



Joseph Kuncaitis

June 30, 1944 - June 7, 2021

Joseph Frank Kuncaitis, 76, passed away suddenly in the early morning hours of June 7, 2021 at Orchard Creek Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Traverse City, MI where he had resided since April fighting a short battle with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Joe was born in Custer, MI at the family farm on June 30th, 1944 to Anne (Romanosky) (Kuncaitis) Ohman and Joseph Peter Kuncaitis. Carl Ohman stepped in early as a loving stepfather bringing the family to live in Ludington, MI. As a youngster he enjoyed working on the SS Badger with Carl Ohman as Captain.

During high school he met and fell in love with Claudia Joy Spooner. They were married in Ludington, when aged 18 and 17, on August 25th, 1962. Had their son (Rod) in 1963 in Ludington. Celebrated the arrival of their daughter (Evie) in 1966 in Kalamazoo and moved to the Traverse City area later that year. They enjoyed 45 wonderful and wholesome years together until Claudia's untimely passing in 2007.

Joe and Claudia were a force to be reckoned with. Through the years they fostered nearly 40 children, most of them newborns. They nurtured and cared for numerous family members and friends as well as area families in need. They hosted and remained lifelong friends with several exchange students and their families from Europe and traveled the world exploring and helping others. Joe served on the Acme Township Zoning Board of Appeals for 47 years and was Chairman for 20.

Joe had the ability to make everyone feel important and safe while in his presence. Whether attending the Williamsburg United Methodist Church, enjoying the, still ongoing, neighborhood pinochle club for 47 years, hosting friends at his deer camp in the U.P., coaching ball games for both his children, attending every sporting and academic event of his grandchildren or welcoming everyone into his home, all thought of him as Dad, Uncle, Grandpa or the best of friends.

He was an extremely proud American who was also proud of his 100% Lithuanian heritage. After Lithuania regained its independence in 1992 he made around 10 trips to the homeland of his grandparents, establishing connections with family and friends, sending aid and support to many and hosting international family reunions while in Europe. This August will be the first Kuncaitis Family Reunion, in Michigan, in 44 years that will be without him.

Joe started working for Meijer Corporation while attending Western Michigan University. In 1968 he was hired as the Northern Michigan regional salesman for General Mills Food Co, which brought them to the Traverse City area. In 1971 they settled into the Acme/Williamsburg, MI area. After several years with General Mills he worked for Cherry Central and then eventually found his favorite job as the Regional Director of Sales for Bigelow Tea Company encompassing all territory east of the Mississippi. He was known throughout the grocery industry as a man of honesty and integrity and remained friends with many of his colleagues after he retired in 2006. He amassed well over 6 million frequent flyer miles out of Cherry Capital Airport.

Without a doubt, the twinkles in his eyes were his grandchildren: Heather (Tippett) Peshl, Dana Kuncaitis, Joseph Huver, Samuel Huver and David Huver. He loved dropping them off and picking them up from school, providing treats for their sporting events, taking them hunting, driving them around on his golf cart and sharing his life experiences. Recently he had found equally great pleasure spending time with his great grandchildren Sloane Peshl and Avalynn (AJ) Huver.

Joe is preceded in death by his parents, Joseph P. Kuncaitis and Anne Ohman, his stepfather Carl Ohman, his stepmother Tressa (Johnson) Kuncaitis, Father and mother-in-law Paul and Alfa (Heddon) Spooner, stepsister Diana Retcher, and his wife, the holder of his heart, Claudia (Spooner) Kuncaitis.

His life on earth continues to be celebrated by his son Rod Kuncaitis (Kimberly Jeffrey-Kuncaitis) Williamsburg, MI, daughter Evie Kuncaitis-Huver (Jim Huver) Williamsburg, MI, and a special niece/daughter Elizabeth (Spooner) Marshall from Colorado Springs, CO. His grandchildren Heather (Kevin) Peshl of Auburn Hills, MI, Dana Kuncaitis, Joseph Huver, Samuel Huver and David Huver all of Williamsburg, MI. Great grandchildren Sloane Peshl and Avalynn Huver. His siblings Robert (MaryAnn) Kuncaitis of Lansing, MI, Sheila (Lynn) Holley of Westminster, SC, Richard Johnson of Rialto, CA, Shirley Chancellor of Scottville, MI, Kathy MacDougall of Branch, MI, Teresa (TC) Gustafson of Sheridan, WY, Pat (Mike) Kuncaitis- Newman and Betty (Bill) Zweigle all of Branch, MI and many nieces, nephews, cousins and very close friends.

His favorite four legged buddies will receive some extra dog biscuits this weekend: Panzer, Albe, Ziggy and Quavo.

An intimate burial service took place 6/11/2021 at the Acme Township Cemetery officiated by Pastor John Messner of the Williamsburg United Methodist Church.

Per Joe's wishes, a large, joyful and music-filled celebration of his life will take place later this summer. Those who wish to remember Joe with a memorial donation are asked to please consider the Acme Civic Association, PO Box 268, Acme, MI 49610.

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Joe and his family are being cared for by the Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home

Comments



“ Send BEAUTIFUL Flowers Locally to the family of Joseph Kuncaitis. Express your condolences, giving comfort and support. [Click here to view selections on our website](#)”

Send Flowers - June 11 at 06:12 PM



“ Joe and his two kids have the biggest hearts. Joe and his truly great wife Claudia are now together. There's was a true love story.”

Dorothy Dunvilld - June 14 at 04:30 PM



“ Such a beautiful tribute. I did not know many of these things about my neighbor. What an extraordinary human. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.”

Koster Family - June 13 at 12:14 AM



“ I was fortunate to have know Joe for a very short time. But in that short time, he felt like family. What a gift. His son, Rod, has the same gift. They both love people and make them feel like family. What a gift.”

Vaughn W Harshfield - June 12 at 10:36 PM



“ Some people come into our lives and quickly go. some stay for a while and leave footprints on our hearts and we are never, ever the same.

I met Joe in 1968, I was assistant manager at Giant Super market; Joe was a representative for General Mills Food products.

Joe and I started Deere hunting together in the early 1970s and in 1985 Joe, Don Beyer and I bought the camp. With Joe as cook we never went hungry, not just a beans and weenie camp, we had 5 course meals. We hunted there together for nearly 50 years.

In 2012 Joe and I took a road trip to Florida, Joe wanted to listen to 60 and 70s music. He knew the words to every song and would sing along.

January of 2020 Joe invited me to bowl with him which was cut short due to covid.

Due to restrictions we were still able to play golf at GT Resort and Twin Birch.

JOE WAS DEFINITELY ONE OF THOSE WHO LEFT FOOTPRINTS ON MY HEART.

I LOST MY BEST FRIEND

Dave Galligan

Dave Galligan - June 12 at 04:22 PM



“ I didn't know Joe for long. Ironically, my husband grew up with Evie. I met Joe while working on A7 at Munson. Had the pleasure of being his Nurse Assistant. During his stay I got to talking with Eve. We shared stories of our families. When I showed her my husband's picture, she said his name. Then we had even more to talk about with Joe. He was a kind and funny. It was an honor to take care of and to know him even for the short time I had.

Stacy howe - June 12 at 02:36 PM



“ I was honored to have met Joe. Gentle and gracious he was truly a person I felt comfortable in his presence and knew his love for his faith, heritage and family. I could tell he was proud and he knew what he stood for. There is a theory in psychology called self actualization and this is the highest form of humanity, when a person truly becomes who they are intended to be and shares this with others...I would say Joe achieved this. He shared with me his love of children because I love and have adopted and foster children. I am so sorry for your family's loss. I hope you find comfort in your memories.

Abigail O'Brien - June 12 at 07:43 AM