



Mike H. Opolka

January 13, 1927 - December 8, 2014

VULCAN - Mike H. Opolka age 87, of Vulcan, passed away at his home on Monday, December 8, 2014

He was born in Vulcan on January 13, 1927 to Polish immigrant parents Mike and Rose Opolka, who made their living farming and working in the iron ore mine.

These hardworking values were instilled in Mike, who started working full time at the age of 17, and eventually spent 44 years 3 months at the Niagara Mill.

Despite not completing high school, Mike was a voracious and motivated learner. He challenged himself to fix anything, whether it was broken or not, and the motor, door, bicycle, or fence would be left better off than how it started after he was through.

He didn't believe in excuses, and he was an honest man who told it to you straight whether you liked it or not. This honesty, motivation, and confidence allowed him so many accomplishments in his life, and also provided his family with a loving, talented, and reliable man.

He enjoyed sports and seldom missed a Cubs game, listening in on his old radio that he refused to upgrade. He coached girls' softball in Vulcan for many

seasons. He loved the game and knew it forward and backward.

Always awake before the sun, with fresh coffee in his system to start the day, Mike enjoyed life. He loved the outdoors and was always busy doing something, never sitting still. Mowing grass, cutting firewood, gardening, watching the birds, and feeding the deer were some of the daily activities he enjoyed. He would tinker in the garage for hours, as evidenced by the oil rag in his pocket, and he loved to lend a helping hand to anyone who needed it. His yard was immaculate. His garden was full of cukes, tomatoes, and things he could share with the kids. On the weekends, he liked to be out and about, and he and Bev really enjoyed going to the casino.

Most importantly, Mike loved his family. He was always very proud of his children and grandchildren. We had a wonderful family gathering this Thanksgiving and he enjoyed himself immensely. Plenty of stories were shared, and we will cherish them forever.

Mike was a happy man and lived a long life. He was always so proud of his age, "I'm 87, you know!" and he would be the first one to mention what a full, good life he led with his wife Beverly.

We will miss him terribly, but we will keep him alive in our hearts forever with his memory, the Polish phrases he would always say, and the love we feel for him.

Mike is survived by his wife of 44 years Beverly, children, Mike Opolka, Kathleen DuPont, Kristine (Russ) Spranger, Gina (Bill) Maynard, Debora (Tom) Murray, Scott (Karen) Opolka, Paula (Randy) Bader, Willard (Joyce) Opolka, Cindy (Mike) Pfeiffer, Cheryl Moudy, Patty (Rick) Bandt; 27 grandchildren, 37 great grand children; sister Marilyn Steeno of Niagara, and Rose Wenzel of Vulcan; several nieces and nephews.

Mike was preceded in death by sisters Ann, Julia, Helen, Stella, Catherine and Nora, and by his two brothers, Adam and John.

Family will greet friends on Friday, December 12 from 4-5 p.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Norway.

A Memorial Service will be held on Friday at 5 p.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran with Rev. Dr. Michael J. Langlais presiding.

Tribute Wall

HM

“ *Holly McCarthy-biolo lit a candle in memory of Mike H. Opolka*



Holly McCarthy-biolo - December 19, 2014 at 02:41 PM

HM

I am sorry for your loss and bless be the whole family, take care.

Holly McCarthy-Biolo - December 19, 2014 at 02:42 PM

RF

“ *Bev and all the family, our heartfelt condolences on your loss. I will always remember Uncle Mike fondly. He trully was a man's man. I remember that he always seemed to have a smile and a good word for everybody. As a kid when Mom (Helen), Dad my sister Cindy and I would come up to visit Grandma Opolka he was fun to be around. He always showed an interest in what kind of fish we caught or how deer hunting was. I got my first deer staying at Mike and Bev'scamp on Foster City Road. I've still got the hide on a wall 40 years later. Thanks Uncle Mike, GOD BLESS YOU.*

Richard and Joan Suchan and family - December 18, 2014 at 09:50 AM

MG

“ *To the family of Mr. Mike Opolka: We are sorry for your loss.*

Mike and Mary Girard - December 18, 2014 at 09:50 AM

PC

“ Hi Bev and Family, I just wanted to express my deepest sympathy to you and your family, What a wonderful testimony to him in the newspaper and I'm sure he will be missed. My thoughts and prayers are with you. Peggy

Peggy Connors - December 18, 2014 at 09:49 AM

PP

“ My condolences to Beverly and family. I was at the casino on Saturday and saw a man from behind that I thought "could that be Mike"? I hadn't seen him in a long time. I'm sorry now that maybe it was and I missed a chance to say hello. I'm sure Richard and Ernie greeted him with the rest of the family. Rest in peace!

Pat Pardon - December 18, 2014 at 09:49 AM

JP

“ Tears filled my eye's , hearing of your passing. Then memories filled my head of the many years of you and my Dad together, and visits to uncle Mike's when I was a little kid was always a fun time, I hope you and my Dad are having a pasty lunch and discussing the next project together. Good bye Uncle Mike

Jim Pardon - December 18, 2014 at 09:49 AM