

OBITUARIES

Ricky A. Henderson

September 7, 1955 ~ March 10, 2026

Ricky Arvid Henderson, age 70, left this world to enter eternal salvation on March 10, 2026. Rick was born September 7, 1955, in Kalkaska, Michigan to Arvid "Zeke" Henderson and Erma Lucille Warner Henderson. He was the eldest of four brothers. His brother, Mike Henderson, spent hours talking about history and Vikings and was his confidant. Dennis (Jolanta) Henderson was the one he wanted to talk to when he needed some laughter. His baby brother, Andy (Molly) Henderson, was the gentle and caring one that Rick guided through educational and parental responsibilities. Deb Brode, a loyal friend of Rick, was consistently present, bringing him happiness, and the comfort of her pets.

Rick was raised in Rapid City and frequently returned there regardless of his career pursuits. He valued the memories of exploring forests, rivers, and fields with the Dalton, Guy, and Deater children, among many others. David Dalton, Dale Gaylord, and Mark Guy maintained lifelong friendships, often contesting who was his closest friend. Rick

graduated from Kalkaska High School in 1973, which he regarded as the best class ever. His passion for learning led him to Northwestern Michigan College, where he developed an interest in Geology. Subsequently, he attended Western Michigan University. Although college kept him away from home, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology and Elementary Education. His love for his hometown led to his Viking poem:

Rick the Red of Rapid City
Brave and Bold
And what a pity
He is so very witty
Ta Ha... Ta Ha... Ta Ha!!!

Despite obtaining his degree to pursue his passion for teaching, Rick was employed by the State of Michigan as a Geologist within the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality (DNR/EGLE). He remained a dedicated employee, advancing to the position of Senior Regional Geologist. His career included postings in Roscommon and Cadillac, and he worked remotely until his retirement after more than 4 decades of service.

Throughout his career, he spent weekends in Rapid City. Had health issues not arisen, he would likely still be working. His continued guidance and advice for colleagues after retirement were sources of great pride. Rick was a lifelong member of the Rapid City Church of Christ, where his beliefs were deeply rooted in tradition and community support, with God as the central focus. Through his faith in Jesus and commitment to community, he provided opportunities for numerous youth in Rapid City to engage in various activities and work. He frequently employed cousins, nephews, nieces, and neighbors for odd jobs on the family property, often concluding these chores with target practice using an assortment of firearms. He spent many hours driving through the woods in the Upper Peninsula disguised as bird hunting with his friend Bill Cornish as a way to connect with God's creation.

He was the uncle to four nephews—Dylan (Lindsay Gondol) Henderson, Deryk (Kyleigh) Henderson, Jack Stewart, and Mykolas Henderson—and

four nieces—Nicholle Sherwood Trubiroha, Kelly Jeanne Sherwood, Alayna Stewart, Gabrielle Henderson, Three great nieces and nephews Wyatt Gondol, Juna Gondol, and Mckinley Henderson—whose lives he enriched through advice, homework assistance, vehicle loans, and critiques of farming practices.

Rick was preceded in death by his mother Erma, father "Zeke," and brother Mike. He is survived by his brothers Dennis (Jolanta) Henderson and Andy (Molly) Henderson; his devoted friend Deb Brode; stepmother Patricia (Udell) Henderson; step-sisters Debra Meadows, Sharon (Rex) Alspaugh, Jody Fritz; and stepbrother David Meadows.

The visitation was held at the Kalkaska Church of Christ on Tuesday, March 17, from 1:30 to 3:30 PM, followed by a service beginning at 3:30 PM. Burial will take place in the spring at Clearwater Township Cemetery. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home.

Elizabeth Antonia Ludka Leask

April 16, 1942 ~ February 25, 2026

Our beloved Elizabeth "Liz" Antonia Ludka Leask, age 83 of Kalkaska, Michigan, passed away on Wednesday, February 25, 2026. Born April 16, 1942, in Traverse City, Michigan, Elizabeth was the daughter of Frank and Lillian (Antony) Ludka. On April 16, 1973, Elizabeth married Paul D. Leask in Traverse City and they moved to Kalkaska in 1974. Elizabeth worked as a Supervisor for Michigan Family Independence Agency, retiring in 1997 after 25 years of service.

Elizabeth is survived by three children, Kevin (Rachael) Leask of Charleston, South Carolina, Mark Leask of Kalkaska and Robyne Fournier of LaCygne, Kansas. Also surviving are brothers and sisters, Larry (Loretta) Ludka, Elaine (David) Kozlowski, and Charles Ludka all of Traverse City and sister Ruth Holsather of Midland. She is also survived by thirteen grandchildren, eight great-



grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Elizabeth was preceded in death by her husband Paul Leask, son Michael Leask, daughter Tari French; her mother and father; her brothers

Walter Bud Ludka and Frank Ludka II; her sister Virginia Ludka Schram; sister-in-law Julia Ludka and brother-in-law Wilfred Holsather.

The funeral Mass of Christian Burial for Elizabeth will be celebrated on Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. with visitation at 10:00 a.m. at the St. Francis Catholic Church in Traverse City, Michigan. Remembrance memorials may be made to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation at 5005 LBJ Freeway in Dallas, Texas 75244. Arrangements were made by Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home, our family serving yours.

Judith Ann Petroff (Martin)

June 27, 1943 ~ March 1, 2026

Judith Ann Petroff [Martin] 83, born June 27, 1943, in Madison, Wisconsin passed away peacefully Sunday night March 1, 2026 in her hometown of Kalkaska, Michigan. She was a long-time resident of Kalkaska for almost 50 years. She became a registered nurse and, from there became an administrator of several nursing homes all around northern Michigan. She had a passion for horses and dogs her whole life and owned and cared for many. She loved the outdoors, gardening, reading, traveling, horseback riding, and she loved where she lived. She was the most kind human being, always thoughtful and caring. She is predeceased by her father Stanley

Yancey, mother Charlotte Basel [Yancey] Stepfather William Basel, brother James Yancey, first husband Diminko [Danny] Petroff and second husband Robert Martin. She is survived by her nieces and nephews Tammy Yancey, Mike Yancey, Christine Jeavons, Matthew Yancey and Michelle Bratton. She is also survived by several great nieces and nephews. No services will be held at this time. She will be laid to rest at Garfield Township Cemetery, Fife Lake MI, in the spring. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

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V O I C E

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Dennis John McDonald

August 10, 1941 ~ March 4, 2026

Dennis John McDonald was born in Rochester, Michigan, on August 10, 1941, to John and Enid McDonald. He was a Christian man who loved his family and adhered to the values of respect and godliness. Dennis grew up in Rochester and



graduated from Rochester High School. He attended Cedarville College in Ohio for his bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and excelled at baseball to such an extent that he signed for the Detroit Tigers before sustaining an injury that brought an end to his professional baseball aspirations. After recovering from his injury, he returned to school to earn his master's degree in Special Education/Autism at Wayne State University in Michigan, and his post-graduate degree at Central Michigan University as an Education Specialist. He spent his fifty-year professional career working in education, teaching and mentoring students with special needs before moving into an administrative role. Dennis was a farmer at heart who enjoyed the slow pace of country life. He never passed up the opportunity to "haggle" (in his words) for the trade of equipment or favors. He loved to tinker in the barnyard with his farm equipment and take care of his farm animals. He spent many days baling hay or mending

fences. He also loved to spend his time outside on the golf course, perfecting his self-proclaimed ugliest swing in the game. Dennis enjoyed his morning devotions sitting on the porch with his wife and spiritual partner. He also enjoyed a good book from bygone eras. He possessed an inquisitive mind and loved to pose and debate thoughtful, philosophical questions. He loved to go for drives with his wife but never found the "long way" to be too long when the route took him past a donut shop or ice cream parlor. Dennis passed away on March 4, 2026. He is survived by his wife, Jay Ann, his son and daughter-in-law, Sean (Erin) MacDonald, as well as his two brothers, David (Jackie) and Bruce (Beverly) McDonald. The first visitation for Dennis took place on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, from Noon until 1:00 PM at the Evergreen Bible Baptist Church, Saunders Rd., in Kalkaska, Michigan. The funeral service was at 1:00 PM. A second visitation gathering was held on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 3:00 PM until 6:00 PM at Sharp Funeral Home in Grand Blanc, Michigan. The family asks for donations to St. Jude or the Wounded Warrior Project in lieu of flowers. Arrangements were made by Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home, our family serving yours.

Jacob K. Kade

March 13, 2006 ~ February 24, 2026

Jacob Kenneth Kade, 19, of Fife Lake, passed away in his home on February 24th, 2026. He was born in Traverse City on March 13th, 2006. Jacob graduated from Forest Area High School in Fife Lake, MI and continued his



education at Kirkland Community College in Grayling, MI. Jacob married the love of his life Kaylinn Kade (Root). He was an avid outdoorsman, amazing baker, and loved every single thing about vehicles, mechanics, small engines, and had a vast general knowledge when it came to turning a wrench. In his free time, he loved tinkering with his beloved truck, Roxanne ("Roxy"), his '86 Ford, and his vintage Arctic Cat snowmobile. He was well-known around town for his work ethic and always being willing to help the next guy in line. He got his start wrenching at his first job at the hardware in Fife Lake working on small engines. He was also a very involved member of the Sons of the American Legion and would spend most of his time doing lawn maintenance, working the fish fry, and working the EZ meals. He was also a part of the Color Guard where he had an amazing mentor, Randy Gilbert, who was also like a father figure to him. Jacob and Kaylinn met at

his auto parts job in Kalkaska on April 12th, 2025. From there they lived together and spent almost every day together. They often spent time with friends or out camping. On December 15th, 2025, they lovingly exchanged their wedding vows. Jacob was oftentimes considered a "bull in a china shop" by those around him but also "as a young man with an old soul". He is preceded in death by his two unborn children; Grandma & Grandpa Turk; Kaylinn's mom Noelle Vasquez and sister Elisa Root. He is survived by his wife Kaylinn Kade; his father Shawn Volger and mother Lindsay (Michael) Gresser; his grandparents Doug & Sandra Kade; his uncle Jason and Aunt Kim; his half-siblings Brodie (Abby) Long, Jobe Trelfa, and Katie Williams; his nephew Arlo Long; and his countless cousins and many friends. Jacob was truly one of a kind and will forever be missed. Matthew 19:26 was his favorite verse. A memorial service was held at the American Legion Post 219 in Fife Lake at 1:00 PM on Sunday, March 8, 2026, with visitation and a luncheon following. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

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Reatha Marie Cochran

March 21, 1945 ~ March 7, 2026

RAPID CITY - Reatha Marie Cochran, 80, a former court reporter in Michigan, passed on Saturday, March 7th, 2026, at home on the Torch River surrounded by family. Reatha was born to Zelda (Gray) Smith and Orin Gray on March 21st, 1945, in Grayling. She graduated from Kalkaska High School in 1963 and Lansing Community College - Court and Conference Reporting in 1979. She worked as a court reporter for the State of Michigan until her full retirement in 2009. Reatha was married to Max (Mick) B. Cochran on July 9th, 1966, at Munson Medical Center in Traverse City due to Mick's severe motorcycle accident two days before their actual wedding date while Mick was on leave from the Navy. As Reatha always joked, their nearly 60-year marriage started with a crash and bang. The couple lived in Vernon, Michigan, for decades, travelling North to their cabin near their beloved Torch Lake and the infamous Elvis Houseboat. As Reatha worked in the court system, Mick worked at



Buick-GM Flint until his retirement. The couple had one daughter, Reye Marie (Cochran) Kenney, in 1970. In 2000, they built their dream house on Torch River, enjoying the beautiful views from their front porch and the fun associated with the

lake. She spent her retirement years visiting friends and family, playing euchre, or gambling at Turtle Creek Casino. Reatha is preceded in death by her parents, Zelda (Gray) Smith and Orin Gray. She is survived by her beloved husband, Max (Mick) B. Cochran; their child and grandchildren, Reye (Cochran) Kenney, Tanner Kenney, and Taylor Kenney; brother Tom (Julie) Gray; nieces and nephews, Jodi (Gray) Thayer, Krisi (Gray) Scheidel, Tawni (Gray) Dieki, Rick (Lisa) Knust, Robin (Kim) Knust (Wells), Tammy (Jim) Leithow, and Terri (Cindy) Reasoner.

No services are planned at this time. Arrangements were made by Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home, our family serving yours.

Cheryl A. Buffington

May 21, 1959 ~ March 12, 2026

Cheryl A. Buffington, 66, of Grayling and formerly of Marine City, passed away on Thursday, March 12, 2026, at home with her husband, Phil by her side. She was born on May 21, 1959, in Windsor, Canada, the daughter of the late Robert and Frances Lee.



of Marine City, and grandson, Bryson. "Cheryl was friendly, loving and the best partner a person could ask for" said Phil. She will be sadly missed by those who loved and cared about her.

Cheryl married her love, Phillip S. Buffington on 9/14/2010 in Marine City. She is also survived by her son, Robert (Lisa) Hopkins

Cremation has taken place per Cheryl's wishes. No services are planned at this time. Arrangements were made by Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home, our family serving yours.

John 14:2 - In my Father's house, there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Additional Obituaries on pages 8, 9 & 10

DEAL ME IN

By Mark Pilarski (reprinted with permission of the author)

Downright lethal vs. pretty good

3 November 2003

Dear Mark,

Please explain what you mean by "winning progressive" betting? You mentioned it in a column without an explanation. Does it differ from doubling your bet after each loss? I play in Atlantic City, generally blackjack (I'm relatively new to the game), and \$10 a hand (hard on weekends to find anything lower). Keith B.

The latter part of your question, Keith, describes the "Martingale system," an historic name for doubling up after every loss. In essence, you, the gambler, double your previous bet (after a loss) leaning on the statistical certainty that sooner or later you're bound to win. Sounds great, Right?

MID-TERM QUIZ: Why is it the worst money management system you can use? Read on.

Far too many players believe the Martingale system is foolproof because you have to win eventually. The three problems with this money management system are: 1) you do not have an inexhaustible bankroll, 2) the casino owns the bank and sets the rules — like the table limit, and 3) your hourly wage if you win could be something like \$0.01.

Let me show you, Keith, how fatal this form of wagering can be. You bet \$10 and lose, then \$20 to recoup that loss. Then \$40, \$80, \$160, \$320, \$640, \$1,280, \$2,560 and finally \$5,120. You have just invested \$10,230 to get your \$10 back. And let us not forget, Keith, "the Donald" (Trump) might have his \$10 games set with table limits of \$500. A string of six defeats and you're up against the table limit - maxxed out, as they say. On the bright side, they'll probably say; "Thanks, Keith, and have a beer on us."

Ever met a gambler who has not lost six, eight or even 10 hands in a row? I haven't. That 10 bucks could buy a first class bandanna for wiping the sweat from your forehead.

Horsemen sometimes use a Martingale bit to control a fractious horse; each twitch of the reins doubles the discomfort in the horse's mouth. There may be a connection — don't know, seems likely.

The far superior "Winning Progressive" betting method goes like this:

You set a predetermined percentage increase to follow any winning bet, and pull in your horns after losses. Example? OK. On the advice of my brilliant better half, I increase the bet that follows any winning bet except the first by 50%: First \$10 bet wins, next bet also for \$10 wins, and now we're off on the 50% gallop: \$15, \$22, \$33, \$50, \$75 etc., then drop to the table minimum — "flat betting" — after every loss.

Side note here: Many players increase their bets after a win by 50% after the first win. I just happen to be a little more conservative with my hard-earned money — actually, only when my wife is standing next to me — and wait out the second win before plunging.

Either way, Keith, a winning progressive method of betting, will minimize your losses and usually protect your winnings.

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Gambling quote of the week:
"When you enter a casino, remember that you are entering a place of business run by very shrewd business people who understand human emotions."-Henry Tamburin



Sudoku Puzzle March 20, 2026

7		9						1
	3	5		9				6
8				4	5			7
9	5							4
1			7					6
		8			6	9	1	
		2	6	1	8	5		3
		3						
6	8						1	2

Solution on page 15

Additional Obituaries on pages 4, 5, 9, & 10

Raymond LeRoy Peka

August 7, 1945 ~ March 12, 2026

Raymond Leroy Peka (80) of Fife Lake, Michigan passed away on March 12, 2026, at a nursing home in Romeo after spending an afternoon with his niece and time with an old friend and his favorite son in law.



a good life by traveling and taking family trips between Michigan and Minnesota. "Butch" and Mary loved visiting Aruba, but most of all, he enjoyed hunting, fishing, gardening, hosting reunions, building campfires, and

Raymond (Ray, Butch) was born in Little Falls, Minnesota, on August 7, 1945, to the late Raymond F. Peka and Eleanore D. Oldakowski. During his childhood, the family moved to Roseville, Michigan where he grew up.

chopping wood at his retirement home in Fife Lake, where they were members of the Catholic church.

Ray was married to the love of his life for almost 60 years. Mary Elizabeth Sherrill (Peka) passed away in September of 2024.

Butch is survived by his three children, John D. Peka (Melissa), Brian J. Peka, and Cynthia D. Brunk (Robert); five grandchildren, Raymond (Kristin), AJ, Kourtney (Alex), Evelyn, and Zach; six great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and poodle, Max.

Ray served in the U.S. Air Force, got stationed in Marquette, toured in Thailand, went to Vietnam, and worked as a helicopter mechanic. After his two enlistments, he was a truck driver for many years until he started his own home-remodeling company. He retired downstate in 2008. The couple then moved up north to spend summers near Ray's youngest sister Patti's place. They wintered in Florida, where he volunteered at Sun N Fun Aerospace Flight School in Lakeland. Ray was part of the maintenance team there. His main job was to exterminate all the ants, which gave him the nickname of "Ant Man." Ray lived

Butch is predeceased by his sisters, Jane (Jan) Dine, Lois Jovanov, and Patricia (Patti) Dooley; nephew, Steven Kenward and great nephew, Jason Kenward. Cremation services have been entrusted to Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home in Kalkaska. Memorial contributions can be made to Kalkaska County Commission on Aging, or St. Aloysius Church. Please go to www.wolfeoneill.com/obituaries to visit Raymond's tribute page and share a memory with his loved ones. A small, private service will be held at a later date.,

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= MENTAL HEALTH CORNER =

Mentorship and Mental Health: Part 3

In the last two columns, we explored how mentorship supports our mental health and how healthy mentors help regulate our nervous systems, provide perspective and guide our development. But, in reality, mentorship is not just an abstract idea or something that only happens in formal programs or coaching. The truth is that most mentorship actually happens quietly in everyday life through relationships and shared experiences.

When I was 19 years old, I took a job bussing tables at Mr. Bill's Family Restaurant. Little did I know that this was going to forever change the course of my life. It was here that I finally developed a true work ethic and job loyalty. This was in no small part because of the leadership of Bill Winkler.

One day, while I was sitting down for my lunch break, Bill sat down across from me at the booth. He said something to me that day that would change my life forever. He looked me in the eye with a demeanor that would set anyone at ease and said, "Adam, what the hell are you still doing working for me?" What? I loved working for this guy. What in the world could he be talking about?

He then said, "Adam, you're great with people, and you are smart. Why are you at least not in college?" I didn't have an answer for him. If I was being honest, I didn't see myself as college material, so these questions really struck me hard.

Well, within a week, I had applied to college, and the rest, as they say, is history. Without this mentor kicking me in the butt, this might have never happened.

My previous columns shared the mental health benefits of mentorship. In this final column on this important topic, I want to show how sometimes mentors come in the most unexpected forms. Over the years, I have had mentors in coaching, licensing, business and personal development. These were deliberate and intentional, but mentors will also come from some often-unexpected sources.

Now, the question is: Who have the mentors been in your life? If the answer is not obvious, I recommend you get intentional about getting some mentorship.

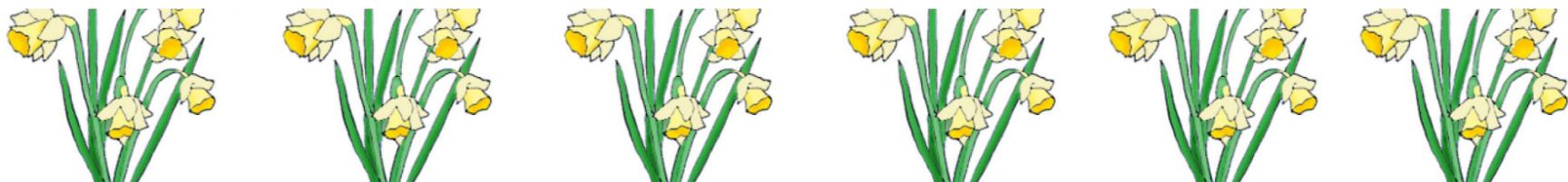
The final question is this: Do you see yourself as a potential mentor? If the answer is even a tepid

"yes", then consider stepping up and sharing your hard-fought life wisdom with another person. I guarantee that this will change both of your lives for the better. This is just another way that we all win at life.

-Adam DeVaney, LCSW, CECP

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Adam DeVaney is a clinical social worker and therapist with over a decade of experience working with clients with a diversity of challenges from addiction and anxiety to overcoming trauma and helping people to learn what it takes to live their best lives. Along with his wife, Mandi, he founded Life's Work Clinic in Kalkaska, Michigan, and Life's Work Coaching with a local and global footprint. Adam has dedicated his life to serving others and walking with them on their healing journeys.



Additional Obituaries on pages 4, 5, 8 & 10

Shirley J. Knust

November 5, 1938 ~ March 14, 2026

Shirley Joyce Knust, 87, passed away on Saturday, March 14, 2026, at the Eden Center in Kalkaska surrounded by her family. Shirley was born on November 5, 1938, to Bernard "Buster" and Marie Cochran. She graduated from Kalkaska High School. Shirley married the love of her life, Eddie Knust, on September 8, 1956. They were married for almost 67 years until Eddie's death on June 26, 2022. They raised two children, Rick and Robin, lived in the same home on Ladd Drive at Torch Lake for 68 years. Shirley loved going fishing with Eddie. She also loved taking care of her grandkids and they often took them fishing with them. But most of all Shirley loved and cherished her family. Shirley is survived by her two children, Rick (Lisa) Knust and Robin (Kim) Wells; 3 grandsons, Mick (Katie)



Knust, Matthew (Alyssa) Knust and Brandon Knust; four great grandchildren, Harper Knust, Mason Knust, Hadley Knust and Brayden Knust; her sister Beatrice Cochran, brother Mick Cochran and sister in law, Janice (Knust) Clark; along with several nieces and nephews. Shirley was preceded in death by her parents, Buster and Marie Cochran; her beloved husband, Eddie Knust, sister in law, Reatha Cochran; brother in law and sister in law James and Heather Knust and brother in law, Russell Clark. We want to thank the Awesome staff at the Eden Center for taking such great care of Shirley for the last two years. No services are planned at this time. Arrangements were made by Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home, our family serving yours.

Darlene R. Moran

January 20, 1960 ~ February 28, 2026

Darlene Ronda (Maynard) Moran was born in the back of an Army Jeep on a base in the beautiful town of Munich, Germany, on January 20, 1960. She lived out her life in the wholesome town of Mancelona, MI, with her husband Mike and daughter Beth.

Darlene went to be with the Lord on February 28, 2026. Darlene loved to spend time working in her garden and spending as much time as she could outdoors. She enjoyed fishing, kayaking, side by side rides and spending time with close friends and family. Darlene had a very unexpected departure from us here, earth side, but she had the privilege to say her goodbyes and depart surrounded by her family that she loved the most until her very end.



She is survived by her husband Mike Moran of Mancelona, MI, her 3 children, Ronda (Donnie) Spencer, Elizabeth (Titan) Spencer, Nathan Spencer, her step-son Trent (Kari) Moran and her grandchildren Alyssa Smith, and Tristan Hoffman.

She was preceded in death by her parents JoAnn Phillips, and James Maynard, and her first love/husband Ward Spencer.

At Darlene's request there will only be a private burial and Celebration of Life. Thank you for all your love and support during this difficult time. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the charity of the donor's choice. Arrangements are in the care of the Mancelona Chapel of Mortensen Funeral Homes.

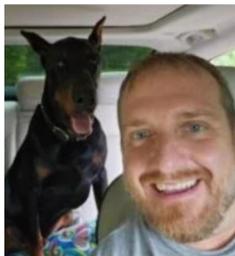
ADDITIONAL OBITUARIES

Additional Obituaries on pages 4, 5, 8 & 9

Brett L. Beller

November 13, 1981 ~ March 5, 2026

Brett L. Beller, 44, of Kalkaska, passed away peacefully at home on March 5, 2026. Brett was born on November 13, 1981, in Royal Oak, Michigan, to Edwin Beller and Janette Toussaint. In the early 2000s, Brett moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, where he spent several years building his business and helping raise two children, Devon and Jordan. Brett later returned to Michigan, where he lived the remainder of his life and helped raise two more children, Carter and Wyatt. He also shared a special bond with his niece, Keira. Brett was known for his strong work ethic and was always willing to lend a hand or share his knowledge with others. Although Brett never had biological children of his own, he had a special place in his heart for his Dobermans, Sampson, Jake, and Atlas. Brett was happiest when he was building something, repairing something, or helping someone



else. He will be remembered for his strength, his generosity, and his willingness to help others. He is survived by his wife, Alisa Beller; the children he helped raise, Devon, Jordan, Carter, and Wyatt; his mother, Janette Toussaint; his siblings, Cori Crowell and her husband Alec Crowell, Keith Shepherd; and their children, Rachel, Nikita, Gage, and Keira along with their own families. Brett leaves behind many family members and friends who will deeply miss his presence and the steady, dependable man they knew him to be. The family is grateful for the care and support provided by hospice and the many friends and loved ones who stood by Brett during his illness. A private family memorial gathering will be held. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

Carol Jean Tanner

January 24, 1943 ~ March 9, 2026

Carol Jean Tanner, 83, of Kalkaska, passed away peacefully on March 9, 2026. Carol was born January 24, 1943, in Kalkaska to the late Thaddeus and Irene (Angell) Tanner. She grew up on the Tanner family farm on Sharon Road, where she spent most of her life and where she remained until the day she left her earthly life to join her parents, her sister Sharon, brother-in-law Ed Bandlow, and other loved ones in heaven. The Tanner Farm was the original homestead of Thaddeus Tanner's grandfather and continues to remain in the Tanner family's name today.



Friends, neighbors, and family eagerly awaited every batch she made, and her fudge became a beloved tradition at the annual Tanner family reunion. Throughout her life, Carol was known as an incredibly hard worker. She worked at Iott's Potato Farm, Cooley's, and Traverse Bay Woolen Company, and later served the community through her work at the Kalkaska County Equalization Department until her retirement in 2013. Carol was also gifted at organizing and decorating. She lovingly planned celebrations and created decorations for weddings, birthday parties, and many special events. She enjoyed decorating seasonally at Spencer Church of Christ and spent many years decorating the Christmas tree at the Kalkaska Governmental Center, sharing her festive spirit with the community.

Carol was raised alongside her siblings, Audrey (Harry) King, Alta (Wesley) Beasley, Sharon (Larry) Birgy, Thaddeus John (Martha) Tanner, and Ann (Ed) Bandlow. Growing up in Kalkaska, Carol was crowned Homecoming Queen and was known for her joyful spirit and love of life. Carol was a woman of faith. She was baptized on December 16, 1956, along with her three older sisters at the Kalkaska Church of Christ, which today is the location of the Kalkaska Funeral Home. More than anything, Carol loved her family. Her children, Valerie (Dale) Thornburg, Carla (David Avery) Waite, Danny (Tammy) Woodin, and Ryan Woodin, were the center of her world. She was a proud and devoted grandmother to Dustin (Nanci) Dimon, Celsey (Logan) Kline, Cody (Megan) Waite, Dylan Woodin, Emma Woodin, Wyatt Woodin, and Tanner Woodin. She was also blessed with great-grandchildren Adrian, Melany, Ian, Corey, Parker, and Cooper, who brought her endless joy. Simply put, her family was her life.

Carol will be remembered for her kindness, generosity, creativity, and her heart of gold. A memorial service celebrating Carol's life will be held on June 6, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at the Kalkaska Funeral Home. A private graveside service will follow at Oliver Township Cemetery. In place of a luncheon, Carol's family will share a parting memorial gift with those who attend in honor of her life. Carol's love, warmth, and the many memories she created will remain in the hearts of all who knew her. Her family finds comfort in knowing she is now at peace in the presence of the Lord she loved. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home.

Carol will also be remembered for her famous peanut butter fudge.

Betty Ann Martinson

August 10, 1942 ~ March 6, 2026

On March 6, 2026, Betty Ann (Mockerman) Martinson, went home to her Lord and Saviour at the Munson Hospice House. Born on August 10, 1942, in Grand Rapids, MI, Betty graced our world with warmth, kindness, and a spirit that would touch all who were fortunate enough to know her. Betty was the cherished daughter of Harold Rowan and Lillian Gertrude (Watson) Rowan, and she was preceded in death by her father, Kenneth Mockerman, her loving stepfather, Harold Rowan, her devoted mother, Lillian Watson, her baby sister Janet and her dear mother-in-law, Mary. She is survived by her devoted husband, George Martinson, with whom she shared 64 wonderful years of marriage. Their love story began on April 14, 1961, when they exchanged vows at the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints in East Grand Rapids, MI. A proud graduate of Lee High School in Grand Rapids, Betty's life was marked by a deep commitment to her family and community. She was the beloved mother of Debra Grose, Ronald Martinson, and David Martinson. Her legacy lives on through her 10 grandchildren and 34 great-grandchildren, who brought immense joy and pride to her life. Betty's passions extended beyond her family, as she was an



avid bowler who enjoyed participating in tournaments across the country. Her presence was a familiar and cherished one at Fife Lake Baptist Church, where she found spiritual nourishment and community. Betty also took great pleasure in traveling with George, exploring new places and creating lasting memories. A devoted fan of NASCAR and baseball, she never missed an opportunity to cheer on her favorite teams or support her grandchildren and great-grandchildren at their games. She also loved her dogs very much. Betty's life will be celebrated on March 28, 2026, at 12:00 PM at Fife Lake Baptist Church, located at 449 W State St, Fife Lake, MI 49633. Luncheon to follow at the church. Her family invites all who knew and loved her to join in honoring her remarkable life. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made to her husband, George, as a tribute to their enduring love and shared journey. Betty Ann (Mockerman) Martinson will forever remain in the hearts of those she touched. Her family shares this special message: "Forever in our hearts." May her gentle spirit continue to guide and inspire us all. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home.

Mark R. Allen

July 24, 1964 ~ March 3, 2026

Mark Richard Allen, age 61, passed away unexpectedly on March 3, 2026, following a work-related accident while working as a Technician for Summit Fire. He was born on July 24, 1964, in Clio, Michigan, to his parents, Richard Loisell and JoAnn. Following Richard's passing, Mark was lovingly adopted by his stepfather, Mark Allen Jr.



Mark grew up in Clio, Michigan, alongside his three siblings and attended Clio High School, where he graduated before proudly joining the United States Navy. While home on leave nearing the end of his active service, Mark met the love of his life, Deborah Barry. Deborah was already serving in the Navy, as a Junior Officer. They often found humor that their meeting was best described as "An Officer and a Gentleman." Their relationship grew into the kind of love story people dream about. Mark and Deb were not only husband and wife but truly best friends, sharing a deep bond throughout their 36 years of marriage.

Together, they enjoyed traveling, the outdoors, boating, golf, gardening, and spending time with their family. Most importantly, spending time side by side in all that life brought them. Mark considered himself an outdoor enthusiast, and he enjoyed time spent in the woods. He especially loved deer hunting,

where he proudly pursued—and often returned with—the biggest trophy.

Mark had a natural ability to make any gathering more fun and was admired for his likable personality. He was warmhearted, had a gift for making people laugh and bringing joy to those in his presence. Above all, he cherished time with family and friends and simply loved having a good time.

Mark is survived by his beloved wife, Deborah; and his mother, JoAnn; his sister Jeannette and brother Stephen, as well as, numerous nieces and nephews who will forever cherish his humor, kindness, and unforgettable spirit. Mark's fathers Richard, Mark, and his younger sister Stephanie preceded him in death.

A cremation is planned along with a Catholic Memorial Mass at St. Charles and Helena Church in Clio, Michigan at 11a.m. on Friday, March 20, 2026. A memorial service will be held in Traverse City on Friday, April 24, 2026 "International Employee Memorial Day" coordinated by Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home, followed by a private celebration of life. In lieu of flowers gifts can be made to St. Charles and Helena Catholic Church or to the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, in memory of Mark Allen.