

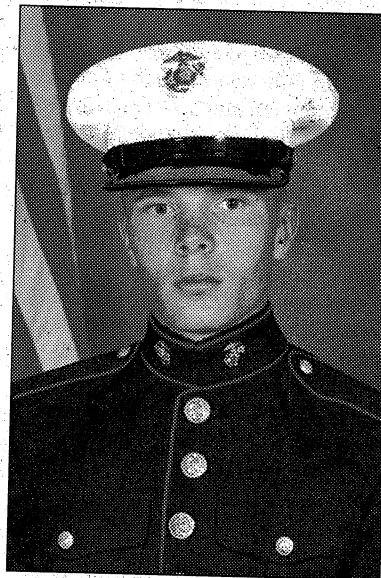
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## Gary 'Lil Gary' Leon Caldwell

Gary "Lil Gary" Leon Caldwell, 58, of Grinnell, Iowa, passed away on Saturday March 25, 2023, at his home, under the care of UnityPoint Grinnell Regional Hospice, due to a brave battle with cancer.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 1, 2023, at the Smith Funeral Home in Grinnell. Visitation will be held prior to the service at the funeral home beginning at 9:30 a.m. There will be a Celebration of Life gathering immediately following the service at the Poweshiek County Fairgrounds building. All are encouraged to attend and tell any memories or funny stories they have about Gary.



The burial of Gary's cremated remains will be held at Shaul Cemetery in Ottumwa, Iowa, at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be designated to the Gary Caldwell Memorial Fund to benefit local organizations and mailed in care of the Smith Funeral Home and Crematory, PO Box 368, Grinnell, IA 50112. Memories and condolences may be shared with Gary's family online at [www.smithfh.com](http://www.smithfh.com).

Gary was born on July 20, 1964, in Ottumwa, Iowa, to Gary O. and Janice (Van Tassel) Caldwell. He graduated from Ottumwa High School in 1982. Gary entered the United States Marine Corps right after graduation. He was stationed at Camp Pendleton as a Fuel Specialist. He also served at MCAS El Toro and Camp Fuji, Japan, from 1985-1986 with Range Company. After leaving the military, he spent his career serving and protecting others. He worked as a Reserve Deputy for Wapello County, a jailer for Mahaska County, was Chief of Police for the city of Eddyville, and was a Correctional Officer for the State of Iowa. When Gary became ill, he was working as a Shift Supervisor for Grinnell College Dept. of Campus Safety, which he really enjoyed.

Gary was married to Christine Myers in 1982, but they later divorced. On November 30, 1998, Gary married Kelly Hardy (Utoft), the love of his life. They would have celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary this year. In the later years, Gary and Kelly lived in Newton, Iowa, and finally settled to Grinnell, Iowa.

Gary enjoyed spending time with his family, playing all types of games, especially dice games, watching his western, war, police, and paranormal T.V. shows, golfing, traveling, riding his motorcycle, and always liked to learn about history.

Gary is survived by his wife, Kelly Caldwell of Grinnell; brothers, Douglas (Tammy) Caldwell and Todd (Julia) Caldwell; sister, Carrie (Aaron) Chadwick; mother-in-law, Dianna Hartman; father-in-law, Dennis (Shannon) Utoft; brothers-in-law, Brian (Mary) Utoft, Mark (Toni) Utoft and Ben (Monica) Utoft; aunts and uncles; and many cousins. Last, but certainly not least, are his nieces and nephews, whom held a special place in his heart. Gary was preceded in death by his daughter, Kelsey Hardy; his parents; his niece, Lisa; his grandparents; and his beloved dogs, Margie and Graham.

A special thank you to Dr. Dan Buroker, his nurses, and staff at both Des Moines and Newton cancer center locations, as well as UnityPoint Hospice in Grinnell.