

Louis Michalak



Louis' Life Story

Louis Michalak, Jr. was an honest and hardworking man, dedicated to his family and loyal to his friends. Louis found happiness in many things, but nothing delighted him as much as spending time with his family and grandkids, whom he loved dearly.

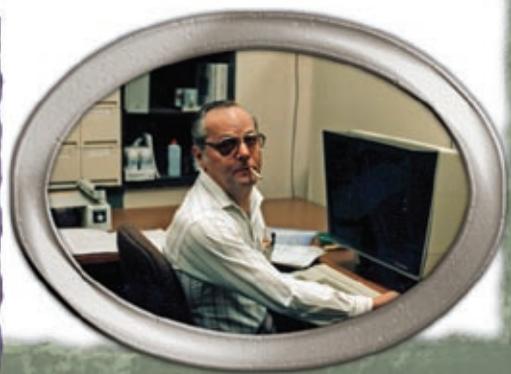
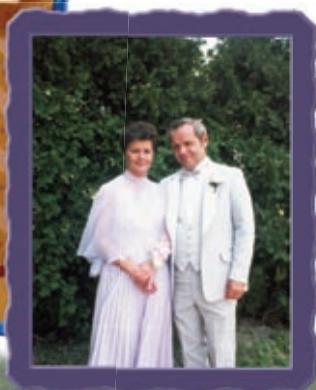
In 1937, the United States was just beginning to surface from the effects of the Great Depression. President Franklin Roosevelt continued to enact his domestic reform known as the New Deal, which, among other things, instituted programs such as the Social Security System. Meanwhile, political conflicts in Europe were also making headlines, and within 2 years, World War II would escort a new generation of men into the horrors of battle.

In Bay City, Michigan, Louis Michalak, Sr. and his wife, Verna (Kuczkowski), were not focusing on the unfolding events, but rather on the newest blessing in the family. On November 5, 1937, the couple welcomed the birth of their son, Louis Peter Jr., the youngest of their seven children. Louis Sr. provided for his large family working for the municipality of Bay City, while his wife Verna stayed home to care for their children: Ellie, Lucille, Fran, Geraldine, Dorothy, Jerome and Louis.

Once school age, Louis received his education attending St. Stanislaus Elementary and High School, where he played trumpet in the school band and sang in the choir. Outside of school, Louis babysat on occasion for some extra spending money. He made sure to tell everyone about his brush with fame when he babysat for Madonna when she was 3 years old. Shortly after graduating high school, Louis followed the same patriotic calling of other young men of the time, and enlisted in the U.S. Army in November 1956. He proudly served in Vietnam and stateside until his discharge in November 1965, with the rank of Sergeant.

It was while stationed in Washington that Louis met his first wife, Phyllis, who had a son of her own named Joe. After the couple was married, they moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where they welcomed the birth of their daughter, Marlo. Louis supported his growing family working as a machinist at Ford Motor Company.

After several years, he left Ford to work in a machine shop in Montague before taking a job with Blackmer Pump, which was later bought out by Dover Corporation.





Louis' marriage to Phyllis eventually ended in divorce. Then in 1975, he found love again when he met Joyce Andrzejewski on a blind date on New Year's Eve. They dated for the next 4 years, during which time Louis easily found a place among the extended family. Joyce's daughter, Laurie, fondly remembers how Louis would stay up and wait for her to get home from a date, in case she needed to talk or some friendly advice. And although he wasn't much of a pet lover, he came to "tolerate" Laurie's cat, Cheetah.

Joyce affectionately referred to Louis as her "Sweet Lou." The couple was happily married on July 14, 1979, at Faith Lutheran Church in northeast Grand Rapids, a day Louis treasured as one of the greatest in his life. The couple enjoyed doing some traveling together and had visited Washington to attend his daughter's wedding, took weekend excursions to visit relatives and attended various other family weddings. Invariably, the couple seemed to always get lost along the way and misplaced many hubcaps because of their off road adventures. So much so, Louis even gave Joyce hubcaps for one of the anniversaries because they lost so many.

Louis retired from Dover in 1998, with about 10 years of service. He wasted no time in putting his extra leisure time to good use pursuing some of his favorite hobbies. He enjoyed staying active playing golf and bowling, and loved to go Polka dancing with his wife Joyce. Louis also enjoyed playing cards, particularly poker, or watching a Detroit Tiger's game, of which he was a huge fan. Louis was a pretty good handyman and liked to take on projects around the house, especially if it involved woodworking. He was also pretty knowledgeable with the computer, and used it often to aid in his study of his family history or to help the grandchildren research something for schoolwork. A proud Veteran, Louis got the opportunity to reconnect with some of his Army buddies that served with him in Vietnam. After all these years, they still remembered him as being "one of the good guys."



Above all, Louis' happiest moments always involved the time he spent with his family and grandkids. He was a very proud "Dzia Dzia" (Grandpa in Polish) and enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren and attending their countless recitals and sporting events. Every Easter, they also hosted a fabulous egg hunt, which over time became legendary. With family so dear to his heart, it is no wonder that he

cherished his picture albums as his most prized possession!

What gave Louis the greatest joy was sharing himself with his family, offering them the most precious thing he possessed - his time. It is a gift none of them will ever forget.

Louis Peter Michalak, Jr., age 70, passed away on Saturday, August 23, 2008, at his home in Comstock Park and was welcomed into the arms of his Lord. He is survived by his wife, Joyce; children, Marlo and Jeff Burmood, Joe and Barbara Butler, all of Olympia, WA, Dan and Susan Andrzejewski of Rockford, Dave and Mary Andrzejewski of Comstock Park, Laurie and Todd Scheidel of Rockford; grandchildren: Aubriana and Cody Burmood, Ieah and Jared Butler, Jennifer, Matthew, Jaime, Joshua, Erik, Allison Andrzejewski, Travis and Alyssa Scheidel. Also surviving are his brothers and sisters: Ellie Jozwiak,



Lucille and Eugene Jozwiak, Fran Burzynski, Geraldine and Bob Stange, Jerome and Bernie Michalak; in-laws: Paul Korthals, Helen Veenstra, Bev and Ed Dyer, Charles and Judy Miller, Devona Miller; and many special nieces and nephews.

Services for Louis will be held on Wednesday, August 27, at 11 a.m. at Heritage Life Story Funeral Homes - Van't Hof Chapel, 851 Leonard St NW, Grand Rapids. Friends may meet the family on Tuesday, August 26, from 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. and on Wednesday for one hour prior to the service. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 400 Ann NW, Suite 202, Grand Rapids, MI 49504. Please visit Louis' personal memory page at www.lifestorynet.com, where you may share a memory with his family or sign his online guest book.



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