

Yves Avila Daigle

Yves Avila Daigle, 89, of Westfield died with family by his side on September 7, 2021. He leaves behind a family and a community that loved him dearly and will long miss his big presence in this world. He was one of a kind.

Yves was a civic-minded man who spent decades serving the town of Westfield, first as a library trustee, then 52 years as a selectman. In his retirement years, he ran the town's recycling center (he turned Saturday recycling into the week's social event) and dug graves. He collected cans and cashed them in to support the playground he initiated. He collected aluminum can tabs for the Shriners to help pay for patient care. In his eighties, he took computer classes and got an iPad so he could conduct town business in the twenty-first century. And he mowed lawns – his own, the library's, the cemetery's, even the lawn at an abandoned house, so no piece of Westfield would look unsightly if he could help it.

He collapsed doing what he loved – working, specifically mowing the lawn on his beater of a riding mower. He had a new one but preferred the old one, which lacked a hood and resembled something out of an apocalypse film. Despite a daughter's, son-in-law's, and first responders' efforts at CPR, he never regained consciousness and died two days later, hanging on well beyond expectations.

His parents, Leo and Marie Laure (Carrier) Daigle, moved to Westfield from Quebec and started Daigle's General Store. It included a barber shop, a grain business, and about anything else a person could want. When Yves was still in his teens his father sent him to Montreal to learn how to be a barber – whether he wanted to be one or not.

At 20, he married Hilda Willis, and six days later was shipped out for a two-year stint in the Korean War, where he worked as a medic. He always joked that, for the first two years of marriage, he and his wife got along great. Actually, they got along well enough for the rest of them that in December of this year they would have celebrated their sixty-ninth wedding anniversary.

He went back to working in the store when he returned from the service, but what he really wanted to do was be a dairy farmer. In the 1960s he bought a farm on the Loop Road in Westfield. That venture got off to a rough start when, not long after purchase, the barn burned down. Later, there was a fire at that barn, too, and he was badly burned trying to get back into the hay barn to save his youngest daughter, who was there to do CPR the day he collapsed.

Over time, he built up a legendary herd of purebred Holsteins and a reputation for being one of the best farmers around. He was so meticulous that this writer, his daughter, remembers having to demonstrate to every new hired hand exactly how to spread sawdust in a cow's stall. Eventually, his wife, Hilda, put the place up for sale, and they "retired," moving to a house in Westfield Village, where Yves took on more jobs for the town. He's been on WCAX's Channel 3 news twice as a featured "Super Senior." He was recently honored through a legislative

resolution for his community service – several legislators presented him with the resolution, which, among other things, noted that he was likely the longest-serving selectman in Vermont. The Shriners also recognized him for providing over 300,000 tabs to their program.

Above all, however, he loved his family. Yves and Hilda's home has long been the hub of family activity, and any given day will see a revolving door of family members. Nothing interested him more, or made him prouder, than hearing about the lives of his daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. From cheering on grandkids at sporting events, to spearheading home renovations for his daughters, he led his life with purpose and unparalleled commitment to those he loved.

He leaves behind his wife, Hilda; his three daughters: Tena Starr of Glover and her partner, Steve Maleski, and her son's father, Erik Porter, Mary Lee Daigle of Westfield, and Kelli and Scott Dean of Westfield; his grandchildren: Lara Starr and her partner, Grant Reed, and the fathers of her children, Jason Belisle of Westfield and Dave Heath, of Newport Center, Hannah Dean and her fiancé, Anthony Andronico, of Quincy, Massachusetts, Jeremy Dean of Westfield, Walker Farley and his partner, Desiree Ouellet, of Westfield, and Colton Porter of Glover and his partner, Michelle Adkins, of Dallas, Texas; and his great-grandchildren: Garrett Heath and Grason, Mabel, and Maverick Belisle of Westfield. He also leaves behind five siblings: Louis Daigle and his wife, Sandy, Monique Temple and her husband, Allyn, Jeannine Tayler and her husband, Bernard, Jacques Daigle and his wife, Theresa, and Laurette Lewis and her husband, Jim. He also leaves his good friends Norman Piette, Todd Morey and Frank McAllister, and many more.

He was predeceased by six other siblings: Joseph, Charlie, Jackie, Norman, Conrad, Norbert, Bobby, and Louise.

We will miss his humor, his quirkiness, his hard work, and his willingness to give to us and to his spot in the world.

There will be a funeral mass at the Catholic church in Troy at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, September 14. It will be followed by a full military honors ceremony at the Westfield cemetery, then a reception at the parish hall in Troy.

In lieu of flowers, please honor Yves with a contribution to the Jay Westfield Elementary School Sports Program. Checks can be made out to Jay Westfield School, and all donations should be sent to 257 Revoir Flat Road, Jay, VT 05859.