



Thomas "Sugar Bear" Welp

December 3, 1947 - January 6, 2026

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Thomas "Sugar Bear" Welp, age 78, of Celestine, Indiana, passed away at 1:55 a.m. on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at Serenity Springs Senior Living at Northwood in Jasper, Indiana.

Tom was born in Siberia, Indiana, on December 3, 1947, to Cyrene and Emma (Hedinger) Welp. He married Shirley Partenheimer on May 2, 1970, at St. Raphael's Catholic Church in Dubois, Indiana.

He was a 1967 graduate of Northeast Dubois High School.

He was a United States Army Veteran.

He had worked at PV Mining and then construction, and was most recently a truck driver for Qualters Trucking.

Tom was a member of St. Isidore Parish – St. Celestine Catholic Church in Celestine, Indiana, the American Legion, the Celestine Community Club, and a lifetime member of the Birdseye Conservation Club.

He enjoyed hunting, fishing, cooking, especially helping the fire department at Celestine make turtle soup every year, and spending time with family and friends.

Surviving is his wife of 55 years, Shirley Welp, Celestine, IN, one son, Rodney (Liz) Welp, Jasper, IN, one daughter, Rhonda Welp and fiancé Rachel Celletti, Plainfield, IN, six grandchildren, seven great grandchildren, two sisters, Mary (Charlie) Marx, Evansville, IN, and Monica Welp, St. Meinrad, IN, two brothers, Eugene (Dolores) Welp, St. Meinrad, John (Michelle) Welp, Loogootee, IN, one sister-in-law, Eilene Welp, St. Meinrad, and several nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death are two brothers, Mark Welp, and an infant, James Welp.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Thomas "Sugar Bear" Welp will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at St. Celestine Catholic Church in Celestine, Indiana, with burial to follow in the church cemetery. The American Legion Post #147 will conduct military gravesite rites.

A visitation will be held from 9:00 a.m. until the 11:00 a.m. Mass time at the church on Saturday.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Isidore Parish or to the wishes of the family.

Online condolences may be made at www.becherkluesner.com.

Cemetery Details

St. Celestine Cemetery

6864 Indiana 164
Celestine, IN 47521

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 10. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Celestine Church
6864 Indiana 64
Celestine, IN

Mass of Christian Burial

JAN 10. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Celestine Church
6864 Indiana 64
Celestine, IN

Tribute Wall

IK

“ Our deepest condolences to the family. We remember when he would come to Rhonda's softball games at Dubois. He was always so much fun to be around cheering. Never a dull moment, so friendly. May you rest in peace in God's hands.

Irene/Eric Krodel - January 11 at 12:33 PM

JT

“ Our heartfelt sympathy to the Welp family. Have so many memories: living at Ellsworth, going to Bender Grade School, Dubois High School, and Class of 67 Reunions. Tom had a big heart. Judy Nolan Tolbert and Lana Nolan Wells

Judy Tolbert - January 08 at 02:21 PM

DZ

“ Our heartfelt thoughts and condolences go out to the Welp family. Dave and Debbie Zehr

Deborah Zehr - January 07 at 03:40 PM

MB

“ Bob and I always enjoyed talking with you and Tom at class reunion. Prayers for you and your family.
Martha&Bob Buchta



Martha Buchta - January 07 at 01:43 PM

SM

“ We were so sad to hear of Tom passing. We will always remember him at some family gatherings joking and laughing with us. We pray he will have peace and eternal rest. Our thoughts, prayers love and sympathy to Shirley, all of family and friends. Love, Susan & Claude Mitchell, Indpls, In.

Susan Mitchell - January 07 at 10:25 AM

CS

“ I'm going to miss him and his diary queen spoon at our turtle soup. He's always been so nice to me.

Candy smith - January 06 at 01:42 PM

KE

“ Shirley and Family. Thoughts and prayers are with you. Carla and Karen Erny



Karen Erny - January 06 at 01:03 PM

CB

Shirley and family, our thoughts and prayers are with you all. Paul and Chris Best

Christina Best - January 06 at 01:47 PM