



Merle D. "Little Moe" Tholen Jr.

June 15, 1980 - June 21, 2026

Merle D. "Little Moe" Tholen Jr., age 46, of Bonfield, passed away on Sunday, June 21, 2026 at Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee. He was born on June 15, 1980 in Kankakee, the son of Merle D. Tholen Sr. and Linda Sue Bushey. He married Tammy Morrical on August 20, 2020 at Glacier National Park.

Merle graduated from Herscher High School and Nashville Auto Diesel College. He was an employee of CSL Behring and was a former Vice President and member of the Chemical Workers Union 498C.

Little Moe was truly the life of the party, a man whose laughter, stories, and larger-than-life personality could light up any room. To him every friend was family; he was always ready to lend a hand, share advice, fix a problem, or simply make someone smile. He loved telling stories, making people laugh, and keeping everyone around him entertained. He was loved by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.

A devoted husband and loving father of four, Moe's greatest pride and joy was his family. Moe and his wife shared a love of traveling. While he often protested when another boat appeared in the driveway, he always seemed to enjoy floating on the water with a drink in hand.

Moe loved animals, especially his cat Louie. They had the same "Grumpy Bear" attitude, but those who knew them best knew they were lovable teddy

bears at heart.

Moe had a passion for adventure, outdoors, and adrenaline. His love for outdoors and his family in southern Illinois prompted him to buy a farm, which he loved to work and visited often, despite gas prices.

He loved dirt track racing and spent time racing street stock cars locally. He had a lifelong love of old cars, fixing engines, and Facebook marketplace. However, the latter was a love hate relationship as people ask too many questions or low balled his prices.

He enjoyed hunting, fishing—especially trips to Lake Erie and Southern Illinois with his father—riding ATVs and UTVs, and spending time outside. He also had passion for watching reels at full volume. Despite receiving many pairs of headphones as gifts, he simply refused to use them.

He was happiest around a flat top, grill, or smoker. His “hillbilly hibachi” was a favorite of family and friends.

Merle is survived by his wife, Tammy Morrical, of Bonfield; two sons, Christopher Tholen of Kankakee and Rylan Tholen of Bonfield; two daughters, Gabrielle Tholen of Kankakee and Scarlett Tholen of Bonfield; his mother, Linda Slabik of Gilman; one sister and brother-in-law, Karrie and Guy Pool of Onarga; one brother, Terry Whitten of Gilman; his father-in-law, Miles Morrical Sr. of Kankakee; one brother-in-law, Miles Morrical Jr.; one sister-in-law, Amy Morrical (Robert Gabriel) of Wilmington; one niece, Marissa Pool of Onarga; three nephews, Kyle Pool of Paxton, Hunter Morrical of Kankakee, and Wyatt Butler of Kankakee; and one Uncle, Wilmer and Laura Tholen of Buckley.

Merle was preceded in death by his father, Merle D. Tholen Sr.; his mother-in-law, Karen Morrical; and Louie his beloved cat. Moe was also preceded in death by his beloved recliner, a faithful companion that served him well through countless naps, stories, Romcoms, and Hallmark movies.

Though his laughter is now missed, the memories he created, the stories he

shared, and the love he gave so freely will live on in the hearts of his family and friends forever. Above all else, Moe loved his family, and that love remains his greatest legacy.

Friends and family are invited to gather and share stories, laughter, and memories of Moe on Friday, June 26, 2026, from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home in Kankakee. An additional visitation will be held from 9:00 AM until the time of the 11:00 AM funeral service on Saturday, June 27, 2026 at Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home in Kankakee. Come prepared to celebrate a life well lived, share a laugh, and remember a man who never missed an opportunity to make life interesting. Cremation rites will be accorded following the service.

Memorials may be made to family wishes.

Upcoming Events

Visitation

JUN 26. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Kankakee - Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home
1480 W. Court St.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Visitation

JUN 27. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Kankakee - Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home
1480 W. Court St.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Funeral Service

JUN 27. 11:00 AM (CT)

Kankakee - Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home
1480 W. Court St.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Tribute Wall

LD

“ Lesley Dato lit a candle in memory of Merle D. "Little Moe" Tholen Jr.



Lesley Dato - 11 minutes ago

UP

“ Uncle Gary & Aunt Pat purchased the "On Ange l's Wings" Sympathy Gift Wind Chime to Send for Funeral Or Memorial for the family of Merle D. "Little Moe" Tholen Jr..



Uncle Gary & Aunt Pat - 22 minutes ago

NB

“ Noel Burash lit a candle in memory of Merle D. "Little Moe" Tholen Jr.



Noel Burash - 1 hour ago

VJ

“ VICKIE FARREL JONES lit a candle in memory of Merle D. "Little Moe" Tholen Jr.



VICKIE FARREL JONES - 2 hours ago

SB

“ Steve Boni lit a candle in memory of Merle D.
"Little Moe" Tholen Jr.



Steve Boni - 2 hours ago

SP

“ Sherry Parks lit a candle in memory of Merle
D. "Little Moe" Tholen Jr.



Sherry Parks - 3 hours ago

JS

“ Judy Steele lit a candle in memory of Merle D.
"Little Moe" Tholen Jr.



Judy Steele - 3 hours ago