

David Allan Sorby was born on July 13, 1954, the youngest child of Gayle and Vivian Sorby. At the time, he was the last to carry on the Sorby name—a legacy that continues today through his family, including his oldest grandson, Gage Sorby.

From the very beginning, Dave showed a spirited and curious nature. At just 18 months old, while within arm's reach of his mother as she washed clothes, he slipped his thumb under the piston of a pump. It was an accident that would stay with him for life, earning him the nickname Dave "One Thumb" Sorby.

Not long after his second birthday, another childhood mishap added to his story. His sister Barb gave him a "buck on a bike"—with Dave sitting on the seat, barefoot, while she stood pedaling and steering. In the process, his right big toe became caught in the bike's sprocket. From that day forward, Dave lived with one thumb and one big toe. These moments became more than memories—they turned into lasting family lessons: no "bucks on a bike," and no riding without proper shoes. Safety, in all forms, became a principle Dave carried with him and instilled in his children—though they occasionally tested those rules just to get a reaction.

Between his "bull in a china shop" years and his late teens, Dave built a lifetime of memories he would often revisit with a smile. He cherished trips to Campers Paradise with the Fladeboe's and Ferguson's, as well as northbound journeys to a lake cabin with the Skoglund's. Among his most treasured times were those spent at Green Lake, where his family had various homes over the years. There never seemed to be enough time for boating, swimming, water skiing, and of course, fishing—sometimes casual, sometimes competitive, always with bragging rights on the line.

As the seasons changed, so did his adventures. Fall brought duck hunting with Steven, Stacy, and friends. Winter was filled with ice fishing and snowmobiling, fueling his lifelong love of excitement and the outdoors. When Dave spoke of these years, he often emphasized that he had lived a full life—one without regret and rich with experiences he would never trade.

No matter the holiday, Dave made sure his children experienced the same joy he did. Even if it meant making four extra trips to the store for Halloween candy, he refused to let a single child leave his door empty-handed. That generosity reflected the love and memories that shaped him—traditions he was determined to carry forward.

Dave graduated from Willmar High School in the class of 1972. Afterward, he began working for his father at Little Crow Electric. He later accepted a position with the City of Spicer in 1984, where he also served as a dedicated member of the Spicer Volunteer Fire Department for 12 years, earning a plaque of appreciation for his service. Dave faced dangerous fires and helped save lives along the way.

For those who knew him, it was clear that Dave's heart belonged to the fire service. As a young boy, he chased fire trucks, inspired by their bravery. In time, he lived that dream—riding in and driving those very trucks in service to others. Even later in life, he never lost that sense of pride and respect, always following the sound of sirens with his eyes and his heart.

In 1985, Dave moved to Eagan, Minnesota, with his wife, Bonnie Sorby of Willmar. There, he began working for the City of Mendota Heights as a Street Supervisor, dedicating many years to the Streets Department until his retirement. He also continued his firefighting service, first in Spicer and later in Eagan, where he served for 10 years. Through dedication and leadership, he rose to the ranks of Lieutenant and Captain.

One of Dave's greatest passions as a firefighter was teaching youth in the community. He took immense pride in educating others about fire safety, leaving a lasting impact on those he mentored. He retired from firefighting in 2000 after moving to Cannon Falls.

As his family grew, Dave embraced a quieter but equally meaningful chapter of life. His oldest son, Paul, joined the U.S. Marine Corps, while his younger children, Scott and Beth, pursued their own paths into adulthood. Both carried forward Dave's values of community, safety, and a sense of adventure.

Dave loved the outdoors and shared that passion with his family. Nearly every weekend, he and Bonnie took their children camping across Minnesota's campgrounds and state parks. He was a constant presence in their lives—attending dance recitals, sporting events, and every milestone in between. As a grandfather, he found immense pride and joy, always eager to hear updates and marvel at how quickly his grandchildren were growing. His children fondly remember that his "long goodbyes" always ended the same way: "Tell those grandkids I love them and miss them."

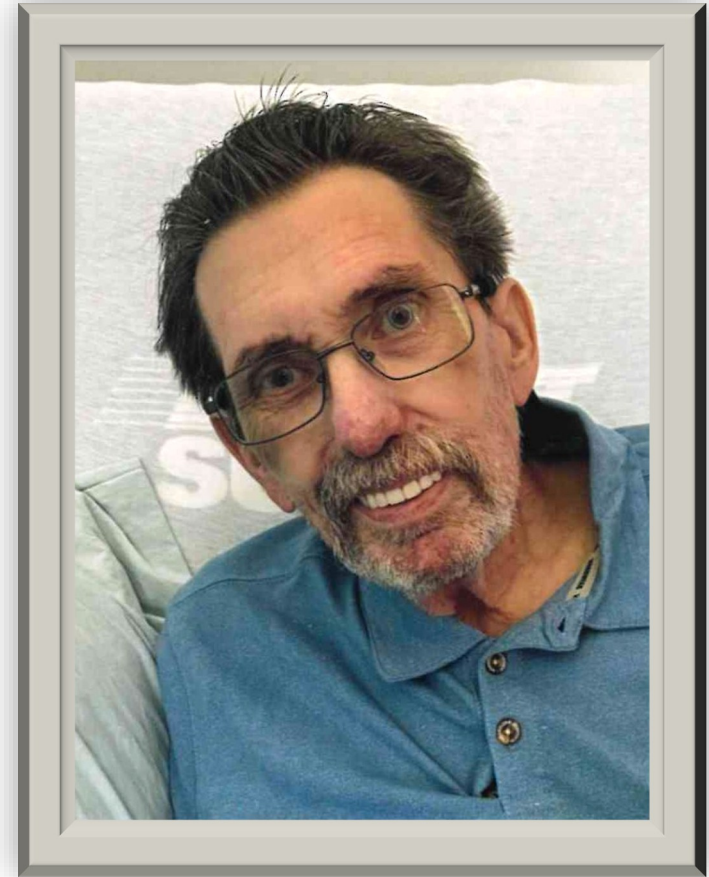
Dave later remarried Diane Anderson, and they shared 20 years together in Hampton and Hastings, Minnesota. Even after a work-related injury around 2009 forced him into retirement, Dave kept busy with small "Mr. Fix-it" projects for friends and family. He rarely missed a NASCAR race, Sunday golf on TV, or a Minnesota Vikings game.

Dave had a deep love for people. He was always ready to lend a hand—and to tell a "short story" that inevitably became a long one. His humor was unforgettable, filled with jokes, laughter, sarcasm, and a sharp wit that brought joy to those around him.

In his later years, Dave faced challenges, but he continued to make the best of every day. He enjoyed spending time with friends, watching game shows like *The Price Is Right*, and visiting his favorite local spots. He had a rare gift for making people laugh, smile, and feel genuinely loved. It was often said that there was no one who didn't like Dave—and just as true, there was no one he ever chose to dislike. He took pride in saying he never hated anyone.

On February 10, 2026, Dave's life changed suddenly and unexpectedly. Though he had faced ongoing health concerns, this moment marked a difficult turning point. His daughter Beth became his constant advocate and companion, rarely leaving his side. She ensured he received the best care possible, offering not only strength and organization, but also warmth, laughter, and love—even bringing him his favorite raspberry sorbet from Cosetta's. No matter what was needed or unspokenly needed she was there by his bedside ensuring he did not have to walk this new journey alone that truly broke his heart. Beth ensured that her dad always received the best of the best care even if she had to pull out her Sorby attitude that wanted to make anyone run for the hills. Dave found great pride in being able to be buried in his family plot that his Grandfather purchased in the early 1900's. Dave was closest to his mom and will be laid to rest in his oldest sons fire boot at the feet of his Beloved Mother, Vivian Sorby.

# *Celebrating the Life of*



## *David A. Sorby*

1954 — 2026

## ***Prayer for a Firefighter***

*When I am called to duty, God,  
whenever flames may rage,  
give me strength to save a life,  
whatever be its age.  
Help me embrace a little child  
before it is too late,  
or save an older person from  
the horror of that fate.  
Enable me to be alert,  
and hear the weakest shout,  
quickly and efficiently  
to put the fire out.*

*To Spicer and Atwater fire departments:*

*Thank You for the honor you are showing our family by escorting  
our dad to his final resting place. We will never forget the  
respect you are giving him on this final journey home.*

*Thank you as well to your families for sharing your time with us today.*

*The sacrifices made by fire service families never go unnoticed,  
and we are deeply grateful. In honor of our dad,  
a donation will be made to both departments.*

In Loving Memory Of

# *David Allan Sorby*

July 13, 1954

Willmar, Minnesota

April 16, 2026

New London, Minnesota

### **Celebration of Life Service**

Friday, May 1, 2026 - 11:00 a.m.

Peterson Brothers Funeral Home

Willmar, Minnesota

### **Officiant**

Chaplain Lisa Lynott-Carroll

Moments Hospice

### **Scripture**

Psalms 23 & John 16:22

### **Music**

*"The Old Rugged Cross"* - Alan Jackson

*"Amazing Grace"* - Alan Jackson

*"Cow Girls Don't Cry"* - Brooks and Dunn

### **Honorary Pallbearers**

Spicer Fire Department

Atwater Fire Department

### **Interment**

Union Cemetery

Atwater, Minnesota