



Larry Dale Helder

April 11, 1953 - May 29, 2025

Larry Dale Helder, age 72, died peacefully at his home in Holland, Michigan on May 28, 2025, following a long struggle with progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP). He was supported and cared for by his family, friends and loving wife, Lyn Raymond.

Born in Zeeland , Michigan, April 11, 1953, to Lorraine and Clarence Helder, Larry grew up in "The Heights" area of Holland where he loved playing in the woods, the Black River lowlands, and later ramming around on dirt bikes with his high school friends. After graduating from Holland Christian High School in 1971, he followed his keen interest in how things worked and found employment at Wirick Office Machines in Holland. His basic skill set was apparent and soon he was sent for more advanced training to a business machine repair school in Tarrytown, New York.

Larry eventually enrolled in Hope College as a non-traditional student where he studied English, geology, philosophy and religion, graduating in 1982. After college, Larry joined an overseas mission program where he taught English to Japanese high school students in the Utsunomiya prefecture in Japan. Typical of his passion for education, he enrolled in an intensive course in Japanese at Earlham College and learned to read and write well beyond the requirements of the program. He often shared memories of riding a motorcycle into the Japanese countryside where he worked with a potter during a school holiday.

He also learned the Japanese martial art of archery, Kyudo. While there are many goals to Kyudo, Larry enjoyed the beauty of the form and its practice of meditation in action.

Upon his return from Japan, Larry started his own small business as an interior house painter. He soon added wallpapering and light carpentry to his skill set. Larry's attention to detail, craftsmanship and love of old houses quickly gained him a reputation in the Holland Historic District and beyond, including contributions to the Cappon House in Holland and the Felt Mansion restoration project in Laketown Township. Larry always had an affinity for the spare lifestyle. It was a genuine outgrowth of not wanting or needing too much. He felt the economy of life was similar to the economy of the minimum brush strokes it took to do a job well. On his retirement in 2021, former clients expressed their appreciation to Larry for putting color in their lives and caring for and enriching their homes. Many of his customers became friends and those relationships went well beyond any services rendered. He leaves a legacy of personal integrity and professional craftsmanship that will endure in the many homes he worked in and the lives he touched.

When Larry wasn't repairing other people's houses he loved to read, bicycle, cross-country ski and paddle his canoe. For many years he was the proud owner of a BMW motorcycle on which he loved riding the twists and turns of the Leelanau Peninsula. He pursued many of these activities with his customary precision and a quest for mastery. Paddling a canoe well wasn't enough for Larry so he attended a wooden boat school in Rockport, Maine. There he learned how to carve his own paddles and build his own canoe. The canoe hung from the rafters of his apartment above the Holland Peanut Store where he lived for more than 20 years.

In 1999, Larry met Lyn Raymond. They shared many interests including a love of hiking, good books, good food and the beauty of Northern Michigan. In

2013 they were married in the Leelanau County Courthouse. They had already purchased a home in the Holland Historic District, which Larry continuously improved to his own high standards. Larry and Lyn lived together with their dogs, Chance, then Boe, and finally Twyla, who was by his side when he died.

Although Larry did not have children of his own, he was always fun-loving and generous with those of his friends and relatives. He could be counted on to provide adventures and often the hand-crafted equipment to make them happen. Bows and arrows, canoe paddles and special wooden boxes were among his many gifts to his favorite children over the years. He was a faithful friend and went to great lengths to maintain relationships.

Larry is survived by his wife, Lyn Raymond; siblings, Christi (Terry), Rosie, Kathy (Virgil), and Bob (Karyn); many nieces and nephews, and dear friends. Larry was predeceased by his parents; father-in-law, Dick Raymond; and brother-in-law, Ron Hutson.

Arrangements for cremation were made by the Langland-Sterenbergh Funeral Home in Holland, Michigan. At Larry's request, there was no funeral or memorial service. An informal gathering to remember Larry will take place later in the summer.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a memorial contribution to the Leelanau Conservancy at <https://leelanauconservancy.org/>

Condolences for the family may be left online at www.langlandsterebergh.com.

Tribute Wall

LS

“ My deepest sympathies to you Lyn for the loss of Larry. He will be missed by many.

Lori Shepard - June 18, 2025 at 02:05 PM



“ What a beautiful obituary for a beautiful man. My late wife Jeannette would not forgive (well she would, but I wouldn't forgive myself) if I didn't add my voice to a chorus of satisfied clients of Larry. Jeannette had him help several of her clients with painting and repair. We could always count on a job meticulously done... Lynn, you have my deepest sympathies.

Jonathan Brownson - June 07, 2025 at 07:08 PM

DZ

“ Larry did several repair and paint jobs for us and we always enjoyed his quiet friendly personality as well as his excellent workmanship.

Our condolences to Lyn and the family.

Dave and Karen Zwart - June 06, 2025 at 05:37 PM

JS

“ Larry was the first neighbor to walk over (with Boe!) and ask if I rode a bike 🚲 and would like to ride with his group! When I could KEEP UP with him, I enjoyed many rides to Saugatuck, New Richmond, and other destinations! He would speed up as the ride wore on! I enjoyed several fireplace fires with him as he became more housebound. Larry will certainly be missed! Condolences to Lyn, to his siblings, and to others who called him “friend “!

john Shea - June 05, 2025 at 01:54 PM