

In Loving Memory of

David John Abernathy

April 4, 1946 ~ October 10, 2024

Wake Services

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Fort Thompson, SD

7:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 15, 2024

Funeral Service

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Fort Thompson, SD

1:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 16, 2024

Officiating

Fr. Jean Claude SCJ

Deacon Steve McLaughlin

Fr. Christianus Hendrik SCJ

Florentine Blue Thunder

Casketbearers

John Wayne Abernathy

Austin Abernathy

Gregory Pickner Jr.

David Abernathy Jr.

Adrian Abernathy

Killian Petersen

James Medicine Horn

Marisa Abernathy

Honorary Bearers

Lyle Grabin

Allen Keyser

Rich Coleman

Tommy Fogg

Scott Shields

Tim Hendricks

Brett Abernathy

James Alberts

Kenny Wulff

Steve Abernathy

Jack Abernathy

Kenneth "Butch" Hopkins Jr.

Mandy Rockwood

Eric Stebbins

Josh White

Frances Thompson

Butch and Belle Jacobsen

Johnny Hopkins

Dianne Juba

Loretta Rabbit Hawk

Travis Stebbins

Dean Peter

Marshall "Ho-Ho" Gourneau

And all of his many relatives and friends.

Interment

Lakeview Cemetery, Fort Thompson, SD

Arrangements By: *Hickey Funeral Home, Chamberlain, SD*

*God saw you getting tired
And a cure was not to be
So he put his arms around you
And whispered, "Come with me".*

*With tearful eyes we watched you
And saw you pass away
And although we love you dearly
We could not make you stay*

*A Golden heart stopped beating
Hard working hands at rest.
God broke our hearts to prove to us
He only takes the best.*

David John Abernathy, 78, began his journey to the Spirit World on October 10, 2024, while at home on the Crow Creek Reservation and after courageously facing cancer for two years. His wife of 50 years, Sandy, was by his side.

David John Abernathy, or John, as he preferred to be called, was born in Miller on April 4, 1946, to Floyd and Marion (Clough) Abernathy. He told his mother at a young age that his name was John, not David.

John grew up on the family ranch in rural Gann Valley, attending grades 1 through 8 at Prairie Center, a one-room schoolhouse, then transitioning to Gann Valley High School, or “Gavalhi,” where he was a star athlete, excelling in most sports, including football, basketball and track.

Following high school, John trekked across the United States with one of his good buddies, exploring the country and taking a break from rural life. He also spent time working with his brother-in-law, Jim Stebbins, driving semitrucks in New York.

On June 14, 1974, John married Sandy Hopkins in Pierre, having a full-fledged wedding ceremony in Fort Thompson a short time later. John and Sandy raised 10 children together, starting out on a ranch near Gann Valley. Throughout the life they made together, John and Sandy also raised grandchildren and took in “strays,” as he called them, other individuals who became like family members.

John’s main profession was farming/ranching, taking over the family operation after his father died suddenly in 1975. He owned cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens and horses and always planted a vegetable garden and potato field, as well as other crops, during his time on the family land. John took special pride in the dairy cows he raised, producing milk, cream, butter and ice cream for his family and others.

Throughout his life, John remained a true farmer/rancher and was an expert sheepshearer, working both for himself and for other farmers and ranchers. He was also a dedicated employee of the Chamberlain Sale Barn for years.

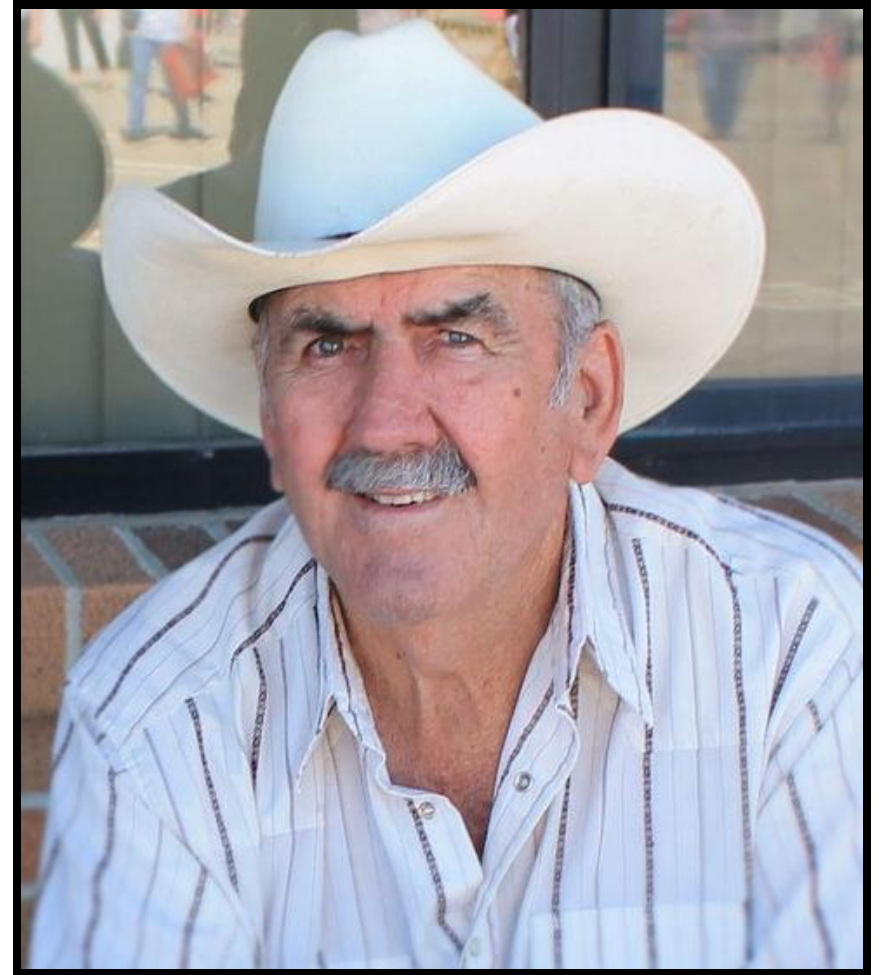
In the early 1990s, John began his secondary career as a bartender and bar manager, first at the Golden Buffalo Casino in Lower Brule, on the Lower Brule Reservation, when the establishment was brand new, then at the Lode Star Casino in Fort Thompson, on the Crow Creek Reservation. Many of John’s employees, coworkers and patrons dubbed him the “best bartender around” and always enjoyed hearing him yell “Hot damn!” and ringing the bell any time he received a tip for his consistently excellent service.

John loved to tell jokes and stories; had a memorable sense of humor; loved to sing; was an outstanding dancer; loved to read and watch Westerns; was an exceptional cardplayer; and was a hard worker and genuine jack of all trades who could do almost anything he put his mind to. Above all else, John was honest, humble, patient and dedicated to his family. He was one tough cowboy – “Big Bad John” – who was always willing to lend a hand to others, no matter how great or small the need.

Forever grateful for having shared in his life are his wife, Sandy; special great-grandsons, Dakota Fallis Jr. and Harper Fallis; sons, Jesse Kirkie Abernathy, of Eagle Butte; Terry (Serena) Abernathy, of Fort Thompson; David (Helen) Abernathy Sr., of Pukwana; Marsden Abernathy, of Aberdeen; and Merrill Abernathy, of Chamberlain; daughters, Audra (James) Alberts, of Pukwana; Marisa Abernathy, of Chamberlain; LaRae (Josh) White, of Box Elder; and Charise Abernathy (Eugene Giago), of Rapid City; brother, Jim (Carol) Abernathy, of Maple Valley, Washington; sisters, Mary (Ron) Hendricks, of rural Gann Valley; Connie (Jim) Stebbins, of Pukwana; and Janet Reuer, of Chamberlain; and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, other relatives and friends too numerous to name.

John was preceded in death by his son, Timothy “Tim” Fallis; special grandsons, Shane Fallis and Dakota Fallis Sr.; brothers, Bernie Abernathy and Rich Abernathy; sisters, Dorothy Schulte, Leona Jacobsen and Marcia Knight; granddaughter, Sierra Abernathy; and parents, Floyd and Marion Abernathy.

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