



## Cory John Christianson

March 20, 1974 - October 16, 2025

Cory John Christianson, age 51, of Grand Marais, MN, passed away on October 16, 2025, at North Shore Health Hospital in Grand Marais, with loving family by his side.

Cory was born on March 20, 1974, in Des Moines, IA, to Robert John (Bob) and Mary Lou (Reedquist) Christianson. He grew up in Waukee, IA, when it was still a small, close-knit rural community. Cory attended school in Waukee from preschool through high school, graduating in 1992. A lifelong Hawkeye fan, he followed in his father's footsteps to the University of Iowa, where he earned his bachelor's degree in Journalism.

During his high school and college years, Cory worked at the Drake Diner in Des Moines, IA, where his skill and leadership in the kitchen led him to become a kitchen manager. Through a close connection there, he was invited to help open a similar restaurant on the Gunflint Trail in Grand Marais — a move that changed the course of his life. Cory immediately fell in love with the North Shore and the incredible fishing it offered. He formed close friendships with local fishing guides, spending nearly every free moment learning from them on the water.

After college, Cory made Grand Marais his home and founded his own fishing guide business. A gifted writer, he also shared his passion for the outdoors through his long-running column, "Tails from the Trail," in the Cook County News-Herald, where he wrote about fishing, guiding, and hunting. In the winters, he worked in Key West in the fishing industry, eventually earning his

captain's license and guiding charter fishing trips. Although he enjoyed his time in Florida, his heart always belonged "up north," especially in the pristine Canadian waters of Lake Saganaga, where he found his greatest joy guiding others.

In 2005, Cory met the love of his life, Rachelle (Lawson) Christianson, while they were both working at a resort on the Gunflint Trail. Rachelle, who grew up spending time at her family's cabin on Lake Saganaga, shared Cory's deep appreciation for the North Shore. They were married in 2008 and spent their early years dividing time between Grand Marais and Key West before building their home on the Gunflint Trail. Together, they welcomed their two beloved children, Sophia (14) and Robert "Bo" (13), who were the pride and joy of Cory's life.

In later years, Cory and Rachelle poured their shared passion for hospitality and the Northwoods into Skyport Lodge and Raven Rock Grill on Devil Track Lake. There, Cory blended his love of the water with his joy in serving others, creating a place where friends, family, and travelers could gather over good food, laughter, and stories. His presence was felt in every meal prepared, every guest welcomed, and every sunset shared from the dock. Even as he faced his cancer diagnosis in late 2024, Cory continued to embody strength, gratitude, and love. His legacy lives on through the family he adored, the community he helped build, and the waters that forever carried his heart.

He is survived by his loving wife, Rachelle; daughter Sophia; son Robert "Bo"; mother Mary Lou Christianson; sister Carrie (Darren) DeMay; brothers Casey (Katrina), Courtney, Charlie (Erin), Cody (Brandy), and Carter (Angie) Christianson; cherished friend Josh Carlson; many beloved nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and cousins; countless dear friends; and his loyal dogs, Ranger and Bailey. He was preceded in death by his father and his maternal and paternal grandparents.

A funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 8, 2025, at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 4114 Allison Ave., Des Moines, IA.

Visitation will take place prior to the service from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., and a

luncheon will follow the service. Live Streaming is available for the 11 a.m. Des Moines service at <https://www.westpres.org>

A celebration of life event will be held from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 15, 2025 at Skyport Lodge in Grand Marais, MN.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that memorial contributions be made to the “Cory Christianson Memorial Fund for Bo & Sophia” to support his children’s future educational endeavors. <https://gofund.me/6b6cf79b7>

Though Cory may be gone, his love, laughter, and light will forever live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life Visitation

NOV 8. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
4114 Allison Ave  
Des Moines, IA 50301

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## Celebration of Life Service

NOV 8. 11:00 AM (CT)

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
4114 Allison Ave  
Des Moines, IA

## Celebration of Life

NOV 15. 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Skyport Lodge and Raven Rock Grill  
205 Fireweed Lane  
Grand Marais, MN 55604  
[info@skyportlodge.com](mailto:info@skyportlodge.com)  
<http://www.skyportlodge.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Cory's Video*



**Dyamond Memorial - \*Burials \*Cremations \*Monuments** - November 10, 2025 at 12:32 PM



“ *Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Cory John Christianson.*



November 06, 2025 at 03:53 PM



“ *Greenbriar Curve Neighborhood planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Cory John Christianson.*

**Greenbriar Curve Neighborhood** - November 05, 2025 at 09:16 PM



“ *Greenbriar Curve Neighborhood purchased the Joyful Memory for the family of Cory John Christianson.*



**Greenbriar Curve Neighborhood** - November 05, 2025 at 09:16 PM

SH

“ So very sorry to hear this news. Cory was such a big part of the Gunflint Trail and the fishing community. Sending prayers for his family and friends.

*Sheryl Hindermann-Schnobrich*

sheryl - November 05, 2025 at 02:15 PM

SS

“ Oh my, much too young. Our condolences to the family and friends of Cory. He was on a team I coached in Little League in Waukee so many years ago, his athleticism and character made him a star on a team that needed a lot of stars due to their hapless coach. I certainly enjoyed him then, haven't seen him since, but see that he became a fine young man.

Steve Spencer - November 02, 2025 at 11:44 AM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Cory John Christianson.



October 31, 2025 at 12:05 PM



“ Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet was purchased for the family of Cory John Christianson.



October 29, 2025 at 12:55 PM

TA

“ The Gunflint Trail Association planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Cory John Christianson.

The Gunflint Trail Association - October 29, 2025 at 12:55 PM

MA

“ Memories of Cory will forever remain in the walls of my cabin and the special place he holds in my heart.

Marcia - October 23, 2025 at 05:58 PM

EF

“ Ellie & Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Cory John Christianson.

Ellie & Family - October 19, 2025 at 10:09 PM

EF

“ Ellie & Family purchased the Forever Our Angel Bouquet for the family of Cory John Christianson.



Ellie & Family - October 19, 2025 at 10:09 PM

TR

“ Our deepest sympathy and condolences to the Christianson family. You in our prayers and thoughts at this most difficult time. No more suffering, God's Blessings.



Terry & Richard Rucker - October 18, 2025 at 11:13 AM