



## Charles Vanneste

December 2, 2024

Charles “Chuck” Vanneste, 79, of Brown City, Michigan passed away on December 2nd, after a brief illness, with his wife Reta by his side in Troy, Michigan, just weeks shy of his 80th birthday.

Mr. Vanneste was born on January 5th, 1945 to Charles and Helen Vanneste in Detroit, Michigan.

Chuck lived a life of adventure. In his younger years he rode bulls, raced cars, had his pilots license, and even played semi-pro football. He especially enjoyed sailing and equestrian activities. He was a cowboy in the truest sense of the word, and he lived life to the fullest.

Chuck was always drawn to animals, and when he met Reta, their combined love for animals led them to found Summer Wind Farms Sanctuary in 1992. They rescued countless animals in need, ranging from large carnivores to non-human primates before they retired.. Through the sanctuary, they were also able to touch the lives of the many volunteers who worked there over the years.

Chuck was never happier than when he was helping animals, or other people, and he dearly loved his farm. Due to his extreme love for animals, his arrival at The Rainbow Bridge was surely met with a stampede of animals who were

waiting for him on the other side.

Those who were fortunate enough to know Chuck would say he was a kind hearted, hardworking animal lover who was always there to help a loved one, and sometimes even complete strangers, in need. He was brave, and so very strong. Some of his accomplishments even defied belief, like the time he saved a young cashier's life after a runaway car crashed into her place of employment and crushed her between the register and a coin machine. Chuck lifted the entire coin machine off her and saved her life. But that was just who Chuck was. If there was something that needed fixing, he would fix it. If there was a soul, human or animal, who needed help, he would help them. He was larger than life, and if you were lucky enough to spend any time with him, you'll never forget his wild stories, of which there were many.

The family wants to extend a heartfelt thank you to the nurses and staff at Troy, Beaumont hospital for the care, kindness and dedication they showed Chuck during his final days. They helped make a devastating situation a little easier.

Chuck is survived by his wife Reta, his brother Gerald, his daughters Dawn, Julie and Kelly (Chris), his sons Charles "Chucky" and Gary (Rene), and his grandchildren Jennifer, Kyle, Flynn, Makenzie, Meridith, Gavin, Lillian, Jaden, Mason and Mia, as well as many extended family members and spouses.

The information for his Celebration of Life will be announced at a later date.

# Tribute Wall



“ When I think of Chuck, I think of him smiling taking young visitors out to view the animals. He was a positive light that drew people to him. The world is a little less bright. I remember my volunteer days with such delight and a special opportunity. Chuck loved his family and his animals. He will be missed.

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**Stacy Hearts Fritz** - January 01, 2025 at 10:46 PM

RV

“ I was 28 years old when I met Chuck and scared to death of that big crazy guy with the big giant house but I had to get to know him because my sister and niece and nephew were moving there. Turns out he was the best thing that ever happened to them and they were him!!! He was not scary at all! Jack of all trades. He truly could not only bring home the bacon, he could raise it and cook it too. Chuck and Reta gave so many of us the opportunity to experience things that we probably never will again. I'm convinced that there wasn't anything that Chuck couldn't do. You worked hard Chuck and I wish for you to rest in peace and please keep your arms around your family. I know that they made you proud 💖 Reta, I know Chuck is so proud of you the kids and grandkids and the way you all took care of him and made him feel loved and cared about. Chuck sure left so many memories for so many!!!

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**Ruth V** - December 16, 2024 at 03:01 PM

ER

“ Chuck was always the calm in the storm. It was truly an honor to know him, and call him family even though it was chosen vs by blood. The world is a little bit darker without his shining light in it.

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**Erica** - December 11, 2024 at 08:56 PM

JS

“ Chuck was one of, if not the smartest man I had the pleasure of learning a thing, or two from about the value of working hard .. He definitely had a big heart .. you will be missed deeply by all !! Thank you sir for all the adventures..

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**Justin Stanton** - December 11, 2024 at 06:58 PM