



## Robert L Ffarek

July 21, 1921 - August 14, 2014

Robert Lee Ffarek, age 93, passed away, Thursday, August 14, 2014, at Traverse Victorian Senior Living Community.

Robert was born to Joseph and Anna (Kelenski) Ffarek on July 21, 1921, in Traverse City, Michigan.

He was married to Dorothy A. (Chase) Ffarek on June 8, 1946, at Saint Francis Catholic Church in Traverse City.

As a child, Robert enjoyed riding bikes, roller skating, and playing basketball, baseball and football with his friends. Robert peddled papers on the West side from the age of eleven until he was fourteen. He began hunting with his father when he was eleven years old and shot his first rabbit at that age. He and his dad hunted all over the Traverse City area, and Robert enjoyed regaling the entire family with stories of these experiences. He also enjoyed fishing. He was an outdoorsman for the rest of his life. He added golf to his interests as an adult, playing on company leagues or with family members and friends. While traveling during his retirement, Robert would often play a round of golf at an area course of the community he was visiting.

Robert graduated from Traverse City Central High School in 1939, where he studied a commercial course. He participated in football for four years. As a starting guard in 1937 and 1938, he and his football team won the Big North Conference Championships, and he was also a member of the first team to play under the Thirlby Field lights in 1937. Following graduation in 1939, Robert attended Lewis Chapman School of Business, studying accounting. Robert worked at the Traverse City tennis courts after high school until 1941 when he was hired by Michigan Bell Telephone Company as a lineman.

Robert joined the U.S. Naval Reserves in July of 1942. Within that branch of the armed forces, he served with the Capital Construction Battalion, the Seabees. In November of 1942, he shipped out as part of the invasion of North Africa on the troop transport U.S.

Thurston. As part of the invasion, he was stationed in Casablanca, Port Lyauté, at Craw Field, in Oran, and eventually landed in Sicily. In 1943 he headed to Saipan via the islands, spending some time on Marcus Island, which was eight hundred miles from Japan. He was discharged from the Navy in 1945 at Great Lakes in Chicago.

Following World War II, Robert returned to work for Michigan Bell Telephone Company, first as a lineman, then as line foreman, then with the engineering department. In 1953, he and his family moved to Manistee. He served as Plant Chief for Michigan Bell under the title of Exchange Repair Foreman - X. Robert worked there until he was transferred back to Traverse City in 1972. Robert continued to serve as Plant Chief until he retired in 1978.

In 1955, the cottage on Long Lake, owned by Dorothy's parents burned to the ground. Robert spent that summer demolishing the remains of the structure. Over the following summers, Robert transformed this second cottage into a summer home for the family, until it was expanded and remodeled into their retirement home in 1980.

Robert served on the board of directors of the Traverse City Athletic Boosters and did much to support the High School football teams. He was also very active with Special Olympics. While he was in Manistee, Robert was a member of the Jaycees and president of the Lions Club. He was also president of the Manistee-Cadillac and Traverse City chapters of the Pioneers.

Robert was a founding member of the Saint Patrick Catholic Church.

Robert was preceded in death by his wife, Dorothy; his parents; his in-laws, Raymond and Rosa Chase; three sisters, Joan Fifarek, Georgia Fifarek Lynch Synnestvedt, and Alice Fifarek Wright; a brother, Edward Fifarek; three brothers-in-law, Dr. Philip Lynch, Norman Synnestvedt, and William Wright; a sister-in-law, Nellie McFarren Chase; and his great-granddaughter, Sophia Rose Fifarek.

Robert is survived by two daughters, Rosanne Fifarek and Mary Jo Fifarek, both of Traverse City; and two sons, John Fifarek of Haslett, and James (Jan) Fifarek of Grand Rapids. He is also survived by his brother-in-law, William R. Chase of Kalkaska; his former daughter-in-law, Lori Hydeck of Sarasota, Florida; five grandchildren, Dr. Chase (Katie) Fifarek, Dr. John Fifarek, Jr., Lauren Fifarek, Sara Fifarek and Kalli Fifarek; seven nephews and numerous relatives and close friends. Especially dear to him was his great-granddaughter, Ellie Alona Fifarek.

The family would like to thank Deacon Rene Hoenscheid for his frequent and caring

attention. We also wish to express gratitude to the staff of Traverse Victorian and Hospice of Michigan for their gentle care of our father during his last few days.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Saint Patrick Catholic Church Men's Club or Saint Patrick Catholic Church Building Capital Campaign.

There will be a visitation for family and friends, Friday, August 22, from 4 - 7 PM, with a rosary to follow, at Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home.

A funeral Mass celebrating Robert's life will be held at 11 AM, Saturday, August 23, with a visitation one hour prior to the service, at Saint Francis Catholic Church, Traverse City. The Rev. Fr. Willaim Lipscomb will be presiding. Burial will follow at Oakwood Cemetery.

Please feel free to share your memories and thoughts with Robert's family by visiting [www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com](http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com)

Arrangements for the family have been entrusted to Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

# Cemetery

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## Oakwood Catholic Diocesan Cemetery

1720 Hannah Street  
Traverse City, MI, 49686

# Events

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**AUG 22**   **Visitation**   04:00PM - 07:00PM

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

**AUG 22**   **Rosary**   07:00PM

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

**AUG 23**   **Visitation**   10:00AM - 11:00AM

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St. Francis Catholic Church  
1025 S. Union, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

**AUG 23**   **Funeral Mass**   11:00AM

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St. Francis Catholic Church  
1025 S. Union, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

# Comments

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“ Great friend to many of us growing up in TC. From Junior High through Senior High. Many lunch & dinner times with the Fifarek's. When it came to "manning up" Mr. Fifarek set the standard. "Fair Winds and Following Seas" Mr. Fifarek. God Bless you!!!

**David Beagle** - August 18, 2014 at 07:14 AM

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“ Mr. Fifarek you were a wonderful person to work with. A gentlemen !!  
God Bless you and Dorothy.  
Aggie (Deering) Ochs

**Aggie Ochs** - August 18, 2014 at 07:13 AM

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“ I will miss when I hugged and kissed him that his hearing aid whistled, we both laughed, and his wonderful smile, love and will miss you , give Aunt Dorothy and Mom a big hug and kiss for me xoxox

**Doralie Chase, niece** - August 16, 2014 at 04:34 PM

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“ Wonderful parents and role models while John and I grew up in Vista Manor. Super family, super legacy.

**Dan Aja** - August 16, 2014 at 02:28 PM



“ To the Fifarek Family,  
May you find comfort in the memories that are yours to cherish always, and strength in the companionship of those who share your loss. Your Mom and Dad were such wonderful people, as I remember way back to Guardian Angels school days together.

Darlene Miller

**Darlene Miller** - August 18, 2014 at 02:13 PM