

Throughout the years, Butch enjoyed snowmobile trips with his children and grandchildren, duck and pheasant hunting trips with his son Brady and sharing his love for hunting and fishing with his son Rudy. He proudly taught his children and grandchildren how to fish, drive boats and snowmobiles.

At the marina, Butch worked every job—from bussing, cleaning to solving problems - many people didn't even realize he owned the place. He lived by "leave it better than you found it," (especially the bathrooms) and to this day, for many, it's hard to walk past a tangled hose without fixing it. You would often hear Butch say "If you have time to lean, you have time to clean" or "I worked a half day today, 12 hours!" and reminded his employees of the importance of the phrase, "My Pleasure". He believed in doing things right, was very generous in quiet, behind the scenes ways, never seeking recognition. He loved the underdog and was described as the silent wind in your sail – nudging you forward when you didn't think you could keep going.

Butch was most proud of his work ethic. He leaves behind a legacy built on VALUES, ENTHUSIASM, DISCIPLINE and ENDURANCE. This legacy was not just spoken but lived by Butch. The business he built gained national recognition and was a leader in the marine industry. The life he built was filled with love for his family, his community and the people that worked alongside him. Butch was proud to have made his success the "old-fashioned way" – hard work. From humble beginnings, he built a lasting legacy.

Butch passed away peacefully on January 6, 2026, at his home surrounded by his wife and children.

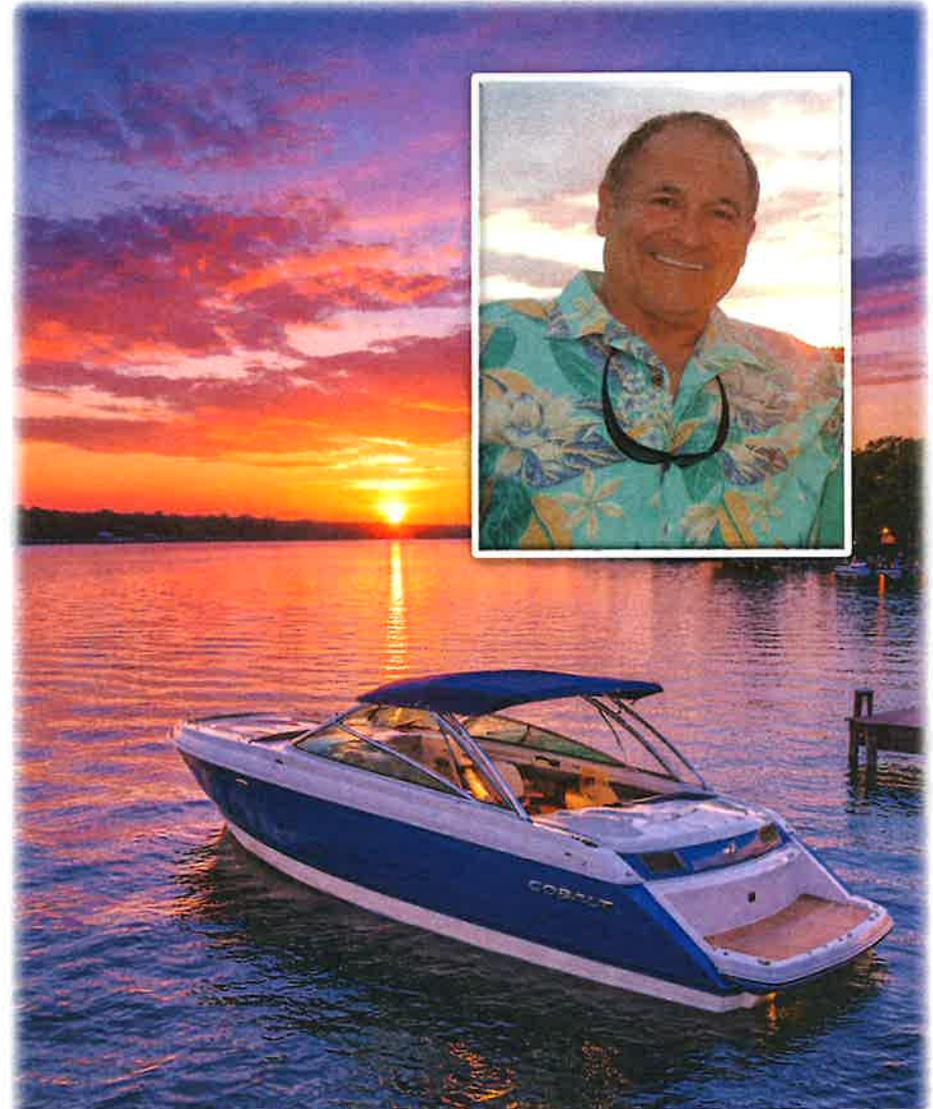
He is survived by his wife Debbie Parks and their son, Rudy Parks; children Stephanie (Dan Cranston) Parks, Jennifer (Matt) Johnson and Brady (Lisa) Parks; grandchildren Charlie Duncan, Emily (Seth) Feller, Alison Duncan, Joe Parks, Jack Johnson and Audrey Johnson; great-grandchildren Bo Feller, Bella Halbur, Mae Feller and Sadie Halbur; siblings Mary Parks Mix, John (Melanie) Parks, and Tom (Deb) Parks; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law Angie (Andy) Sipple, Nancy (Grant) Marquardt, and brother-in-law Jim Wittrock; numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents Leo and Mildred Parks; sisters Sharon Parks Hruby and Janie Parks Wittrock; father and mother-in-law, Kenny and Anne Hansen.

**Pour yourself a tall Absolut Diet Squirt and raise your glass to Butch.
"See you next time!"**

Turner Jenness Funeral Home

Spirit Lake - Milford - Lake Park



*In Loving Memory
Butch Parks*

March 4, 1944 - January 6, 2026

In Loving Memory Of
Butch Parks

March 4, 1944 – January 6, 2026

Funeral Service

St. Mary's Catholic Church
Spirit Lake, Iowa

Friday, January 16, 2026 2:00 PM

Clergy

Father David Hemann
Father Brian Hughes

Music

Hey Jude

Tristan Marquardt, musician

How Great Thou Art

Irish Blessing

Father David Hemann, musician

I Love

Tom T. Hall, recording

Pallbearers

Joe Wittrock Tristan Marquardt Joe Parks
Jack Johnson Randy Kafer Jamie Johnson
Darren Anderson Scott Werner

Final Resting Place

Lakeview Gardens Cemetery
Okoboji, Iowa

**The Parks family invites all that knew Butch to a party on Friday,
January 16th at Snappers in Okoboji. Doors open at 5:00 PM –
please wear your favorite Barefoot apparel in memory of Butch.**

Leo Ralph Parks - better known as "Butch" - was born March 4, 1944, to Ralph Leo Parks, Sr. and Mildred Ruth (Groves) Parks. He grew up on Dixon Beach in Okoboji graduated Arnolds Park High School as an original "park rat". As a teen, he worked at Fisherman's Wharf peeling potatoes, built docks and worked at The Inn. Later he attended refrigeration and air conditioning school.

Butch was previously married and had three children, Stephanie, Jenny and Brady, who were raised on a farm near Spirit Lake. They spent many years raising pigs, farrow to finish. Butch also worked as a milkman for Wells Blue Bunny and later at John Morrell in Estherville.

He had a passion for snowmobiling and speed, and it wasn't uncommon for that passion to help pay the bills. If you were at the right place on a Saturday night, you might see him betting that he had the fastest sled—or ending up in an arm-wrestling match with a side wager involved. In the summers, Butch would compete in demolition derbies at county fairs. He was also known as the first person in the Lakes area to "shoot the bridge," which, depending on who you ask, was either legendary or absolutely nuts.

His snowmobile racing led to drag and oval racing across the region. In 1976, Butch suffered a life-changing crash and endured months of surgeries and recovery. Still a hog farmer, he was humbled and grateful for friends and neighbors who helped keep the farm going. During this time, he trapped muskrats and built furniture in his shop. After some time, he made the decision to amputate his leg. This changed his world, but it did not change his heart, his grit or determination. He didn't slow down - he simply reinvented himself. Even with one leg and three kids, he planted over 1,000 trees on the farm after disease wiped out the originals - because that's what he did, he rebuilt. He would often start his day saying, "I get to go to work today".

On September 1, 1983, Butch purchased Gibson Boatworks and renamed it Parks Marina, launching the legacy that would help shape Okoboji. His father Leo Senior worked at the marina with Butch until his death, some of Butch's greatest times with his dad. He later purchased Okoboji Boat Works in 2001, and in 2002, Barefoot Bar began as a small "tiki bar" and became a destination known across the world. Butch didn't just build a marina; he built a culture. He saw Okoboji as a place that families could fall in love with and was determined to provide a place that kids would enjoy and memories could be made.

Butch married Debbie on February 20, 2010, and they were blessed with a son, Rudy. They worked together side-by-side for nearly twenty six years growing the business that Butch began. They traveled often to Key West and were inspired by the island vibes so together they brought this back to the Barefoot in Okoboji. Butch loved sunsets—whether in Okoboji or Key West—and those moments brought him peace. He was also famous for his appearances at the Barefoot singing karaoke - not well, but confidently - "I Love Little Baby Ducks," sometimes dragging Debbie into singing as well.