



Norton Gray

Jul. 22, 1937 ~ Nov. 17, 2025

Norton Saul Gray of Minneapolis, Minnesota passed away Monday, November 17, 2025 at the age of 88.

Norton was born in July of 1937 on the North Side of Minneapolis. The youngest of four children, Norton made his family whole. He played pranks, told jokes, created a friend group that lasted decades, and importantly, learned to make his own fun.

He attended North High School and briefly joined the Navy before enrolling in the University of Minnesota's business program. In addition to his studies, Norton sang in a quartet called "The Four Northmen," which topped the radio charts in the late 1950s.

At the University of Minnesota, Norton met Susan, his bride-to-be. They dated for 10 months before Norton proposed, beginning a marriage that would span 61 years and include four children, ten grandchildren (to whom he was "Papa Norts") and dozens of dogs.

Norton's long career was bookended by customer-facing jobs, starting first as a door-to-door encyclopedia salesman, and after retiring, learning to DoorDash at age 83. In between, he started multiple apparel businesses, including All Breed Shirt Company (dog shirts to pet lovers) and Heartland Apparel, selling apparel to Daytons, Target, and Kohls. Pertinent throughout his career is a continuous theme of bringing others happiness.

Norton will be remembered for the love he created in every space he went. Whether it was fishing off the dock on Gray's Bay, singing to the dogs in the kitchen, or doing magic tricks with his grandchildren, where Norton went, love, laughter, and light followed.

Norton is survived by his wife, Susan; children, Jeff (Becky) Gray, Scott (Terri) Gray, Jennifer Gray (Mark) Freeman, and Ben (Melanie) Gray; grandchildren, Talia and Sophie Gray, Lily and Julia Gray, Annie, Josh, and Isabel Freeman, and Sidney, Piper, and Ivy Gray; and brother-in-law, Owen Husney. Norton is preceded in death by parents, Elizabeth "Lisa" and Max Gray; and siblings, Alvin, Ruth, and Sonny Gray.

Memorial service will be held at 12 PM on Wednesday, November 19th at Adath Jeshurun Congregation, 10500 Hillside Lane West in Minnetonka. Shiva 7 PM on Wednesday at Adath Jeshurun Congregation. Memorial service will be livestreamed at: www.adathjeshurun.org/livestream.html (direct link below).