



James Joseph Semke

May 7, 1941 - May 17, 2016

Surrounded by the love of family, friends and caregivers, James Joseph Semke, 75 , passed peacefully into the embrace of his heavenly Father, May 17, 2016. Born May 7, 1941, the farm boy from LaCrosse, Wisconsin would always hold a special fondness for the dairy country, but he had a wonderlust for seeing the world. At the age of 18, he enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he served for the next six years. Following this, he traveled the country as a contract Tool and Die Designer, working for firms like Boeing and John Deere. His was a simple life dedicated to serving the Lord. By offering comfort to the invisible people who live on the streets, he touched many. Kindness, patience and grace were his greatest strengths. His favorite past time was rousing his grandson's at 5 a.m. to hunt worms and teach them to fish. As he aged, he gave voice to his thoughts through writing and brought forward beauty among his gardens. We will all miss his cheerful, consistent answer of "wonderful", when asked how he was doing.

He is survived by daughter, Deborah Ann (Alan) Nesbit, son Michael Joseph Semke and his fiancé Erin Allgeier, his children's mother Maureen Buckman(Ryan) and her husband John, Grandson's Christopher, Kevin and Stephen Nesbit, siblings, Louis, Mary Jane, Eugene, Phillip, Ronald, Orville, Annette and Kenneth.

He was preceded in death by parents Lucille (Hall) and Vernon Semke and foster parents Joe and Coletta Stevens and infant son James Joseph.

The funeral service will be held on Monday, May 23, 2016 at Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home at 11:00 am. Interment at the Grand Traverse Memorial Gardens will immediately follow where he will receive full military honors.

The family requests that you plant a tulip in his memory, so that each spring you might remember him.

In lieu of flowers, kindly consider Catholic Human Services. <http://www.catholichumanservices.org>

Special thanks to the staff at Maple Valley Nursing Home, where for the past 7 years, Jim found gentle hands and hearts to care for his many challenges.

Please visit <http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com> to share your memories with the family.

The family is being cared for by Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home.

Events

MAY **Funeral Service** 11:00AM

23

Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home
305 Sixth St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

MAY **Visitation** 10:00AM - 11:00AM

23

Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home
305 Sixth St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

Comments



“ Jim was a good friend and always there with a smile. So sorry for your loss.

Rosemarie Fincannon

Rosemarie Fincannon - June 21, 2016 at 01:53 PM



“ We were so sorry to hear about Jim. He was a wonderful person. We used to go to San Diego and visit with him. We always had a fun wonderful time. When he came home to La Crosse he would always come to see us and my parents. My parents loved him very much. My mom always kept track of his family. We would have family reunions and a lot of his family would be there. It was wonderful. When Jim was home a lot of the time we would take some short trips around the area and also see family which he loved to do. I remember one time when I took a picture of Jim standing by a rock. I think it was one of his favorite pictures. We certainly miss him. God will take care of him now. We are sure he is in heaven with all the relatives before him. You have our sympathy. Sending our love. Don and Carol.

Carol Helgerson - May 22, 2016 at 09:16 PM



“ 8 files added to the album FAMILY MEMORIES



Deb - May 20, 2016 at 05:07 PM



“ We've shared so many memories along this road of life. Mostly I will treasure the gift of time that we have had together. You have shown me my strengths, by letting me take care of you. From the first months in the nursing home, when you insisted on learning, then teaching me, a specialized "morse code" for non communicative people. You insisted that we learn if so that we might communicate with your deaf/mute/quadruplegic roommate. Or how about the time that you figured out how we were going to start a band in the nursing home, insisting that we could travel from home to home spreading joy. I am going to miss so many of our adventures. I will treasure the joy of you singing "You Are My Sunshine" to me, insisting on completing the whole song, every time. I will hold in my heart each of the air kisses you blew to me throughout the day, just a couple short days ago. Even when I couldn't be sure that you knew I was even there, I knew they were your first angel kisses to me. I will cherish the memories of you writing your stories and us working together to keep them safe until they could be shared. I promise to keep your memories alive by sharing them now. Even though it always catches me off guard, I will treasure the smiles of my brother and one son...somehow they magically match your grin in exactly the same way. At least once a year I will dance the Polka and remember the joy that you shared with everyone. I love you always and I will miss the everyday memories the most.

Deborah Nesbit - May 19, 2016 at 12:31 AM



“ Beautiful memories Deborah xxx

Gary povey - May 19, 2016 at 09:39 AM



“ Deborah, After reading your beautiful message of love, I understand how precious life is. What a tribute to your dad. Being a mid-western farm boy, he was the embodiment of America. Serving the military proudly and being one fine family man, you could not ask for much more. "May his memory always be a blessing". We have sent the Wings of Wonder in memory of for your father. He has adopted an eagle, the best of America. Condolences from the Tate Family.

The - May 21, 2016 at 04:02 PM



“ Thank youTate family! Your gift is a cherished tribute to this beautiful soul. Through your donation, we can imagine our father/grandfather/brother soaring, untethered to earthly conflicts.

Deborah - May 22, 2016 at 09:27 AM



“ Jim, was the father of our children Deborah and Michael, of whom he was very proud. May you now rest in peace eternally with your Lord and our infant son, James.

Maureen (Semke) Buckman - May 18, 2016 at 09:42 PM



“ Xxx

Gary povey - May 19, 2016 at 09:40 AM