



## Mr. Emerson R. Gardner

February 18, 1930 - March 4, 2019

Emerson R. Gardner passed away in the early morning hours of Monday, March 4th, 2019. Known as “Russ” in his adult years, and “Red” in his youth, he spent all of his 89 years of life in Pittsfield, Massachusetts (we just celebrated his birthday on February 18th!) His early days were spent biking, working and hanging out with friends in the Elm Street neighborhood of the city he so loved. He often spoke fondly of those days. Even though his family was poor, as were the rest of his family’s neighbors, and friends in that depression era of the 1930's, along with his sister Carolyn (Gardner) Drumm, they still managed to have a healthy, happy and memorable childhood. Even as a young man, Russ was a hard worker - delivering the Berkshire Eagle through his neighborhood by bicycle, working at a local dairy farm, and undertaking every other venture he could muster, to help his family get by.

Russ graduated from Pittsfield High School in 1948, and soon after met his future wife (Charlotte Van de Bogart of Millerton, NY) at his sister’s wedding. They were married on July 2, 1949, when he was just 19 years old and had five children (Mark, Bob, Paul, Karen and Jeff) over the next ten years. Today, in addition to daughter-in-law’s Mary & Susan, and son-in-law David, there are five grandchildren (Lillian, Michael, Grace, Steven, and Angela), and three great-grandchildren (plus there's another one on the way!) Charlotte, his wife of 56 years, passed away in 2006 after a prolonged illness.

As an adult, Russ worked a short stint as an automobile mechanic right out high school, then secured a job at the General Electric plant in Pittsfield, where he worked for over 40 years (predominantly in the power transformer test department). He took great pride in his years in Test and the work he performed as a technician in the Transformer Testing Department, where he anchored the second shift for decades. When the Pittsfield GE shuttered its doors in the early 90's, Russ was one of the last workers to punch out for the final time, considering it an opportune time to retire.

Russ loved a wide and varied range of activities while not at work, but dearly loved spending time with family the most, and next, being a “week-end warrior” as he reworked, rehabbed and remodeled the family home on Gale Avenue in Pittsfield. He was also an avid bicyclist and photographer, loved traveling to California to visit two of his sons who live there, winter trips to Florida later in life with his second love (Jan), and he never

stopped adoring Cape Cod with its quaint seaside splendor and numerous seafood restaurants.

Russ was greatly saddened when declining health forced him to move out of the homestead of 58 years, he had created for his family on Gale Avenue in Pittsfield, to the assisted living residence at Melbourne Place, in the final year and a half of his life. He did eventually, come to revel in his new well-appointed quarters, friends, and the new-found family he discovered there. The Gardner family is extremely grateful to all those at Melbourne Place who befriended, comforted, and loved our father, as we did!

Among his other joys were competitive games, including when he was younger: horseshoes, croquet, boccie ball, swimming, and throughout his life, board and card games of every sort. He was known for a fierce competitive spirit throughout his life and even played a card game favorite of his, (Five Crowns), the evening before his death. He also loved live music, dancing, community theater and the occasional trip to NYC for a Broadway play. He volunteered at Barrington Stage and other venues in the area, and absolutely loved a good musical.

In 2008, Russ met and fell in love with Jan Kroboth, an assistant professor of accounting at Berkshire Community College, with whom he magically shared many of his passions and interests including that of the performing Arts. They enjoyed wintering in Florida with friends and relatives, including with Russ' sister Carolyn and brother-in-law, Harvey Drumm.

We would be remiss if we did not mention he was somewhat of a Renaissance man, with interest in science, technology, art, music and politics - subscribing to a range of magazines such as Popular Science, Time Magazine, as well as National Geographic Magazine, all of which he would actually read from cover to cover!

**FUNERAL NOTICE-** There will be a Wake at Wellington Funeral Parlor on East Street in Pittsfield, this Friday from 4 to 7pm. Then there will be a Funeral Service held at Dad's beloved First Baptist Church, on South Street in Pittsfield (where he served for many years as a volunteer treasurer), on Saturday, March 9th at 11am. Come and celebrate Russ' life with us!

In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made to the First Baptist Church in Pittsfield, to their Steeple/Cupola Restoration fund.

# Events

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**MAR** **Visitation** 04:00PM - 07:00PM

**8**

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Wellington Funeral Service

220 East St., Pittsfield, MA, US, 01201

**MAR** **Funeral Service** 11:00AM - 12:00PM

**9**

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First Baptist Church

88 South Street, Pittsfield, MA, US, 01201