



Merle Tholen Sr.

November 5, 1952 - January 29, 2025

Merle “Big Moe” Tholen Sr., age 72, of Bonfield, passed away Wednesday, January 29, 2025 in Kankakee. Merle was born to the late George H. Tholen and Dorothy Mae (Eheart) Tholen on November 5, 1952 in Watseka, Illinois.

Merle was an avid race fan. Throughout his life he enjoyed dirt track racing. Most notably he was a member of Bryan Dunaway’s race team during the 1980’s and early 1990’s.

His love of gardening was widely known, he took pride in supplying friends and family with vegetables throughout the summer months.

Hunting and fishing was also a passion of Merle’s. He enjoyed walleye fishing on the great lakes and deer season in southern Illinois.

Merle’s love of his grandchildren, animals, and the Chicago Bears was unsurpassed.

Merle retired after 45 years of service from CSL Behring, where he served many years as a vice president of Local 498c International Chemical Workers Union.

Surviving are one son and daughter-in-law, Merle Tholen Jr. & Tammy

Morrical-Tholen of Bonfield; one brother and sister-in-law, Wilmer & Laura Tholen of Buckley; four grandchildren, Chris Tholen, Gabby Tholen, Rylan Tholen, and Scarlett Tholen; and one niece and nephew, Emily & Tim Tholen.

Merle is preceded in death by his parents; one brother, Marvin Tholen; and one uncle, Earl Eheart.

Visitation will be held 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 6, 2025 at Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home in Kankakee.

An additional visitation will be held from 10:00 a.m. until the time of the 11:00 a.m. funeral service on Friday, February 7, 2025, also at the funeral home.

Interment will follow at Trinity Lutheran Cemetery in Herscher.

Memorials may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Cemetery Details

Trinity Lutheran Cemetery

Herscher, IL

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 6. 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

FEB 7. 10:00 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

FEB 7. 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

ST

“ *Sandra Hunt Theis sent a virtual gift in memory of Merle Tholen Sr.*



Sandra Hunt Theis - February 07, 2025 at 09:39 AM

ST

“ *Wilmer, Little Moe and families: My thoughts and prayers are with you at this time. Hugs from your cousin, Sandra Hunt-Theis*

Sandra Hunt Theis - February 07, 2025 at 09:37 AM

MP

“ *Maureen Powell lit a candle in memory of Merle Tholen Sr.*



Maureen Powell - February 06, 2025 at 04:22 PM

PT

“ *Patricia Tymec lit a candle in memory of Merle Tholen Sr.*



Patricia Tymec - February 06, 2025 at 12:23 PM

SL

“ Stephen And Jennifer LaVoie lit a candle in memory of Merle Tholen Sr.



Stephen and Jennifer LaVoie - February 05, 2025 at 10:43 AM



“ Big Moe was always thoughtful and brought me Heath Bar Bits whenever he was planning to meet up with Dennis and I. Dennis and he talked of traveling the country in an RV. We had many great times meeting up at Nascar races in Bristol and Charlotte. We will miss you, but never forget you, big guy!
Dennis and Julie Bingham



Julie Bingham - February 03, 2025 at 08:27 PM

FV

“ Faith Voss lit a candle in memory of Merle Tholen Sr.



Faith Voss - February 03, 2025 at 04:55 AM

VP

“ Vickie Page lit a candle in memory of Merle Tholen Sr.



Vickie Page - February 02, 2025 at 03:28 PM

AD

“ I remember when Big Moe taught me how to ride a snowmobile. I rode it with little baby Moe sitting in front of me on the snowmobile. I'm glad I was going slow, I didn't want to loose that baby in the snow. Such good memories!

Anna Dumey - February 01, 2025 at 08:55 PM

PM

“ I will always remember Merle here at Bickford because he was the sweetest loving guy and always stopped at my room to visit my cat. I will always remember him as a really nice man, Patricia Munsell



Patricia Munsell - February 01, 2025 at 06:25 PM

MM

“ The Tholen Family is in our thoughts and prayers. We are so sorry for your loss.
Love and Prayers,
Scott, Michelle and Logan Mitchell
AKA Shelley Ecker and family.



Michelle Mitchell - February 01, 2025 at 04:19 PM

JS

“ *Judy Steele lit a candle in memory of Merle Tholen Sr.*



Judy Steele - February 01, 2025 at 10:18 AM

DT

“ *Remembering the times we played at Grandma Eheart's with Merle and all our cousins. We all loved visiting, such fun times. You will be missed, God bless your family.*

Your Indiana Cousins.

*Sharon and Dan Taylor
Raymond Currie*

Danny & SHARON TAYLOR - January 31, 2025 at 04:34 PM

DL

“ *Remembering cousin Merle with fond memories of his laughter and caring of his family. Sending warm thoughts and many blessings to his family.
Hugs, Dee*



Dee Lazio - January 31, 2025 at 11:36 AM



“ *Mo was a guy had so much fun at the race track on Friday nights
Big Mo u will be missed RIP my friend*

James Hartman - January 30, 2025 at 08:16 PM

CC

“ *Carla Chase-Earles lit a candle in memory of Merle Tholen Sr.*



Carla Chase-Earles - January 30, 2025 at 05:08 PM

ST

Wilmer. Little Moe and families..My thoughts and prayers are with you at this time. Hugs. Your Cousin. Sandy

Sandra Hunt Theis - February 07, 2025 at 09:32 AM