



## Lowell D. Corbin

June 16, 1934 - December 19, 2018

Lowell Dean Corbin of Cadillac gently passed away Wednesday, December 19, 2018 at his Pheasant Ridge home amid familiar friends and surroundings. He was born in Newaygo County, June 16, 1934, on the kitchen table of an employee house on Hardy Dam.

He was the youngest of four brothers: Garth, Bill, and Dick; nine years later a sister, Sandra was born. Lowell's father (Ivan Victor Corbin) was an operating engineer at the Hardy dam, having been a crane operator during the dam's construction. His Mother (Jennie Leonne Davis) was a rural school teacher. One might say that Lowell's 'stiff upper lip' in difficult circumstances came from his father's English ancestry. And there can be little doubt that his love of choral singing came from the Welsh side.

While Lowell was still an infant, his father took a similar position at the nearby Croton Dam. There, in rural Michigan, in the 30's and 40's Lowell grew up as what today is sometimes called a 'free range' child. His descriptions of those days make them sound idyllic and photos of the time show a barefoot, suntanned clone of Tom Sawyer. Or maybe Huck Finn, as Lowell had Huck's combination of a mischievous nature and a very good heart.

In 1941 Lowell's brothers went off to war leaving Lowell, at the age of 7, to be his father's 'Ægopher', apprentice, and right-hand man. During this time in his life Lowell acquired experience in a multitude of trades.

To this he added a knowledge of electronics when he became a licensed ham at the age of 15.

This early experience served him well in his personal and professional life. After a brief time at MSU, Lowell enlisted in the Air Force and was stationed at Harlingen Air Force Base in Texas and Westover Air Reserve Base in Massachusetts. After the Air Force, Lowell returned to Lansing and worked for the Michigan National Guard servicing radar and communications equipment throughout the state.

He remained in the Lansing area for the rest of his work career, working for a number of contractors before finding work with GM, first as an electrician, then an electrical supervisor and finally as a skilled trades supervisor. The circumstances of his work life and obligations of his first marriage resulted in Lowell's alienation from his family and from the Up North life he had so loved as a child. During these years he found little time for his Ham Radio hobby.

However, one brief contact by CW (Morse code) in 1984 resulted in a commitment to regular on-the-air meetings with NI9R, Robin, a ham in Wisconsin. Since the code was exchanged at 20 words per minute, the relationship grew slowly, but ripened into a very strong and caring relationship. They were married on Groundhog Day in 1991 and every year Lowell announced that he was going to look for his shadow to see if he'd go another year.

Lowell carried fond school memories when he left Newaygo County, but had little contact with the old home area for a number of years.

After his retirement in 2000 Lowell returned to his roots, accompanied by his second wife, Robin. For the next 15 years the couple worked together to change a worn-out Scotch pine plantation in Lake County into a lovely country home complete with a tiny cabin nestled among a stand of red pines, with a large fire pit area that served as an ideal place for picnics, class reunions, and poetry around the fire with their book club.

In recent years Lowell's declining eyesight made this life impractical so he and Robin moved to Cadillac where they have enjoyed the love of dear friends and the fellowship of a treasured church community.

Lowell was always a sociable and active person. He was somewhat of a joiner and when he joined he participated and, often as not, he was soon a leader. During his growing up years he participated in 4H. Later he was a scout leader. He was a life-long bird watcher and served several years on the board of the Michigan Audubon Society. Photography and star gazing were also favorite activities of his.

As his vision declined, participation in many activities was severely curtailed, but he always found a way to keep on the air, occasionally by voice, but mostly using his beloved International Morse Code.

Even those who only met Lowell briefly were struck by his kind and non-judgmental nature. Those who knew him over a span of years often saw how this kindness and slowness to judge helped to bring about compromise, healing and forgiveness where there had been only conflict and anger.

Lowell is survived by his wife Robin; a daughter, Elizabeth (Decker of Los Gatos, CA), his sister Sandra Garn (Terry), numerous nieces and nephews, and other children with whom he has long been estranged.

He was preceded in death by his daughter Annette Ouderkirk of Fort Myers, FL.

No specific time for a memorial service has been set, and for now all are encouraged to continue celebrating the season of Advent.

Lowell would be pleased and honored if thoughts of him prompted you to contribute to First Congregational Church of Cadillac, the Michigan Audubon Society, or your favorite charity that, in your mind, honors the things for which Lowell stood.

An online guestbook is available at [www.petersonfh.com](http://www.petersonfh.com).

# Tribute Wall

IC

“ Dear Aunt Robin,

*It's wonderful to read the various tributes here about Uncle Lowell. I couldn't add much other than it was so good to get closer to you both over the last 30 years. We were all blessed to know him. See you in May!*

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**Ivan Corbin** - March 11, 2019 at 04:49 PM

MM

“ Robin, I am holding you in the light as you live more fully into the loss of your beloved companion and spouse. I give thanks that you have a close knit church family holding and upholding you in the days to come.

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**Melanie Morrison** - January 04, 2019 at 06:59 PM

D1

“ Lowell was my boss at Lansing Fisher body for a couple of years. He was a GREAT boss and was there if you had a issue on a job and helped resolve what ever the issue was. He was the type of guy you could set and talk to about anything. He will be missed. Prayers coming to his family. May he R.I.P.

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**Don Perry 1/4/19** - January 04, 2019 at 05:28 PM

NG

“ Robin, holding you close to my heart in the knowledge that your wonderful memories and strong faith will continue to support you, as will our wonderful friends at First Congregational Church. My love to you. Nancy

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**Nancy Glander** - December 22, 2018 at 10:12 AM

JB

“ I did not know Mr Corbin, but appreciated reading his obituary and the story of his birth and childhood at Hardy and Croton Dams. I oversaw the land at the dams until my retirement from Consumers in 2012. One of the projects I am quite proud of was the creation in 2002 of a township park at the site where the Operator Homes once stood. A display showing and recalling the Operators Homes was an important part of the project. Anyone can visit the Operator's Village Park in Big Prairie Township today to see the site. It was an idyllic childhood setting and I appreciate you describing it in the remembrance. My sympathy on your loss.

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**James Bernier** - December 21, 2018 at 11:30 PM

LH

“ We love you, Dear.

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**Lisa and John Hauck** - December 21, 2018 at 03:26 PM

LD

“ Oh, Robin, we are so sorry to hear of Lowell's death. He was always so kind and friendly to us. Our hearts go out to you as we know what a dedicated and loving spouse you were. Our sincere sympathy, Jim and Linda Dishman

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**Linda and Jim Dishman** - December 21, 2018 at 08:33 AM