give it some extra fluff and often made himself a sweat band. We would exercise together while the house shook. It was hard to get through because we'd end up laying on the floor laughing our heads off. Johnny pulled so many pranks throughout the years. I finally trained my brain to not believe his silly claims but every now and then he would get me good. I will miss that so much. You may find this hard to believe (ha ha) but I have a stubborn streak. I will eventually get to the point where I'll do the right thing but Johnny was my coach. He was wise, honest (minus the teasing) and loved you enough to tell the hard truth. He was great at keeping you accountable so if you were struggling with something he was the one to tell. He made me a better person and I know he did this for everyone lucky enough to be a part of his life. Neil and I were blessed to have a small group Bible study in our home. Johnny took that so very serious and it was great to grow in Christ together. He loved God's Word and was faithfully studying it at home. He applied what he read to his life. Johnny would have been a good person without Christ, but with Christ he was an example of Christ here on earth. How blessed we were to have him and I long to see him again. What comfort to know we will be together in eternity. What joy to close my eyes and picture the great reunion taking place in heaven with those who passed before him. It especially delights my heart to picture Johnny with April.

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Suzette (Cootware) Stenfors - NORWAY, MI - Sister - January 01, 2013 at 12:00 AM

EC

“ *Cootware Family,  
We are so sorry for your loss, John was a wonderful person who will be greatly missed. Everytime we saw him he had that sweet smile and lately humor about our son and his granddaughter getting together when they grew up. He was so proud of his family and to be a grandfather.*

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**Erin, Scott Raether & Family - Foster City** - December 31, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ *We are so sorry to hear of Johnny's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with your and your family. God Bless*

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**Jim & Cheryl Richard - Church Point, LA - Friends** - December 30, 2012 at 12:00 AM

AF

“ *No words can express the sympathy I feel for the Cootware family during this time of loss. John touched so many lives and was able to bring his gift of friendship that warmed the hearts of every person that was lucky enough to know him. May those mourning the loss find peace knowing that John is now smiling over us from his home in heaven. God Bless.*

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**Angela Phinney (Cha Myers) - Saint Johns, MI - friend/neighbor** - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM

BC

“ *I am so sorry to hear of your loss. I remember John as being such a nice guy. He will be greatly missed. And by the way I also remember what great parents he had. Your are all in my thoughts and prayers.*

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**Betty Peronto Hansen - Powers, MI - Michelles classmate** - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ Dear Jack, Donna, and family - We were so shocked and saddened when we saw John's obituary in the news. It is a parent's worst nightmare to have their child predecease them. We have fond memories of John and your whole family, and our hearts ache for all of you. John was a loving man of strong character, and will be greatly missed. May the love of family and friends sustain you in your time of sorrow. You are all greatly loved and appreciated.

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**June and Don Rittenhouse - Randville, MI - Friends of the family - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM**

MF

“ Dear Cootware Family,

So sorry to hear of your loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with you

Ensio and Marie Ostola

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**Marie and Ensio Ostola - Ishpeming, MI 49849, MI - Friend - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM**

HF

“ Dear Jack, Donna and Family,

My brother just called with the sad news of Johnny's "passing". Words can't begin to express how sorry I am. Wish I could be there to comfort you. He was a wonderful son to you both and Roland and I always enjoyed talking with him. He was indeed an "ANGEL" on earth. Much love.

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**Harriet Hallquist - Troy, MI - Friend - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM**

JC

“ Jack, Donna, Cheryl & Family,

*I'm so sorry for your loss. Johnny was one of the most genuine, good souls I've ever know. The picture you've placed of him here is perhaps the greatest tribute of all. When I think of him, his smile is what I remember most. My brother Carl & I have such great memories of Johnny running us up & down the farm until the sun was gone. It seemed he always had endless time for the children in his life.*

*Our thoughts & prayers are with you. I'm confident that your family bond & strength of your faith will guide you as you face this new chapter together.*

*Be well & God Bless.*

*Jamie, Cristina, Orion & Phoenix Gustafson - Chicago*

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**Jamie Gustafson - Chicago, IL - Cousin** - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ Donna, Jack, Cheryl and Family. My prayers are with you all today. I have so many great memories of Johnny growing up as our families would visit and also from school. Always a kind loving person. I know he had a heart for Christ and I smile as I think about how big his smile is as he looks upon his savior. With you all in prayers and thoughts!

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**Catherine Boutch (Broeders) - Conroe, TX - Friend** - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM

GF

“ Chery and family, we are so very sorry for your lose of John. He always had a friendly smile and always so kind.. You sre in our prayers! May God wrap his arms around you for strength!

George and Kim McGillivray - Menominee, MI - Friend - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ Dear Donna and Jack, Jurgen and I wish to share our sympathy with you. We will keep you and your family in our prayers.

Jurgen and Cindy Jesionek - Ruskin, FL - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM

AF

“ To the family of John, my deepest sympathies. John and I were elementary school friends. My fondest memories when I was young were the times I stayed overnight at the farm in Ralph in the winter and we would have to get up in the morning before school and go and feed the animals in the dark. John was such a calm and caring person, I know that he cared about me. Even though our lives took us on different journey's, our friendship meant alot to me. God Bless all of you.

Adrian Steinbrecher

Adrian Steinbrecher - CO - Friend - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ My prayers and heartfelt condolences are with all of John's family. I remember his wonderful, caring, loving personality. He always had a smile. His joy was so contagious.

Mary Jo

Mary Jo (Davis) Hunsberger - Northbrook, IL - Friend - December 29, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SC

“ To our much loved family of John, we are deeply saddened. Our hearts ache and hope the love of family and friends will help you through the days ahead. We all know John was 'the best' and you all can be so proud that he is loved by so many...may the wonderful memories you have in your hearts live on forever....we will miss him also. Love you all. Hugs & God's blessings always.

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**Sharon & Esley - Munising, MI - Cousins** - December 28, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ John was such a special guy. He will be sadly missed by friends, family and everyone he touched. He was extremely kind to everyone, always speaking of the Lord and what the Lord wanted him to do. He is now with His Lord in the palm of His hands. May the family have peace and sympathy through these tough times. Cheryl you have my very deepest sympathy and may the Lord see you through. I loved John as a brother and he was such a "great" guy. I know that you will miss him so much. Words can not express my grief for you. You two were inseparable and I looked up to you two because of that. If you need someone to talk to I am here for you. 704-798-6568

Love always,  
Charlotte

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**Charlotte L. Briggs - Swannanoa, NC - Friend** - December 28, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ I would like to express my condolences to John's entire family. John was a very kind, sincere, hardworking person whom I very much enjoyed getting to know and work with. I will truly miss seeing and working with him, but will always remember him for the very positive impression he had on me. John was a very special person that made me feel at ease, almost like a member of the family, whenever I saw him and I will never forget him. Jim Harris Jr.

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**James Harris Jr.; Dickinson County Road Commission - Iron Mountain, MI - Fellow Community Leader; F** - December 28, 2012 at 12:00 AM

FF

“ Dear Family and Friends of John,

*Please know of my prayers and sympathy as you mourn John's passing. I had heard from my father, Paul, on December 23rd that John had suffered an accident. It was shock this morning when my dad informed me of his passing. John was such and honest, hard-working and likable man of much faith. Soon I will offer a Mass for John and for your intentions. God's peace,*

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**Father Larry Van Damme - Marquette, MI - Friend** - December 28, 2012 at 12:00 AM

KC

“ Dear Cheryl, Anne, Michael, Jack, Donna, "Girls", "Out-laws", and Kids-a-Plenty...

*We love you all so much and will be with you in hearts & prayers. The memories are flooding the gates right now; so many smiles and reasons to celebrate the love of family! Thank you, Johnny, for always making us feel at home. Until we see you again on your side of eternity...All our love & holy hugs sent from IN - Kristen, Wes, Logan & Jonas*

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**Kristen Wells - Westfield, IN - Loving Cousins** - December 28, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LF

“ To Johnny's family, so very sorry about Johnny's passing, what a wonderful man he was and will be missed by so many...I haven't seen him in a few years but I can remember his voice and see his smile.. You have my deepest sympathy.. Laurie Van Damme---(Paul & Jeanettes youngest daughter..)

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**Laurie Van Damme - Gwinn, MI - friend** - December 28, 2012 at 12:00 AM