



Mr. Merton C. "Mert" Hathaway Jr.

August 2, 1937 - November 22, 2025

Merton C. Hathaway Jr., (8/2/1937 - 11/22/2025) also known as Mert, lived a life that could fill a novel — and not always the kind you'd want your kids to read. He grew up in Hinsdale Massachusetts, the son of Merton “Bud” Hathaway and Caroline Emerson Hathaway, Merton Jr had a twin brother Martin and a sister Judy. As a boy, he was a prankster, plain and simple. If there was trouble, he found it (or it found him). He was mischievous, a bit reckless, and always three steps ahead of whatever adult was yelling his name at the time.

He loved telling stories from his younger years — like when his father made him and his twin brother, Martin, dance in bars for money so their dad could drink. Or the time he and Martin lit a bag of poop on fire on the stoop of the local doctor’s house, then pulled the steps away so the poor man nearly broke his neck chasing them.

He served in the Army stationed in France from 1955 to 1958. Even in the Army, Mert didn’t lose his knack for pranks. He was known to write his own leave passes and head out to the local bars, where he somehow always managed to find trouble — and charm his way out of it.

He worked a short time for the Crane Government Mill, E.D. Jones, J.H. Maxymillian and Lenox Machine. He married the love of his life of 64 years, Erika Steinhilber from Lenox Dale Mass and there they built their home on

land given to them from Erika's father, George. While living in Lenox Dale, he volunteered for the Lenox Dale Fire Department. One of his favorite pastimes was spending time at the Eldorado Bar, where his quick wit and even quicker mouth sometimes got him into trouble. Thankfully, his buddy Jack Duby often served as his self-appointed bodyguard, making sure he didn't get the crap beat out of him for saying exactly what was on his mind.

Mert finally gave up drinking and smoking in the seventies when it nearly killed him. To his credit, he stayed sober and nicotine-free for the rest of his life.

He had a deep love for animals and children. He once rescued a retired racehorse and gave it the peaceful life it deserved, and he adopted a kitten he found tangled in a briar patch on the golf course (most likely where his ball had landed) — because that's just who he was, a friend to animals. He had many dogs throughout his life who were constant companions and sidekicks.

Golf was another of his passions and inspired a love for the game in his son. Mert spent countless hours on the green, chasing the perfect shot and the next good laugh. He swung a club up until the age of 86, despite a bad back from his military service and years of construction work.

Mert had a strong connection with kids. He co-coached his son's peewee football team in Lee, sharing his love of the game and mentoring young players. His favorite NFL team was the Chicago Bears, and through every season — no matter how rough — he remained a loyal fan, forever hopeful for "next year."

He also found joy in coaching girls' softball and took great pride in teaching his daughter how to pitch — a skill that led her to become the first female softball pitcher in Berkshire County to throw a no-hitter, a memory she'll cherish forever.

If Mert wasn't on the golf course, playing with kids, or taking in stray animals, you could find him in a couple of places: the racetrack, where he bet on the dogs and horses, the Locker Room playing cards, or his raspberry patch, where he endlessly groomed, weeded, and picked buckets of berries to share with his neighbors.

Mert is survived by his wife Erika, whom he endeared the name Herman the German, aka Hermie, his daughter Nancy and her husband Russ Hopowiec, his son David, granddaughter Whitney, daughter in law Wendy Marchand, grand dog Molly as well as sister-in-law Beverly Hathaway and many nieces and nephews.

He is predeceased by his parents, his twin brother Martin Hathaway, sister Judith Sherman, nephew Martin John Hathaway and niece Anne Hathaway. You could say he is also survived by countless stories — some unlawful, some painful, many hilarious — and a legacy that proves people can change, even if it takes them a while to get there.

In his younger years, Mert battled demons, often at the bottom of a bottle. He drank hard, lived harder, and made more than his share of bad choices. But in time, and to the surprise of many, he reformed. Maybe not into a saint, but into a man who tried, a man who worked, who showed up, who wanted to do better even when it was hard — especially when it was hard.

Mert was stubborn, a little too trusting, and didn't always use the best judgment. People took advantage of his good heart more times than he probably realized — or maybe he did realize and just chose to believe in people anyway. He gave second chances, even to those who didn't deserve them, and helped people who never said thank you. He was the kind of man

that would help another person out, whether he knew you well or not. Mert wasn't perfect, but he was kind. He wasn't a hero in the usual sense, but he was ours and he had a heart of gold. We will miss him more than words can say.

The family is deeply grateful for the care and kindness he received from Home Care Services, Hospice, and Elder Services, and for the many friends he made while being cared for at Kimball Farms. Kimball Farms won't soon forget Mert — or the daily “Mert Alert,” as he kept everyone on their toes with his antics right up to the end.

Services for Mert will be private. A celebration of life will be scheduled at a later date.

Memorial donations may be made to the Berkshire Humane Society or the Lenox Youth Basketball Association c/o Roche Funeral Home, 120 Main St, PO Box 152, Lenox, MA 01240

Cemetery Details

Mountain View Cemetery

Housatonic Street
Lenox, MA 01240

Tribute Wall

CT

“ *Memorable for his smile which made so many smile. RIP, Mert*

Caryl Tugget - December 09, 2025 at 10:36 AM

JY

“ *Erika, Nancy, David*
First, what a wonderful obituary for a great friend. It captures all of the Mert I knew. As a longtime golf buddy and driver for the last couple of years, I heard many of the stories (several times) direct from the source! Always told and received humorously. As a playing partner, i can vouch for his true love of golf, his wonderful berry patch, his pride in his family and the day he shot his age (72 at Pontoosuc from the blues). I still smile at that today.
Our group misses him every Saturday morning we play and will toast him our first time out next Spring.
Enjoy the raspberries always!

Jack Yablonsky - December 08, 2025 at 10:32 AM

MD

“ *Dave, my condolences to you and your family.*

Mark Delsoldato - December 08, 2025 at 09:37 AM

TF

“ *Our condolences at the passing of Mert. He was definitely a piece of work! Great obituary! Our prayers & thoughts are with you.*

The Sheehan family
Lenox Dale

The Sheehan family - December 08, 2025 at 06:24 AM

GL

“ Dave and family, very sorry for your loss. Always enjoyed talking sports with Mert, he was certainly fun to be around. Thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Gary Lagarce - December 07, 2025 at 05:13 PM

WM

“ My Condolences on the passing of Mert. I worked With Him at Cranwell back in the Mid 80's Great Guy to work with. May He Live on in Paradise

William Marco - December 07, 2025 at 01:37 PM

CB

“ I'm so sorry to hear of Mert's passing. Austin and I will keep you all in our thoughts.

Charlene & Austin Bona

Charlene Bona - December 06, 2025 at 09:31 PM

BW

“ There's a group of us who Mert played golf with every Saturday for years. On his birthday which he turned 72 that day he shot a 72! It was so awesome to see and he was very happy about it! We will miss him on Saturday mornings!

Bob Williams - December 06, 2025 at 08:53 PM

KD

“ A lovely tribute to Mert and very truthful. Mert was one of Stan's best buddies . Wonderful Pee Wee football memories. We had good times . A fine man and friend.

kathy daoust - December 06, 2025 at 12:54 PM

JM

“ Nancy and family, so sad to hear of the loss of your Dad, another of the greatest generation.

I have vivid memories as a kid with my lemonade and golf ball stand on the fifteenth hole at Cranwell. On Saturday's Mert and his partner Jack DUBY, would come thru with my father Art and his partner Taxi Fairfield. There was always something besides lemonade stashed in my cooler for them!!

Cherish your memories..

Jon Martin

Jonathan Martin - December 06, 2025 at 07:59 AM

TC

“ To Erika, Nancy, Dave and Family. So sorry for your loss of Mert. A few years ago we were in a very close golf match with with some buddy's when on the 13th tee he remembered that he had a doctor's appointment, so we took the cart through the woods to Paterson Road. Match over!! Always had a blast with Mert. RIP Buddy.

Tim Casey - December 05, 2025 at 09:13 AM

DR

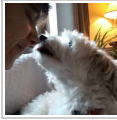
“ It's impossible to single out one story after 40+ years of friendship. We played hundreds of rounds of golf together, we traveled on golf trips, we were VFW members, we were "pitch" partners for years, we worked together and we watched our children mature into wonderful adults. Ever one of these connections produced many stories. At some time I hope to be able to share some of them with you. He was one of a kind! RIP my friend

David Roche - December 05, 2025 at 08:07 AM

WL

“ Sorry for the loss of your husband and father. My father worked at Beloit in Dalton where I first met Mert over 60 years ago. Mert was a unique individual. Whenever I would run into Mert the conversation would turn to memories of their time together at Beloit. The loss of Mert is another loss of someone with a connection with my dad.

Wayne lemanski - December 04, 2025 at 12:19 PM



Thank you for sharing Wayne

Nancy Hathaway-Hopowiec - December 04, 2025 at 11:31 PM

MK

“ Mrs. Hathaway, David, Nancy and Family,

I first met my buddy Mert while he was coaching our pee wee football team and for the past 45 years or so I've been blessed to call him a friend.

He looked after my brother John a.k.a. Gumby while working as his supervisor at Cranwell, he would drive our family to and from the airport if we needed rides no matter what time it was day or night, he would swing by the house to drop off some berries for the kids, and was always good for a joke or story or two / some clean some not so much.

I remember one morning he came by the house for breakfast and told the kids he was going to stop by on his way home to go see "Digger Roche" so he can ask for a few spare teeth since he was missing a few. You can imagine that took some explaining on my part later on.

If you were to google the term "one of a kind" it should have Mert's picture next to it! His obituary is a testimony to that but also a beautiful lesson of determination, resilience, and striving to be a better version of himself.

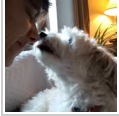
I'm grateful for our friendship and for some of those lessons he taught us.

Thinking of you and your family.

God bless,

Matt Keator

Matt Keator - December 03, 2025 at 12:24 PM



I love this Matt, thank you for sharing...

Nancy Hathaway-Hopowiec - December 04, 2025 at 11:30 PM

JY

Erika, Nancy, David

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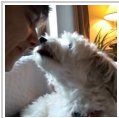
Jack Yablonsky

Jack Yablonsky - December 07, 2025 at 01:14 PM

MF

“ *So sorry that Mert has left this earth. What a wonderful obituary, telling the whole story. Mert was Bob’s limo driver in his sober years* 💕 *He gave rides to and from the airport, race tracks, golf courses, and special events. We could always depend on him to get us where we were going on time and safe! He would arrive early to pick us up with a coffee in hand. He also gave Shannon some of those raspberry bushes to plant... He will be missed by many* 💔

Monda and family... - December 03, 2025 at 11:07 AM



Thank you Monda

Nancy Hathaway-Hopowiec - December 04, 2025 at 11:32 PM

CS

“ *My deepest sympathy for your loss. May fond memories bring you comfort during this difficult time.*

Cheryl Sibley - December 03, 2025 at 07:36 AM



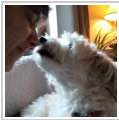
Thanks Cherski

Nancy Hathaway-Hopowiec - December 04, 2025 at 11:39 PM

MD

“ *Uncle Mert always had a quick wit, smile, and his laugh reminded me of Grandpa. Will miss him and his mischief. Great obituary. Deeds*

Michelle Doucette - December 02, 2025 at 10:37 PM



Thanks Deeds

Nancy Hathaway-Hopowiec - December 04, 2025 at 11:36 PM

RH

“ *Erika, so sorry for you and your family's loss. Mert was a great guy, a one of a kind!
He's going to be missed by all who knew him.
Loved the obituary.. Well done!*

Roger Hart - December 02, 2025 at 03:22 PM

SS

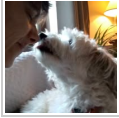
“ *Very sorry for your loss, Mert will be missed. I always enjoyed our chats and his words of wisdom. Thoughts and prayers are with you all.*

Scott Sibley - December 01, 2025 at 11:56 AM

SG

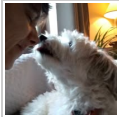
Dave and Nancy I'm very sorry to hear the loss of your Dad. He was a very nice man and always kind to me when ever he would see me. May God bless him and all of you.

Spiro Grigoropoulos - December 02, 2025 at 03:19 PM



Thank you Spiro

Nancy Hathaway-Hopowiec - December 04, 2025 at 11:38 PM



Thank you Scott. It was such a honor for him when you recognized him on Veterans night at the basketball game.

Nancy Hathaway-Hopowiec - December 04, 2025 at 11:39 PM

AD

Erika and family - So sorry to hear about Mert. So many memories! Please call me if you need to talk. Love, Annie

Ann Dobson - December 07, 2025 at 12:50 PM