



## Mark Anderson

Mark Albert Anderson was born September 1, 1953, the first child of G. Albert and Nancy (Wright) Anderson. He arrived on his father's own birthday in Orange, New Jersey, the historic family center of one of the Wright family patriarchs. He moved by age two to Gardner, Massachusetts, which was the immigration center of his Swedish great-grandfather and Anderson family patriarch. Eventually he would be provided with two siblings, Ellen and Nils. Life in the small city of Gardner (pop. c. 20,000) during the 50's had many benefits: access to a safe urban and manufacturing setting with its freedom to come and go with unlocked doors, and where the neighbor Moms always knew who you were so you'd get reported if necessary. Mark attended School Street Grammar School, built around 1900, the same as his grandfather Anderson. Bike riding, swimming at Greenwood pool, playing "allies" or marbles, Boy Scouts, junior church choir, piano lessons, Sunday School, putting on neighborhood plays, building forts, rescuing orphaned squirrels, putting pennies on train tracks, looking for cool stuff in the dump, and other real boy activities occupied Mark. Dad taught Mark the shoe-shine business, and he had a route of regular customers. Other entrepreneurial activities during this time were lemonade stands, newspaper routes, and the sale of old newspapers to a furniture shipping-pad manufacturer. Character building activities included lawn mowing, yard work, and mulching an acre or more of blueberry bushes for "farmor and farfar" (Swedish for grandma and grandpa) in a neighboring town. Two weeks a year, the family went to Cape Cod, but eventually to Nantucket Island, which was hands-down probably the most treasured destination for all family members. Clam digging, sailing, fishing and catching sharks, going out in the Boston Whaler, hanging out with kids, Wauwinet's antique fire truck, fireworks on the 4th, and many other wonderful memories filled our time for the first two weeks of July. Mark also loved Lake Monomonock, in Rindge, New Hampshire. The lakeside clubhouse from the late 1800's, with all its members' families, provided sailing, swimming, horseplay on the raft, volleyball games, picnics, friends, mischief, and a whole lot more. Mark said that some of the best times of his life were there. And it was available any day all summer season long. We even usually got to be in-residence for a week every year along with another club family. Evening card games often had 8-10 players and was a much anticipated activity. Junior high school, followed by high school in Gardner were

pretty standard. Mark played tuba in the marching band, complained about going to Pastor Swanson's excellent Saturday morning confirmation class, and avoided homework. In order to improve his focus on education, Mark spent his junior and senior year at Proctor Academy in Andover, New Hampshire. Known by house parents as being one of their more "spirited" youths, Mark participated in LaCrosse, and with the advent of age 16 and the much awaited Learner's Permit, Mark caught the car bug. He particularly loved the old "rounded" ones. Many of you will remember his pride and joy, the black '41 Olds, and depending on your perspective, the coolest or most embarrassing car on the planet. Mark spent one year at Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio. Being entrepreneurial by nature, he found himself needing to get out of the classroom chair and getting on with life. From Marietta, he found his way to working with cars-cleaning, selling, fixing-and other seasonal and varied jobs while trying to find his niche. He lived for a while on Cape Cod and also south of Boston until he and some friends decided to do like our European ancestors and move to a place of better opportunity. I don't quite remember why Houston, but Houston it was. He got a job in a couple of days with a lumber firm and stayed with them for a few years. Once again, the entrepreneurial wheels were turning, and he moved into carpentry and construction. He finally found his place. He could work with his hands, sniff out a good opportunity and have a sense of satisfaction that comes with a good days work. Mark was a hard worker, and he told me that he never short-changed anybody, and I believe him. He had a lot of integrity and was honest. He believed in doing a quality job. Mark met his former wife under unusual circumstances, and the long and short of it is that he took Diane and her daughter Christine into his life and they formed a family. Mark loved Christine dearly. His fatherly love was pure, real, and even exemplary. In a while, Cameron joined the little family. This was also an intense delight for Mark. Cam was his little guy, and he loved that boy. Mark, who had been a bachelor for so long, was amazingly a really happily-adjusted family man. Who could have predicted? In 2005, Mark got the medical news that he had mylo-fibrosis. Stuningly, insurance would not pay for any treatment until it turned into leukemia. He was forced to wait with no help. Turn it did, and his ten year battle started. During this time, things changed on the family front for many reasons that get played out all over the country and in all sorts of families. Mark became a single custodial parent. He took the job seriously and did his utmost. As his illness progressed, and he realized he would need to check into MD Anderson for several months, Grandma and Grandpa Anderson lay their lives aside for a total of c. 2-1/2 years over a four year period and moved to Bellaire where they ran the household, loved the grandchildren, and loved Mark. Stability, structure, and consistency ruled the roost under Grandma and Grandpa. And the kids got to love vegetables. Wink, wink. If love would have cured Mark, this alone would have done it. We all loved and prayed for him. He was so brave, uncomplaining, forgiving, hopeful, persistent and compassionate. God provided many hands and hearts, many of them right here at Faith Lutheran. Where else could he

get a dozen or more people to line-up on short notice to make a donation of fresh platelets? And then there was a special friend who did a needed fund-raiser. And another friend and near neighbor who was on call for any task at any hour. Brothers and sisters in Christ from Faith and other churches helping Mark and indeed our entire family, especially Mom and Dad. Casseroles, cards, intense prayer, love..... the sacrifice of time and love in the end by a dear cousin, a sister-in law and a woman of heart, and an intensely devoted soul and beloved companion who would have done anything, anything to keep him. So today, we remember Mark: father, son, brother, cousin, friend, beloved. Remember his children in your prayers, that they might be lifted and that with all that has happened, that they "Make love [their]aim..." (I Corinthians 14:1) "The strife is o'er the battle done; Now is the Victor's triumph won; Now let the song of Praise begun: Alleluia!" A Memorial Service will be held for Mark on Friday, December 5, 2014 at 11 o'clock in the morning at Faith Lutheran, 4600 Bellaire Boulevard, Bellaire, Texas 77401, with a luncheon to follow in the fellowship hall. Mark was never uncompassionate, but in the forge of personal suffering, his heart grew even bigger. He found a great deal of satisfaction in volunteering at Faith House, which was one of his church's outreach programs in a similar vein to the "Ronald McDonald" Houses across the country. Memorial contributions may be made in Mark's name to their work. Faith House c/o Faith Lutheran Church 4600 Bellaire Blvd. Bellaire, TX 77401