

VanFleet Family



The Adrian VanFleit family left Utrecht, Netherlands in 1662 and came to America, settling in New York State. The name was changed to VanFleet as that was the way it was pronounced. In the 1800's some of the family moved to Michigan. Dale's ancestors settled in Lower Michigan in Hillsdale County, where they farmed for many years. The VanFleets are found all over the United States, some retaining the original spelling while others use a variation.

Dale's parents were Lee and Inez (Aldrich) VanFleet. Lee was a farmer in southern Michigan and Inez a homemaker. They raised seven children.

Gretna's family came from England. The Sanfords, her father's family, came to New York State early in the 1800's. Her grandfather on her mother's side, William Dollimore, came to the United States about 1880 at 16 years old, seeking his fortune. Gretna visited the Dollimore Homestead in Hemelhempstead, England and found the church where her grandfather had attended and the graves of many ancestors.

Gretna's parents were Duane and Leta (Dollimore) Sanford. Duane was a pharmacist for a few years before he decided to do what he liked best – farm. Leta was a one-room country school teacher. They had four children.

Dale and Gretna were married July 17, 1949 with a lawn wedding at her parents' home in Allen, Michigan. They lived in Monroe for a short time and then farmed in Hillsdale for several years. Dale also did some work as a tool and die maker.

In August of 1967, Dale VanFleet and his family moved to Sunburst Court in Frankenmuth. Dale wanted to make a career change and had the opportunity to open an office for Farm Bureau Insurance.

Dale and Gretna had four daughters: Marcia, Pamela, Cheryl and Jonilyn. All four daughters went to school in Frankenmuth and graduated from Frankenmuth High School.

For nearly 30 years Dale pursued a career with Farm Bureau Insurance, winning numerous awards such as Man of the Year, Elton R. Smith Award, 27 years on the App-a-Week Club, as well as numerous trips. Gretna worked as office manager for the Saginaw County Farm Bureau and for Weiss Farm Equipment. She also worked in Dale's office managing the Crop Insurance Program. Her last major job was running a Bed and Breakfast at their home on Tuscola Street.

Dale and Gretna were involved in community activities such as Bavarian Festival, 4-H Club and Farm Bureau Community Action Group. Gretna was president of the Frankenmuth Women's Club and on the Quilt Committee. They were active in the Frankenmuth Methodist Church and have traveled through various states and to Reynosa, Mexico, doing mission work with the Nomads. Gretna was also a member of Questors, an international group.

Marcia married Carl Gustafson in 1971 and they had two children, Amber and Grey. Carl died in 2000. Marcia has been in PTA and in 4-H as a leader and president of the 4-H County Council.

Pamela married Bruce Wright. They lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan and had two children, Lisa and Eddie. She worked many years for Amway.

Cheryl married Tim Weirauch in 1979 and is a Special Education Administrator with the Vassar School System. They had two children, Sarah and Jonathon.

Jonilyn works as a pathology technologist for Dow Chemical in Midland. She had three children: Amy, Jacob and Neil.



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