



## Frank Joseph Mierzwinski, Jr.

February 1, 1946 - October 31, 2017

Frank 'Skeeter' Mierzwinski of Harrison Township passed away at age 71 on October 31, 2017. Visitation will take place at Wujek-Calcaterra & Sons, 36900 Schoenherr at Metro Parkway (16 Mile), Sunday Nov. 5th from 2-9pm, the Knights of Columbus Service is from 7-8pm. The Funeral is Monday Nov. 6th at St. Hubert Church, 38775 Prentiss (S of Metro Parkway btw. Crocker & Jefferson), Instate at 10:30am until time of Mass at 11:00am. In lieu of flowers, donations are welcome to one of his favorite charities Angie's Toy Chest (31408 Harper Ave. #338 St. Clair Shores, MI 48082) or St. Hubert food pantry (38775 Prentiss St. Harrison Twp., MI 48045). He will be laid to rest at Resurrection Cemetery.

Frank J. Mierzwinski Jr. was born in Detroit, Michigan to proud parents Helen, a General Motors employee and Frank, a Chrysler employee. He and his younger sister, Karen (Oudman) were raised Catholic and their lineage is that of all American's; spanning from Americas' Native Peoples to immigrants from Europe. Skeeter, a moniker received from his mother, grew up watching baseball with his dad, learning to fish from his grandfather and going on family trips to Lake of the Ozarks. As he continued into his later teens, he became close to his younger cousin Jerry Kasbrick, setting the stones for their lifelong friendship, inevitably becoming the Godfather to Jerry's son Jacob. He graduated from St. Anthony High School in 1964. This is where Skeeter sent a flower to the love of his life, Iona Mockery. He later learned her name was Leona 'Lee' Mocerri and they became high school sweethearts. After marrying

Leona, he gained brothers in Vito, Salvatore, Lawrence, and the late Jack Mocerri. Skeeter and Lee continued to live in the Detroit Metro Area, except for a stint in Minot, North Dakota where he served in the United States Air Force, rising to rank of Staff Sergeant. He supported his family working several places before settling in to the right fit at Chrysler as a Systems Analyst for 30 years, retiring in 2014. General Motors, Holy Cross Hospital, the American Gas Company, Fruehauf, Internal Revenue Service and General Motors (EDS) were all lucky to have had Frank as a part of their organizations. All the while he was raising and supporting his family, he continued educating and bettering himself, as this was an important goal. In addition to being an avid reader, he attended classes wherever he could, starting at South Macomb, then University of Texas, University of North Dakota, Detroit Technical School, and later Wayne State. Completing his undergrad and MBA (at 40) in record time with Central Michigan University.

As a young couple, Skeeter and Lee decided to build a home in Sterling Heights where their family grew, raising 4 children; Deanna (Kevin) Livingston, Marisa (Dominic) Bennett, Joseph (Lindsay) and the late Lawrence 'Larry' (1999). As a baseball fan, he coached all his kids' Parks & Rec base/softball teams, taking all of them to a city championship. He also coached various other teams over the years and continued to coach from the sidelines till the very end. He was known for coaching third base and sending some questionable runners home. The kids attended Henry Ford II High School where Frank was very involved with their activities and sports as well as the school's Booster Clubs. Always volunteering to be a Scout Leader, sell poinsettias, manage the parking lot at their annual Craft Show, hosting countless pasta parties or rebuilding the baseball fields (finally giving those boys proper dugouts). He was extremely supportive of any interest, sport or task his kids took on, getting them whatever they needed; supplies, equipment, specialized coaching or time; nothing was ever too much. Skeeter loved to encourage their interests and got a thrill out of seeing their pride in doing something for the first time. He took them on various trips and

excursions over the years; camping, Lake of the Ozarks, Disney, Cedar Point, road trips throughout the US, NASCAR and Hydroplane Races, Tigers and Red Wings games, Mexico, cruises and many more. Even as they became adults he continued to take care of them by supplying them with pasta sauce, power washing their patio, painting their house, weeding gardens, giving advice, going on day trips, whitewater rafting, hiking, concerts, and various sporting events. He even enjoyed taking them shopping and never looked at the price tag. He loved his kids!

He is exceedingly proud of his 6 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren; Mallory (Steve) Fiordellisi (Amelia, Fiona), Clarisse (Chris) Bruder (William, Cecilia), Mitchell, Melina, Siena and Eliza. They continued to impress him daily with all their individual accomplishments, as well as the type of people they are growing into. He loved seeing them shine and supporting them in all their endeavors; preschool graduations, school performances, swim lessons, dance recitals, baseball games, state meets, choir performances, plays, seeing them in college, signing with Penn State for softball, starting their own families, and working in DC. He was overjoyed to see them be proud of themselves. He also loved doing things just to bring them joy, like making his famous Chicken noodle soup and Banana bread with chocolate chips instead of nuts, building a tiny house out of an appliance box complete with carpeting and window boxes, setting up a winter wonderland on their front lawn, or feeding their teams between double headers. If it's not yet evident, Skeeter loved being a family man and all the responsibilities that came with it. He also extended this kind of love and support to nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews by taking care of them, surprising them with gifts, and managing to seem like he was at every one of their events... cheering them on.

After Skeeter and Leona's children graduated from college, they fulfilled their dream of living on the water. Finding a home on a bay of Lake St. Clair in Harrison Township, they began establishing themselves in their new

community, becoming fast friends with both sets of neighbors and joining St. Hubert Church. Frank became a very active member of the parish, even doing some gardening on the church grounds. Being an usher, he became close with Monsignor Bass having had many reflections together and meals at Frank and Lee's Lake House. At St. Hubert, he also met one of his best friends in Rick Abernathy. Rick, mentored him in being more active in the Knights of Columbus and the Veterans. Rick was also trying to teach him how to be a better captain and angler, as well as how to slow down and take things as they may.

Skeeter and Lee have hosted countless gatherings at their beautiful Lake House; friends, family, friends of family were all welcome. If you were at their house once, you were now family; always being welcomed with a hug, handshake or beverage. Skeeter would feed you, teach your kid(s) to fish or take you on a pontoon ride. His gardens were a gift to Lee who loves to see all the colors in their yard; especially when she looks outside at the water. He also planted a rose garden to make sure her vases had fresh-cut roses all summer. Loving to surprise Lee, he could go a little over the top decorating the outside of their home for holidays, insuring all who saw it would feel the spirit of the season. Skeeter loved to plan the incredible trips they took, this way he could surprise her with a fancy hotel or excursion she would enjoy (but would never splurge on). Their travels have taken them several places all over the US including Hawaii, the Keys, Bar Harbor, and San Diego. They took several cruises through the Caribbean and most recently the Panama Canal. One of their most memorable trips was when Skeeter took Leona, Michelle, Vito and Barb to Sicily for a first-time meeting of their aunts and extended family.

His generosity was something akin to Santa Clause loving to bring joy to someone and never wanting anything but your happiness in return. Between taking care of his friends and family, he also found time and importance in helping his community. He taught catechism at St Matthias, Junior Achievements through Chrysler, he took toys to Children's Hospital of Detroit

(even providing several Tickle-me-Elmo's the year they were all the craze), and coats to the Veterans. In retirement, he began working with Meals on Wheels, The Food Pantry at St. Hubert, Turning Point, and Compassion Pregnancy. Frank also belonged to several benevolent organizations. He had rose to Exalted Ruler of the Elks in the early 2000's, and is a current member; of the Eagles, American Polish Century Club, as well as a Third and Fourth Degree Life-Time member of the Knights of Columbus.

Skeeter and Leona spent 51 years, 8 months and 19 days sharing a life together that should be admired and emulated. They had a love and understanding of one another that is hard to describe without witnessing it yourself. Not that they spent all their time skipping under rainbows and sunshine (she threw a TV tray at him once and he did deserve it!). Skeeter and Leona were truly a team and complimented each other completely. He could be wound tight and a bit impractical, but she evened him out and wrangled him in with a simple "Skeeter" (said in several different tones). He was still in love with her after all these years, shown evident by the high school graduation photo he carried of her in his wallet, as well as the way, he continued to date and spoil her. Most recently surprising her by taking Leona to Niagara Falls on a Wednesday to celebrate her birthday. He also made the little moments special from taking her all over town to see fireworks (Lee loves fireworks), insuring she has had all Erma's frozen custard flavors, to simply cuddling on the couch. Everyone that knows them is very grateful he was stupid enough to send a flower to a girl, not actually knowing her name, and bold enough to ask her out once he did. They made a vow promising to love and honor one another, all the days of their lives. And through it all, they did. Frank 'Skeeter' Mierzwinski knew how to live life to the fullest, being present, approaching each day with gratitude, and moderately indulging in life's guilty pleasures. He saw the greatest protentional in everyone, encouraging them to never accept any less of themselves. He taught what he believed in through his actions and how he tried to live his life, always providing his ever-loving advice.

## Frankisms – (just a few)

- Give the most effort in all you do.
  - Question everything, except God, know he always loves you.
  - Be humble, and remember you are just a spec in the universe.
  - Know our energy comes from the earth's air, plants, animals, and water.
  - Never take more than you need.
  - Respect and love the United States and those who have served for it.
  - Always try to be kind and understanding, you don't always know someone else's burden.
  - Keep the tip of the rod up when reeling them-in.
  - Never take your eye off the ball.
  - Split up your money in each denomination, put each of them in different pockets of your pants, making sure to put the ones and fives in your left back pocket, if you are robbed throw just that pile up in the air and run like hell.
  - When packing the car for a vacation, do it at night, you don't want to advertise to the neighborhood you're going out of town.
  - If you ever buy a big-ticket item, never just put the empty box at the curb, instead break the box down turn it inside out and tape it together, again we don't want to advertise to the masses we might have just acquired a new toy.
- Skeeter could always find the teachable moment, putting a heavy emphasis on savviness, and always coming up with a question you hadn't thought of. Making you constantly question and inspiring you to come to find your own creative solution. The world has lost a great man.

# Tribute Wall

BC

“Great to work with you at the Food Pantry. God bless you and your family.”

**Bruce Cartwright** - January 03, 2018 at 12:00 AM

GP

“I am sorry to find out that Frank has passed away, you both were awesome people to wait on at Difrattellis.  
With Sympathy, Gina”

**Gina Piro** - November 08, 2017 at 12:00 AM

KD

“Dear Lee, I am so so very sorry, my condolences to you and your Family.”

**Kathy Delia** - November 07, 2017 at 12:00 AM

MS

“Leona...you are in my thoughts and prayers...May your memories , loving family and friends, and your faith sustain you  
In the months ahead..Mary Lou (Mueller) Schwalb”

**Mary lou Mueller Schwalb** - November 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM

JK

“Lee, please accept my deepest condolences. Sorry I could not be there to personally express my sympathy. Jay Kaiser (P&M ret.)”

**Jay Kaiser** - November 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM

DS

“Dear Lee & family I'm so sorry to hear about your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you. Love Diane”

Diane Strutt - November 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM

NT

“This pic says it all love this pic love Frank My God take good care of you. Nancy Trompics”

Nancy Trompics - November 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM

CC

“I keep wanting to wake up from this bad dream, so I can't imagine what you all are going through. Such wonderful memories of Minot NDakota. Can't believe Frank and John died 2 months apart. Lee, you and Frank are the best people I ever met and I'll love you both forever. Look forward to playing cards in Heaven!!”

Carolyn Snyder Clark - November 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM

TR

“Dear Lee, We can't express how sorry we are for your loss. Skeeter was such a wonderful man. You both always make others feel so loved and welcome in your home. Our love and thoughts are now with you in such a difficult time.”

Tracy - November 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM

VP

“Dear Leona & family, I was so sorry to hear about Skeeter. You & your family have my deepest condolences. He was such a nice man, I'm so sorry for your loss, gone too young. Love Uncle Jimmy”

Vincenzo Pagano - November 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM

MA

“ *what a great man! thank you for describing his life and his philosophy so beautifully! we are so sorry for the family loss, and especially our hearts go out to Leona, who always appears crazy in love and so happily married. love you Leona, you're in our hearts and prayers.* ”

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**Matt** - November 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM

SJ

“ *It was so rare to see anything but that GREAT BIG SMILE on Skeeter face....I just finished reading his Obit and learned that he got his MBA at 40 Holy Cow....I have so many memories of him but to Jake & I the best were when you were going to play Euchre with us and all the studying you both did on the rules and how to play and it all was worth it cause you guys did AWESOME. He has touched so many lives in a good way, whether it was a friend or someone he gave a coat to in Mt. Clemens, or to all the senior he stopped and talked to while delivering meals on wheels. We are proud to have know him and called him a friend. Sandi & Jake* ”

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**Sandi Jacob** - November 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM