



## Thomas Michael Ropers

June 17, 1939 - November 12, 2016

Thomas 'Tom' Ropers died peacefully on November 12, 2016 surrounded by his loving wife and family.

Tom was born June 17, 1939, in Detroit, Michigan, to the late Carl E. and Marie M. (Ryan) Ropers. He attended Shrine of the Little Flower High School in Royal Oak, Michigan, where he played baseball and basketball. As a senior, he met the love of his life, and future wife, Helen (Hauptert).

Tom studied engineering at the University of Notre Dame where he was a member of the Reserve Officer Training Corps. He graduated from Notre Dame in 1961 with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and was commissioned an officer in the United States Army. Tom and Helen were married on July 1, 1961 at the National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica in Royal Oak, Michigan. Following their wedding, Tom reported for duty and attended advanced artillery training at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. Tom was stationed outside Pittsburgh, PA where he served in the 3rd Missile Battalion, 1st Artillery's "ring of steel" protecting Pittsburgh's industrial complex during the era of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Following completion of his military service, Tom and Helen returned to Michigan where Tom went to work for the Fisher Body Division of the General Motors Corporation – first in Detroit and later Lansing.

Tom and Helen moved to the Traverse City area in 1968 when Tom joined Wayne Wire Cloth Products in Kalkaska, Michigan. As an engineer, Tom designed and managed the production of metal filtration components used in a variety of industrial and commercial applications. His designs were critical to the aerospace, automotive, appliance and commercial airline industries as well as the United States Department of Defense, and can be found in the engines of military fighter jets, commercial airplanes, automotive airbags, major home appliances and NASA's Space Shuttle. Tom spent more than 30 years at the Wire Works and retired as Vice President and General Manager in 2001.

Tom loved Northern Michigan, and toured its beauty as often as possible by car and by boat. He enjoyed golfing, 50's music, hamburgers, TC Thursday Night Buds, his Drummond Island fishing trips and his Manitowish Waters Fish Camp with his longtime Notre Dame friends. Tom was an active member of the Acme Zoning Board for ten years, and he and his wife were one of the founding couples of the Grand Traverse Area Catholic

Schools' Gladhander Auction.

Tom is survived by his wife of 55 years Helen; daughter Kristan (William) Cassidy of Washington D.C.; son Jeff (Jeanette) of Charlotte, N.C.; granddaughters Katharine, Anna, and Olivia; many nieces and nephews and other beloved family members and friends.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents, infant son Jon Thomas, infant daughter Ann, brother Gerald, and the family's three wonderful German Shepherds--T-Bone, Rugby, and Woody.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday, November 16, 2016 from 4 to 8 pm at the Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home, 305 Sixth St., Traverse City, Michigan 49684. A time for sharing along with a special prayer of the rosary will begin at 7:00 pm.

Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 1:00 pm with visitation beginning one hour before at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1025 S. Union St., Traverse City, Michigan, 49684.. Fr. Kenneth Stachnik and Fr. Ben Rexroat will co-celebrate the Mass. Interment services will follow at a later date at St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery, Old Mission Peninsula.

Military Honors will be conducted under the auspices of Cherryland V.F.W. post 2780.

At the family's request, in lieu of flowers, Memorial Contributions may be directed to Munson Hospice House in gratitude and love for the extraordinary care and compassion provided to Tom and family or to the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church Building Fund. Please feel free to share your thoughts and memories with Tom's family at [www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com](http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com).

The Family is being cared for by the Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home and Cremation Service.

# Events

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**NOV 16 Visitation** 04:00PM - 08:00PM  
Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home  
305 Sixth St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

**NOV 16 Prayer Service** 07:00PM  
Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home  
305 Sixth St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

**NOV 17 Visitation** 12:00PM  
Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church  
1025 S Union St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

**NOV 17 Funeral Mass** 01:00PM  
Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church  
1025 S Union St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

# Comments

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“ molly is following this tribute.

**molly** - November 19, 2016 at 07:25 AM

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“ My condolences to the Ropers family on the loss of their father. I was 1 year ahead of Kristi at St Francis and Notre Dame, and it was always clear how much she treasured her parents and brother Jeff. My family will keep yours in our prayers. Joe Rossi

**Joe Rossi** - November 17, 2016 at 09:58 PM

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“ Dear Ropers Family, it was an honor to care for such an amazing man. What a blessing he was to your family. He passed away on my birthday Sincerely ~ Jenn Lamb, RN

**Jenn Lamb** - November 17, 2016 at 04:20 PM

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“ I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Mr. Ropers. I have many memories of him watching basketball practice and offering his support...he and my dad up in the stands (along with other dads) talking about the team, families, or anything else. In reading his obituary and remembering that he went to Notre Dame, I'm realizing that he and my dad probably talked quite a bit about the Irish - my dad's younger brother followed a very similar path through South Bend, to a branch of the Service, then to life as an executive. I worked at a carwash in high school, and Mr. Ropers came in frequently and would always give me a good word of encouragement...I'll always remember that about him. My prayers are with your entire family. God Bless.

**Brian Tschirhart** - November 17, 2016 at 01:33 PM

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“ To the Ropers family - I am so sorry to hear of Tom's passing. My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

Sincerely,  
Debbie Farhat  
(classmate of Jeff's at St. Francis)

**Debbie Farhat** - November 17, 2016 at 10:00 AM

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“ I am so sorry to hear of Tom's passing. I knew Tom for many years through our mutual association with Wayne Wire. Tom was smart, fair, and had a tremendous sense of humor. I had great respect for Tom, who was like the college professor who knew the answer but made sure you understood how it worked too. Tom was a big man in so many ways, and will be missed. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Bill Sturgeon

**bill sturgeon** - November 16, 2016 at 08:59 AM

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“ Great man who raised a great family! Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone.  
- Michael & Jenny Rhattigan

**Michael** - November 15, 2016 at 03:31 PM

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“ Tom's memory will remain irreplaceable for those of BUD'S Night Out with his sharp humor, wisdom and love of a good political discussion. I believe he died knowing the US will be in far better hands and I forgive his debt to me for the Notre Dame loss to Michigan State. He will surely be missed and the BUD'S will plant a memorial tree on Old Mission Peninsula to honor his lasting memory and positive impact on all of our lives.

Dan Denawetz

**Dan Denawetz** - November 14, 2016 at 02:07 PM