

Robert "Bobby Joe" Joseph Willeke

Robert "Bobby Joe" Joseph Willeke was born the son of Donna Wuebker and Donald Willeke in Carroll, Iowa, on August 23, 1955, and died unexpectedly at his home on Nov. 4, 2002, at the age of 47.

"Bobby," as he was known, moved to Dexter one week after his birth and lived there his whole life. He graduated from Dexter High School in 1974. During high school, Bobby was very active in the wrestling program and advanced to the State Wrestling Tournament. He went to Lincoln Technical College in Des Moines and graduated in 1976 with honors. Bobby and Jaci Menke were married in Adel, Iowa, on April 19, 1991.

Bobby joined the Dexter Fire Department in 1972 and served as fire chief for 18 of his 30 years on the department. He was employed as a mechanic with the Iowa Department of Transportation, working out of the DeSoto and Greenfield shops. He was also a salesman for the Feld Fire Equipment Co. of Carroll, selling everything from fire trucks, to boots, to axes for 15 years. He also worked part-time at his father's service station for more than 40 years.

Bobby loved the fire department and first responders. He especially enjoyed fire schools and conventions. He was always eager to grab the hose for a good "water fight" at any local contest, as well as at the State Fair. He spent many a hot day at the State Fair's "Hall of Flame" in a Smokey the Bear suit shaking hands with children. When he died, Bobby was serving as a councilman for the city of Dexter.

Bobby's memory lives on in the hearts and minds of his family: wife, Jaci, and his parents, Don and Donna, all of Dexter; sisters Anne Tigges of Redfield, and Barbara (Tim) Brown of Des Moines; step-daughters Christine (Brett) Mull of Henderson, NV, and Sonya Powers of Fort Dodge; daughter Cindy (Rob) Brown of San Antonio, TX; six grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, friends and a very large number of fellow firefighters. He was preceded in death by a grandson Ryan Mull.