



Harold Berry

Key West, Fla | Saturday, August 22 2009

Harold "Tater" Berry, 80, passed away Saturday, August 22, 2009 at Florida Medical Center, Key West, Fla. with family by his side.

He was born Dec. 18, 1928 in Wood River to the late Macy and Thelma.

He married the former Nell Ruth Bartlett on June 24th, 1950 at the 1st Baptist Church in Roxana, IL. She survives.

He graduated from Roxana High School in 1947. He was quite athletic, playing football and basketball, and he took first place at the state tournament running the 440 sprints. He also was known to be the best jitterbug dancer around. He worked at Standard Oil Refinery during high school. After attending McKendree College he worked at Sinclair Refinery prior to owning and operating Berry Marina on the river road in 1955. The family lived in the upper level of the business on a 100 foot houseboat. Before they left the area in 1959, that summer he managed and was Master of Ceremonies for the Tommy Bartlett Water Ski Show, traveling the west coast. He moved to Key West FL to the open Holiday Boat Rentals and later Holiday Charter Boats. He was known as Captain Tate and named his charter boat the Berry Cuda. With his knowledge of the waters of Key West, he was soon hired by many race teams through the years to navigate their race boats in world championships to victory lane. He raced from the late 60s to 70s and then in the 90s inspired his nephew Dennis to go racing. Dennis called his boat Berry Cuda, and she took him to many victories. Upon retiring from the Charter boat business Harold became superintendent of the Key West Professional Bldg. until his death. He was a current member of Masonic Temple and Demolay and also a member of the Lions Club.

He knew how to enjoy life to the fullest. With his charisma he never met a stranger. And all that knew him listened to his lifetime of stories and enjoyed his humor. He touched everyone's heart that knew him.



In addition to his loving wife, he is survived by a son, Dana of Fort Meyers, Fla. and a

daughter and son in law, Babbette and Howard Smith of Winter Haven, Fla.; five grandchildren Jennifer, Jacqueline, Jessica, Sterling and Suzette Smith; a sister Bettie Mays of Wood River; nieces, nephews, and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Richard; and sister Sharon Shoemaker. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 19 at Zion Lutheran church in Bethalto. The Rev. Willard V. Meyer will officiate.