



Richard John Zettel, Jr.

September 11, 1948 - April 24, 2021

Richard John Zettel 9-11-1948 / 4-24-2021 Age 72

Loving son of Richard & Jeannette (deceased) Zettel, Caring brother of Chris (deceased), sister-in-law Linda Zettel, sister Colleen (Gary) Pankow, and brothers Paul Zettel and Steve (Staci) Zettel.

Beloved husband of Debbie. Loving and devoted father of Laura (George) Watson, Jennifer Armstrong, and Richard III (Ashley), stepfather to Jennifer (Jeff) Price and Sara (Alex) Grevi. Proud and adored Papa to Calib Dranberg, Sean and Ryan Price. Alexandra and Wil Watson. David, Zack, Grace, Emma, and Michael Armstrong. Eleanor, Victoria and Elijah Grevi. Rachael and Charlotte Zettel. Great grandfather to Jasmine Dranberg. Richard served in the US Coast Guard from 1967 to 1971, spending two years serving in Operation Market Time, patrolling for illegal contraband entering Vietnam. He was a former Sterling Heights police officer from 1977 to 1986. While working as a police officer, he went on to attend MSU Law School (formerly Detroit College of Law) and earned his Juris Doctorate and graduated Cum Laude in 1984. In 1988, he was elected to the Sterling Heights City Council and served from 1988 to 1991. He resigned from City Council to accept a position as an assistant prosecuting attorney and then on to the Chief Prosecutor of the Drug Forfeiture Unit in Macomb County. He was appointed by the Governor of Michigan to the Michigan Workers' Compensation Board of Magistrates where he served for 14 years before starting his tenure in 2008 as an Administrative Law Judge with Health and Human Services for Medicare Hearings and Appeals, and he had no plans of retiring. Anyone who walked by his office at work or spent any amount of time with Judge Zettel soon learned of his love for his family and grandchildren. His work team was an extension of the family he loved so much.

Richard was the guy everyone could count on to get the job done; he never said no to anyone. He was very devoted to his family, especially to his grandkids, who he truly adored! If they were not paying attention, they would get Papa's tickle claw, and they would soon jump in his lap for more... or just to relax and take a nap in his arms. Richard would tell everyone "if we knew Grandkids were this much fun, we would have had them first!" He also loved taking his family out to dinner & his favorites were Da Francesco's and any Mexican restaurant. He loved to watch college football with Laura & Jenny who would

get just as excited and loud as he did.

Richard was the family's Great White Hunter. He started teaching his son Rich when he was 5. He loved hunting up north with his favorite brother-in-law Herb. His last hunt was trying to teach his son-in-law Alex to hunt behind his house, with Richard's crossbow. He will be deeply missed by all that knew him...

A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Please share memories with the family at their "Online Guestbook" at WujekCalcaterra.com

In lieu of flower donations can be made to:

Reunitethefight.org

Michigan Special Olympics

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL 10. 12:00 PM (ET)

Macedonian Cultural Center
43133 Ryan Road
Sterling Heights, 48314

Tribute Wall

CF

“ Christine Floerke lit a candle in memory of Richard John Zettel, Jr.



Christine Floerke - May 14, 2021 at 08:15 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Richard John Zettel, Jr..



May 01, 2021 at 03:25 PM

CC

“ Richard spent time with Ron and I regarding a work injury. He was relaxed, kind, and his smile was infectious. Debbie shared so many stories about Richard. Kindness, gentleness, humor, and love. The world has lost a very bright light. He will now be shining down on his family and loved ones. Prayers and peace to all of the family. 🙏📖💔

Cindy Clissold - April 30, 2021 at 03:28 PM

LB

“ Judge Zettel was a pleasure and privilege to have known for over 20 years. I treasure all of the pearls of wisdom that he shared with me as well as our talks about canines. It was clear that in addition to endless professional wisdom, he had a warm and caring heart. His eyes would glisten and that big smile would happen when he spoke of his beloved spouse Debbie, his children and grandchildren, and family as well as his dear and treasured Rottweilers. May he rest in peace with God and watch over his beloved family, Lenise Banse, MD

LENISE BANSE - April 30, 2021 at 09:58 AM

TP

“ Judge Zettel would stop and chit chat before he left for the end of the day when he saw me at my desk and sometimes complained about my weak selection in my candy bowl. He actually took the time to listen to my stories and had better stories to share. He always responded to my mundane emails with a joke or comment of support. He never allowed work to be boring. Judge Zettel was one of my favorite judges because he was so personable and just a great human being. He was just so fun and silly. Although I will be sad, my memories of him will always bring a smile to my face. He will truly be missed by me and by all who ever knew him.

To the family: My dearest condolences. Sending my prayers to you.

Judge Zettel, your favorite saying....but this time, "You Da Man!!!" May you rest in peace. -tpai

Tammy Pai - April 29, 2021 at 05:30 PM



“ Judge Zettel was one of the kindest, generous and genuine people I have had the honor of calling friend. So many memories and endless thanks to him for being there for me in the lowest and highest points in my life. I will miss him tremendously. All my love to you, Debbie, and your beautiful family.

Jennifer Troutman and family

Jennifer Pecchio Troutman - April 29, 2021 at 01:52 PM

RP

“ My deepest condolences to the family of this amazing gentleman. I had the honor of being mentored by him as a judge in Cleveland and you can't find a kinder, more down to earth and approachable person. He and I enjoyed swapping law enforcement stories and listening to him expound on the latest escapades of his grandchildren. He will truly be missed by all who knew him, worked with him, and the family that loved him.

Bob Preston

Robert Preston - April 29, 2021 at 01:46 PM

WF

“ Truly an amazing man! Judge Zettel always kept a smile on his face and kind words in his heart. I will definitely miss the jokes he would send at times that would just make you laugh when you needed it. To the family thank you for allowing many of us just to spend a few moments in time with this great man.
Willie Ford

Willie Ford - April 29, 2021 at 01:43 PM

ML

“ My deepest sympathies and prayers for Judge Zettel's family. I was truly honored to know Judge Zettel and to have worked with him in Cleveland for many years. We often talked about football and family in his office, and he was always very supportive of me at work. I will truly miss him. May your memories of him provide some comfort during your time of grief. I will continue to pray for his family.

Marc Lambert - April 29, 2021 at 01:41 PM

SL

“ My deepest and sincerest sympathy to the whole family for this sudden loss. I know he will be missed profoundly by all whose lives he touched. He is gone way too soon at his 72 years of age and it is hard to imagine him not being with us anymore. I have a lot of memories with him in them over the past 36 years I have known him and his family. It's a sad, sad time for all.

Sue Lynden - April 29, 2021 at 11:19 AM

JA

I am so sorry for the loss of your husband. Nothing can prepare you when that day comes and nothing makes sense when it's sudden. Please know my thoughts are with you as your journey begins celebrating his life.

joanne Anderson - April 30, 2021 at 05:40 PM

JB

Richard is among the best this Nation has produced.. He leaves behind a lifetime of public service, an incredible legacy (we have all admired the long line of grandchildren photographs he so proudly displayed in his office), and a bunch of friends and colleagues who will miss him very much. To his family, I am so sorry for your loss. My prayers are with you.

-- John Bergen

John Bergen - May 14, 2021 at 02:27 PM