

## Paul B. Lapham

November 2, 1929 - May 8, 2020

Paul B. Lapham, age 90, of Clare, passed away on Friday, May 8, 2020 at his home in Clare, Michigan. His story is long and eventful. Following is a brief synopsis of his life story.

### 1930s – The Survival Years

Paul Bernard Lapham is born November 2nd, 1929 to Alger and Ruth Wernette Lapham in Lansing, Michigan. He is their first child; the first of ten children! Shortly thereafter, the “Great Depression” starts and Alger loses his job at the Oldsmobile automobile plant. The family moves back to the family farm in Remus, Michigan, but the farm can’t support the addition of the young family. Alger, Ruth, and baby Paul move to Mt. Pleasant, where they secure a tent and pitch it in Nelson Park. The park, located on the Chippewa River near the Railroad Station, is a “tent city” for those adversely impacted by the failing economy.

While Alger looks for work, they get meat and potatoes from the farm and pick up coal along the railroad tracks to cook and keep warm. Alger finds work at the PWA and the young family moves to an apartment on Andre Street near Kinney School. Paul starts school in 1933 and the family moves again, to 914 E. Chippewa Street, where they have a large garden, can vegetables, and still have enough vegetables left over to sell to more affluent households.

Paul is fired from his first job, pulling weeds in a neighbor's garden, when he pulls the carrots instead! Paul gets a paper route when he is in sixth grade and brings the profits home. All members of the family contribute to the family coffers.

#### 1940s – The Formative Years

When a fire destroys the adjacent apartment, the family is forced to spend the winter in a garage across the street belonging to their neighbor, Mr. Miranda. During this time, they build a house at 1104 E. Chippewa Street. On December 7th, 1941 the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. Paul and Darcy sell many "Extra" papers at the corner of Broadway and Mission. The era of rationing and "Brown Outs" (i.e. no lights to be shown after dark that might give enemy bombers a target) begins. Paul volunteers for Civil Defense and serves as a spotter for enemy planes that might fly over. Everyone does their part!

1943: Paul starts High School at Sacred Heart Academy. He studies physics and geometry in preparation for engineering in college.

1947: Paul graduates from High School, works the summer for a construction company, and starts college at the University of Detroit. He occasionally hitch-hikes the 150 miles back and forth from school to home.

1948: Summer. Paul and Bob Wohlscheid hitch-hike to California to work in the orchards and a cannery in Sunnyvale, outside of San Francisco. In September, he heads back to college. His summer wages almost cover his college expenses; Darcy's paper route money helps cover the rest.

1949: Summer. Paul and Joe Johnston work on a survey crew for John P. Goggins Engineering Company in Clare. Little does Paul know that this will be a key influence in his life's work. In the Fall, Joe goes back to college at

Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant and Paul accepts a job for Goggins to head up a survey crew in the Florida Keys. It so happens that Elva Lea McIntosh, who does drafting and computations for Goggins, also accepts the opportunity to go to the Keys. The beginning of a long career, and, as you will see – a long and wonderful marriage!

#### 1950s – The Startup Years

Since Paul has neither a car nor the money to buy one, Alger gives Paul his prized Buick Roadster. Paul drives to Marathon, in the Florida Keys, where he works for about four years with a native Floridian, Gene Menendez, developing the Marathon Key Resort area.

1952: It almost seems inevitable, Paul and Elva Lea are married on February 10th, 1952.

1953: March 19. In the early morning hours Paul and Elva Lea drive at breakneck speed to the Key West, Florida hospital. The doctor arrives just in time to welcome Angela Ann Lapham, a six-pound twelve-ounce girl, into the world. The Lapham Family is now a reality.

1954: Paul, Elva Lea, and Angela move to Flint, Michigan where Paul gets a job working for West Engineering. On April 29th, Timothy Lynn Lapham joins the family!

1955: Paul becomes licensed as a Land Surveyor in both Florida and Michigan.

1956: The family moves to Clare Michigan, where Paul starts his own business, Lapham and Associates. The first office is located on Elva Lea's parent's farm on Maple Road. On April 16th, Sue Ann Lapham becomes part

of the family!

1957: Paul is appointed Clare County Surveyor. He is re-elected many times and holds that office until his death 63 years later! July 3rd the Lapham Clan celebrates the Nation's birthday a day early, welcoming Mary Ann Lapham to the world!

1958: Paul is elected Secretary of the Northern Chapter of the Michigan Society of Registered Land Surveyors (MSRLS). The start of a long career that goes from local to state to national to international!

1960s and 1970s – The Business Years

Paul is active in civic affairs, serving as the President of Kiwanis, Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, member of the Industrial Development Committee, and member of the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. Paul is active in the acquisition of funds, the design, approval, and construction stakeout and supervision of the Brookwood Park Athletic Complex.

1960: The family moves to 310 W. Wheaton Avenue in Clare and relocates the surveying office to the rear of the house. This allows Elva Lea to be the secretary and help with computations as well as be a mother and housewife. September 29th their fifth child, Beth Ann Lapham greets the world for the first time!

1963: August 18th the Lapham family welcomes Lisa Ann Lapham into the world!

1970s and 1980s – The Professional Association Years

In 1974 the Michigan State Legislature passes a new law which requires surveyors to have a B.S. Degree in Surveying prior to taking the examination for licensure. Paul is active in serving as a member of the Surveying

Curriculum Advisory Committee at Ferris State University.

Paul is elected President of the Michigan Society of Registered Land Surveyors (MSRLS) and is the Michigan Representative to the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM). He takes an active role in the Surveying Division of ACSM and is soon elected Member of the Board of Directors. As such, he is active in the re-organization of ACSM and becomes the founding president of the newly formed National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS). He is an active member and chair of the Council on Federal Procurement of Architectural and Civil Engineers (COFPACE). As chair of COFPACE, Paul serves as head of the U.S. Delegation to the International Association of Surveyors (FIG). He attends FIG meetings in numerous countries beginning with Japan, followed by Germany, Norway, Finland, Poland, New Zealand, and others.

Mid 1990s – Time to Slow Down

Paul and Elva Lea start to spend a few weeks each year in Punta Gorda Florida at the mobile home Elva Lea's mother, Elizabeth McIntosh owns in the Lazy Lagoon Mobile Home Park. In 1996, they retire and spend the winter at Lazy Lagoon. In 1999, Lazy Lagoon is offered for sale. Paul is part of the committee that studies the feasibility of purchasing the park to make it resident-owned. He serves on the first Board of Directors for the new organization.

The Twenty-First Century – Can't Stay Idle Very Long

2002: Paul is elected President of the Lazy Lagoon Home Owners' Association and appoints a friend, Zita Coburn, as chair of the finance committee. Paul and Elva Lea sell their first mobile and move to a mobile on Shell Creek in Lazy Lagoon.

2004: Hurricane Charley make an abrupt turn down the Peace River and

destroys over half of the Lazy Lagoon mobiles. Paul is highly involved in the clean-up and restoration of the park.

2006: Lazy Lagoon needs a new sewage collection system. Guess who spearheads the study, design, and construction? Paul works with Zita Coburn and the finance committee to determine the financial plan for the payment of the project. Paul stays on as a member of the committee.

2012: Elva Lea, the love of Paul's life, his help-mate, companion, best friend, mother of his six children, and wife, passes away suddenly on Sunday morning, August 19, 2012. The marriage lasted sixty years, six months, and nine days. Paul is devastated.

2013: Angela Ann, Paul and Elva Lea's oldest daughter, suffers a series of debilitating health problems and Paul helps care for her until she passes away on April 25th. Again, Paul is devastated.

2017: Paul and Zita Coburn have been friends since 2002 when Zita and her husband Don move to Lazy Lagoon. Don passes away only a couple of months after Elva Lea passes. Zita and Paul continue working on the Finance Committee and in 2015 Paul asks Zita to accompany him to a luncheon with several friends. Paul thinks the group will meet at the Crab Shack in Punta Gorda. There is some confusion, however and their friends are at the Crab Shack in Ellington, about sixty miles away! Paul and Zita have their first "date" together. The rest is history; Paul and Zita are married July 22, 2017 in Zita's home town of Minnetonka, Minnesota.

November 2, 2019 – The Beginning Of The Rest Of His Life!

Paul has led an eventful life! A great party is held celebrating his life. If you ask him, he will tell you he is the luckiest man that has ever lived and that he

has accumulated a vast storehouse of treasures! It consists of his wife, Elva Lea, his six children, his children's spouses, his eight grandchildren and their spouses, his eight great-grandchildren, his new wife Zita, his five sisters and four brothers, and a host of relatives, co-workers, professional colleagues, friends, and the love and memories they have given him!

May 8, 2020 – The passing of a Great man!

Paul returned from Florida to his long-time home in Clare, Michigan to try and regain his health. He only lasted a few weeks until he was taken to the afterlife ending his life here on earth. At his passing he was surrounded by several of his family members, who offered prayers and songs to help in the passing! Paul was 90 years, 6 months and 6 days old!

Paul is survived by his wife Zita. Also surviving are his children, Tim (Jackie Kammezell) Lapham of Clare, Sue Lapham of Clare, Mary (Mike) Hales of Farwell, Beth (Randy) Elinski of Jackson, MI, Lisa (Steve) Thorburn of Morrisville, NC, Eight Grandchildren, Jason, Heather (Chris), Adam (Melody), Brian (Morgan), Jordan (Nasim), Trevor (Emma) , Meagan, and Adriane, Eight Great Grandchildren, Jacob, James, Jaelee, Jaxon, McKayla, Ryann, Brianna and Lily, and his siblings, Darcy Lapham, Clair (Margaret) Lapham, Dave (Sue) Lapham, Rita Poston, Jean (Ron) Cauwenbergh, his brother-in-law, Ray Szumski and sister-in-law Nancy Lapham. Along with a host of other nieces, nephews, cousins and other family members. Paul was preceded in death by his Parents, his wife of 60 years Elva Lea, his daughter Angela, brother, Larry, and sisters, Sandra Lapham, Virginia (John) Krabbenhof and Lorena Szumski.

Because of the Current Orders for mitigating the Covid -19 virus, Paul will be buried in the St. Cecilia Cemetery of the Our Lady of Hope Parish in a privately held graveside ceremony for his family. Memorial donations in honor of Paul may be directed to the Our Lady of Hope Parish, 106 E. Wheaton

Ave., Clare, Mi., 48617. Arrangements were by the Stephenson-Wyman Funeral Home in Clare.

# Cemetery Details

## **St. Cecilia Catholic Cemetery**

411 Schoolcrest Ave.  
Clare, MI 48617

# Tribute Wall

CS

“ *My condolences in the loss of your sweet and wonderful father. Your Mom and Dad (and Gram McIntosh and Grandfather Lapham) touched my heart in ways that continue to this day. Love to all of you! Cindy Schaedig*

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**Cynthia Sue Schaedig** - July 02, 2020 at 04:37 PM

LG

“ *Paul was a great leader in the profession and community and will forever be remembered as such. Most importantly, he was very understanding and a gentle-man! It is an honor to have served with Paul on the "MSRLS" legislative committee, along with Richard Lomax, Clay Adams and Art Crossman and to be in the list with Paul as one of MSPS's Surveyor of the Year May God rest his soul and grant him eternal peace!*  
*So long, my friend,*  
*Larry M. Gerschbacher, P.S.(retired)*

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**Larry M. Gerschbacher** - May 16, 2020 at 08:49 PM



“ Dear Brother Paul,

*I have been so blessed to have had you as my oldest brother and our siblings felt the same way. You were always our great leader and teacher. You always knew our needs and acted immediately so we were never left unaided.*

*I remember how when we were young ❖❖❖ you and Darcy would make a trail through the snow in the wintertime so that Larry and I would have it easier walking to school in the morning.*

*You took me to see Santa Claus, one Christmas. Santa Clause was in a truck in front of the five and dime store. You picked me up so that I could see Santa and Santa gave me a little cloth doll! What a surprise!*

*One birthday, I will always keep as a treasure. Our mom was in the hospital having surgery. I just knew “no birthday cake this year.”*

*Well, you surprised me. You worked in a local grocery store and wouldn't you know, you came home that night and surprised me with a chocolate covered birthday cake! What a surprise and treasure! That is the only birthday cake that I remember receiving.*

*When Ron and I were in Colorado, Ron and I remember and treasure your surprise. You brought your family, wife and five children along with our Dad and Mom by train to Colorado Springs for our wedding. This made us so happy! We were so grateful for you. I can remember how you noticed that Ron's military buddies who were supposed to be ushers, were called into work. You stepped in and made sure that everyone was greeted and seated. You can't imagine how wonderful it was having you at my wedding. You were always so aware of others and their special needs. You always stepped forward and in your kind way, met those needs with love. My children have such wonderful and fond memories of you. Now you will be with all of us always in Spirit.*

*We thank you for your love, kindness and thoughtfulness for all of us especially your great devotion to your family. May you now receive your Heavenly Reward for completing your mission that you were sent down here on this earth to complete.*

*We will always keep you in our thoughts and prayers.*



*'til we meet again. I love you! I loved being your sister and am so proud of you!*  
*Love,*  
*Jeanne*

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**Jean Marie** - May 15, 2020 at 04:54 PM

MW

*Love and prayers to the family in the loss of such a fine man.*

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**Martin and Georgia White** - May 15, 2020 at 06:20 PM

PB

*Love you Aunt Jean*

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**Paula Balhorn** - May 15, 2020 at 11:07 PM

EL

*Wonderful memories, Jean*

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**Elaine LaMarre** - May 16, 2020 at 07:39 PM

PB

“ *I loved going to his house to go swimming and talk to his birds. I can't remember the details but I remember listening to him on the radio and how calming it was. I'm proud to be named after him. ❤️ Rest in peace Uncle Paul.*

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**Paula Balhorn** - May 14, 2020 at 05:55 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Paul B. Lapham.*



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May 14, 2020 at 10:48 AM

KT

“ It was very sad to read about the passing away of Paul Lapham. I had known him for the last 33 years. Paul served as advisory committee member for the Surveying Program at Ferris State University. His contributions to FIG (Federation Internationale Geometres), ACSM, NSPS and MSPS are unparalleled. Paul had a great pleasant personality. He was basically a friend of everyone.

Paul was a great supporter of higher education in Surveying. He was an ardent supporter of the Surveying Engineering Program at Ferris. In addition to many other great surveyors of Michigan, Paul was considered a well recognized national leader and a champion for the profession of Surveying.

On behalf of the students and faculty of Ferris State University, I would like to extend my heart-felt condolences to the family of Paul.

*Khagendra Thapa*  
*Professor and Program Coordinator*

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**Khagendra Thapa** - May 13, 2020 at 11:16 PM

JJ

“ Thanks Paul for being a good friend and a great help to our profession. I always looked forward to your numerous ways and great jokes. You were an honor to our profession and the human race. We will miss you. Jerry and Carol Jones

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**Jerry Jones** - May 13, 2020 at 06:46 PM

JM

“ Uncle Paul was a true HERO to his entire extended family, friends, and co-workers. He epitomized the qualities of joy, compassion, and unconditional LOVE! Never one to back down from a challenge, he refused to allow life 'to happen to him.' Instead, he made sure he went out each and every day and 'happened to life.'

They say there is truly only ONE THING that should be on your life's finished resume. And that is that you INSPIRED OTHERS! I believe the following words are analogous to the manner in which Uncle Paul lived his life while gracing us with his kind, gentle hearted nature.

"The pessimist resembles a man who observes with fear and sadness that his wall calendar, from which he daily tears a sheet, grows thinner with each passing day. On the other hand, the person who attacks the problems of life actively is like man who removes each successive leaf from his calendar and files it neatly and carefully away with its predecessors, after first having jotted down a few diary notes on the back. He can reflect with pride and joy on all the richness set down in these notes, on all the life he has already lived to the fullest. What will it matter to him if he notices that he is growing old? Has he any reason to envy the young people whom he sees, or wax nostalgic over his own lost youth? For the possibilities that a young person has; the future which is in store for him?

No, thank you, he will think. Instead of possibilities, I have realities in my past, not only the reality of work done and of love, loved, but of sufferings bravely suffered. These sufferings are even the things of which I am most proud. For they taught me the most important lesson life has to offer. That being the fact that anything other than LOVE is simply an illusion.

Love and Light Always Uncle Paul....

Jeffrey Martinez

**Jeffrey Louis Martinez** - May 13, 2020 at 04:12 PM

JL

“ *Harold Lapham says Paul was always smiling and never showed anger to anyone. I remember one year he road his bike to the family reunion at School section lake, all the way from My Pleasant. He started the day before the reunion and stayed that night with Carl Smith. Uncle Alger and Aunt Ruth were afraid he'd get hit on M20 so after reunion they made him put his bike in the truck of the car and ride home with them.*

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**JANET LAPHAM** - May 13, 2020 at 10:59 AM

CA

“ *I will always remember Paul as an upstanding professional, a kind friend and someone who always had a good word to share. My condolences to the family and all who were close to him. Paul will be missed.*

*Christy Andersen*

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**Christy Andersen** - May 13, 2020 at 08:38 AM

SC

“ *I write this in joy and not sadness. I was glad to know him and was grateful for the summer jobs he gave me surveying. The knowledge and history he shared stays with me until this day. His smile, warmth and passion will live on through all he met. What a great life and we should all be so lucky.*

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**Scooter Colville** - May 12, 2020 at 09:14 PM

JL

“ *He was always the light at the reunion, and he was a great Santa. Will miss his smile*



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**JANET LAPHAM** - May 12, 2020 at 08:44 PM

MW

“ *Paul and my dad LaVern were life-long friends and I have known the entire Lapham family for years. I remember my youngest brother learned to swim in the Lapham pool! All of their children attended St. Cecilia School as we did and I will never forget Mr. Lapham's distinctive voice as a church lector at Mass! My dad had the utmost respect for Paul and I know my father treasured that friendship immensely.*

*My sincere condolences to the entire Lapham family. Your dad was a good man who he loved his family and friends. He was indeed a....life well-lived.*

*You all are in our thoughts and prayers. God Bless!*

*The children of LaVern & Monie.....Mary, Mike and Tom Wood*

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**Mary Wood** - May 12, 2020 at 08:15 PM

RP

“ *Rita Poston lit a candle in memory of Paul B. Lapham*



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**Rita Poston** - May 12, 2020 at 06:46 PM

PB

*Love you Aunt Rita ❤️ Paula*

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**Paula Balhorn** - May 14, 2020 at 05:52 PM

RP

“ *I have such beautiful and fun memories of my oldest brother Paul. Paul will be in my heart forever. I was born in January of 1947 and brother Paul left for college. We shared so many life's reason to celebrate and get together. The one occasion I will always remember when a few of his young siblings went to Flint with Elva Lea and the children to help caring for the children. Paul and Elva Lea sang the entire trip from Mt.Pleasant to Flint. We got to know and play with our nieces and nephew Tim. The rest of my story is history that will never be forgotten.*

*Thank you Brother Paul for beings such a great role model for all your siblings. Your smile and heart will be forever in my heart.*

*Rest in peace brother Paul. I will miss you but I will never forget you.*

*Your baby sister, Rita*

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**Rita Poston** - May 12, 2020 at 06:43 PM

PC

“ *Paul was a great person and an equally great mentor to many of us in the land surveying profession. He set a very high bar for all of us to try and obtain with his giving to his profession, community and friends. You left a legacy my friend.*

*Phil Case*

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**Phillip D. Case** - May 12, 2020 at 03:59 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Paul B. Lapham.*



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May 12, 2020 at 01:50 PM



“ *Betty & I are both sorry to here of Paul's passing. We have such good memories of the times we spent with Paul & Elva Lea in Mi. & Fla. He will be missed by a great many people.*

*Glenn Richard*

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**Glenn Richard** - May 12, 2020 at 11:07 AM



“ *So sorry to hear of Paul's passing. Thoughts and prayers to the Lapham family! He was a great mentor, and his ready laugh and good humor will be missed.*

*God Bless and keep you Paul!*

*Ron and Robin Harris*

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**Ron Harris** - May 12, 2020 at 10:42 AM



“ *My sincere condolences go out to the Lapham family. Paul was a inspirational mentor when I started my professional career. I always enjoyed his company and infectious laughter. He will be missed.*

*John May, PS, PE*

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**John May** - May 12, 2020 at 10:32 AM

LC

“ *A true friend and a gentleman with a great sense of humor. He will be greatly missed.*

Larry @ Joanne Cavanagh - May 12, 2020 at 10:30 AM

KM

“ *Sorry to hear of Paul's passing. I still fondly remember our families spending time together.*

Ken McConnell - May 12, 2020 at 10:08 AM

RS

“ *Truely one of a kind personality. He will be sadly missed. 💜*



Rebecca Shear - May 12, 2020 at 07:57 AM

KR

“ *Always had a smile and appeared to be an honest, humble man. So sorry for your loss. What an amazing life he experienced and his love of family is even more to be honored. May God Bless him and may he rest in a place of light and peace. Sending prayers for him and your entire family.*

Kathy and Dan Rettelle - May 11, 2020 at 10:45 PM

JH

“ *Judy Hales lit a candle in memory of Paul B. Lapham*



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**Judy Hales** - May 11, 2020 at 07:55 PM

FL

“ *from Carol Lapham Elaine and Bill LaMarre purchased the Starbucks Coffee Condolences for the family of Paul B. Lapham.*



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**from Carol Lapham Elaine and Bill LaMarre** - May 11, 2020 at 07:47 PM

EL

“ *Paul always had a great smile and participated in family reunions. Family was his first priority.*

*Elaine and Carol*

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**Elaine LaMarre** - May 11, 2020 at 07:36 PM



“ *This is a message from my mother-in-law, Joyce Kolka from Grayling, MI.*

*Zit, so sorry for your loss.*

*Paul was such a great help to everyone at the Lazy Lagoon for many years. Especially, driving my husband Jim to hospital when he was very sick. Since I had no family in Florida, I don't know what I would have done without his help.*

*He will be dearly missed.*

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**Diane Kolka** - May 11, 2020 at 06:43 PM

BH

“ *What an amazing life Mr. Lapham lived. Every single time I came in contact with him he was smiling with his entire body. He'll be missed but not forgotten!*

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**Bruce Hales** - May 11, 2020 at 05:09 PM

JD

“ *Paul was a gentleman among gentlemen! He always had a smile on his face and a warm greeting to members of his church family. He was never in a hurry when conversing with someone and was truly interested in what anyone had to say. He will be missed, however he is now receiving his eternal reward. Rest in peace.*

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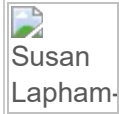
**Joanne Dana** - May 11, 2020 at 05:06 PM

JL

*Rest In Peace cousin Paul. What I remember most is all the interesting stories he would tell us about our grandfather. Loved being around him, his smile and warm personality. Your are in my heart forever.*

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**Joan Lapham Lance** - May 13, 2020 at 06:30 AM



Susan  
Lapham-Sogga

*What a great man Paul was. So many fine memories to share. I really enjoyed Paul and my Dad Bernard when they got together. Funny dual. Rest in peace Paul. You will be truly missed*

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**Susan Lapham-Sogga** - May 13, 2020 at 08:11 AM



MD

*So sorry to hear of Paul's passing. He was a great and wonderful man. He was always so helpful when we needed professional help and it was always a joy when he stopped by the office to visit. He will be greatly missed by many. You are all in our thoughts and Prayers. We have certainly lost a great man.*

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**Micky Davis** - May 14, 2020 at 02:36 PM