

Cletus "Clete" G. Gifford, 72, retired as a grocery business owner and operator after 60 years, died at 3:23 a.m. Wednesday at his residence in Berne. Mr. Gifford was former owner of Gifford's IGA Store.

He also was a member for more than 50 years of the Berne Volunteer Fire Department, serving as chief for 18 years. He was awarded in March of this year the Governor's Meritorious Service Award and was honored on July 16 at the dedication of the new Berne fire station.

Mr. Gifford was a member of the Trinity United Methodist Church. He was born in Wells County May 12, 1928 to Glen and Martha Jane Simon Gifford.

Surviving are his wife, JoAnn, who survives and to whom he was married in Berne on Aug. 13, 2000. Surviving, in addition to the wife, are a son, John Gifford of Detroit, Mich.; four daughters, Mrs. Tom (Linda) Walsh of Berne, Mrs. Rick (Valerie) Graber of Albuquerque, N.M., Mrs. Tom (Rita) Hough of Pucallpa, Peru and Joan Lane of Fort Wayne; four stepsons, Irv Koehler of Chattanooga, Tenn., Daniel E. Koehler and Michael L. Koehler, both of Berne, and Steven M. Koehler of Linn Grove; five grandchildren; nine stepgrandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and three stepgreat-grandchildren.

Services will be held at the Berne Fire Department Station at 1:30 p.m. Sunday with Tom Hough and Paul Zurcher officiating. Burial will be in the MRE Cemetery at Berne. Calling hours at Yager-Kirchhofer Funeral Home in Berne will be Saturday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and at the fire station Sunday from 12 noon until time of services. Members of the Berne Fire Department will serve as pall bearers.

Memorials to Family Hospice of Northeast Indiana or to the Jacob Corral Fund (a great-grandson).

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