



## Jim Sunstrom

February 17, 1938 - February 1, 2008

James Albin Sunstrom "The Old Gearjammer" was born to his parents Clyde and Frances (Uselman) Sunstrom on February 17, 1938 on a farm just north of Wadena. He passed away early on February 1st at the Lakewood Hospital in Staples. After graduating from high school Jim pursued his main love of music for years to come. He worked as a truck driver for many years but was better known as "The Old Gearjammer" on KWAD radio where he did his old time country music show. He was honored with a lifetime achievement award from the Rock and Country Music Hall of Fame in 2006. He was nominated as disc jockey of the year 2 years in a row by Lexington, KY. He was also a board member of the Country Music Association for 4 years in Minneapolis and the Traditional Music Association in Avoca, Iowa. Besides his love of music he enjoyed hunting, fishing and spending time with his family. Jim was united in marriage to Ramona Ann Preuss on July 26, 1969 in Benson, Minnesota. Jim was preceded in death by his parents; his daughter Cynthia and his granddaughter Kaitlyn. He is survived by his loving wife, Ramona; his daughter Dawn of Wadena; sons Dan & DuWayne both of Wadena; grandchildren Austen, Tiffany, Brady, Ivy, Devin, Riley, Tori & Brett; brothers Harold (Kathy) of New York Mills, Loren (Sharon) of Atopka, FL, Jerome (Donna) of Argyle and Eugene (Patty) of Bemidji; sister Shirley Farrell of Eagle Bend; and several nieces, nephews and cousins. Funeral services will be held on Tuesday, February 5th at 2:00 PM in the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Wadena with Pastor Orville Sauter officiating.

Pallbearers will be John Sunstrom, Laurie Sunstrom, Mike Vandenburghe, Myron Vandenburghe, Nicholas Sunstrom, Rick Youngbauer, and Ronny Vandenburghe as honorary pallbearer. Interment will take place in the Wadena Cemetery.

# Tribute Wall

SR

“ *To the Family of Jim Sunstrom*

*My deepest sympathies go out to the entire family of Jim. He was a great guy that always had a humorous side to any difficult situation. But then he never needed a difficult situation to show us his humor. Trust me, I know this first hand. On his radio show one Saturday morning, he made sure that I would be listening, then he went on and on about this guy he knew from Montana, and the way he related to our wooly friend, the sheep. Then he dedicated about three or four songs about sheep to me. OVER THE RADIO, for thousands of people to hear. Yeah, I was embarrassed. But more so, I was elated that he took a little time out of his schedule like that, to do something special. Something that I, and all that heard it, will remember. And that was only one instance of several for me, and only one of thousands for all of us, of the way that he and his humor got our goad a little, but made up the special memmories we all have of Jim, and will remember of him, and will share of him in the days ahead.*

*We will all miss you Gearjammer  
Steve*

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**Steve Resch** - February 01, 2008 at 12:00 AM

BL

“ Just wanted to say that Jim was a dad to me and I will miss him dearly. He first taught me how to two step and has always been there. From rocking Devin when he was colicky to being Devin's caretaker for a few years. Devin will always remember coffee and cookies with grandpa and wrestling.. They spent alot of time together. I wouldn't of made it through a few rough years if it wasn't for Mona and Jim. He also became a surrogate grandfather to my other son, Brett, and that will always be in my heart. We love you Jim, grandpa. Always.

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**Betsy Larson** - February 01, 2008 at 12:00 AM

SL

“ It has been an honor and a privilege for me to know Jim. In just having a friendship with him or as a co-worker, Jim always cared about everyone.

We have missed his voice on the air for a few years now, but you can bet that he is already assembling a group of musicians in heaven and grabbing that microphone so he can make all those he is now sharing his time with enjoy his wonderful humor and great ear for music. Jim had so many followers it was hard to keep track of. I have a relative living in Wilmar which is outside of that KWAD listening area, but when Jim was on the air, he would hop in his pickup and drive north to catch the Ol Gear Jammer..... talk about a loyal listener.... for those 4 hours he would do that every Saturday that it was possible. I call that a great big compliment to Jim.... he entertained....plain and simple.

Thank you Mona, Dawn, Danny and Dwayne for sharing him with me and with the world. Keep your memories and share them often, but always remember that God's newest angel is now Walking among the greats that he admired so.

God Bless you always,

Sherry

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**Sherry (Spencer) Linnes** - February 01, 2008 at 12:00 AM

MO

“ My deepest sympathy to all of you. May God Bless You all. Jim will be remembered for a long time!

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**Melodie Olson** - February 01, 2008 at 12:00 AM

LH

“ *Dear Mona and Family,*

*A few weeks have passed since Jim's death, but it is still hard for me to accept. Jim was bigger than life. Working with him was a pleasure. He always had a joke to share. Jim's down home country show was such a joy to listen to. You could tell that he was doing what he truly loved. Music was a big part of his life and he shared that gift with so many lucky people. Jim usually made me laugh, but on one occasion that I remember vividly, I was able to make him laugh. I had nominated Jim as employee of the month when Kommerstad Communcations owned the radio stations. Anyway, one day after he was told he was employee of the month, he stopped by my desk and sat down. We were visiting as we sometimes did before he went on the air. He said " I wonder who's butt I need to kiss for this honor?" With a smile on my face, I stood up, turned around and bent over in front of him. He let out quite a cackle! I will miss Jim. I know many people will. I feel blessed to have gotten the opportunity to work with him and get to know him as a friend.....enjoy your many precious memories of him. He was a strong and courageous man, and proved it to the very end.*

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**LuAnn Holt** - February 01, 2008 at 12:00 AM