



## Joseph J Vanek Sr.

February 5, 1934 - May 4, 2020

Joseph John Vanek, Sr., 86, of North Judson, IN, passed away May 4, 2020 at Porter Regional Hospital. Joe was born in LaPorte, IN, at Holy Family Hospital on February 5, 1934 to Joseph and Bessie (Dolezal) Vanek.

Joe was an active lifelong member of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church in North Judson. He graduated from North Judson High School in 1952 where he played basketball and football. He was president of his class and a member of the National Honor Society. Joe always enjoyed reunions with his classmates and was happy to get together to talk about the “old days”. He was involved in the Boy Scouts for many years. He earned his Eagle Scout Award and later went on to be a Cub Scout and Boy Scout leader. After high school, Joe joined the Army where he was stationed in St. Louis, Louisville, and the Panama Canal.

On August 23, 1958 he was united in marriage with Patricia Cox at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Knox, IN. Joe and Pat were married for 61 years. During that time, they welcomed a daughter, Lisa, and a son, Joe Jr. Joe owned and operated San Pierre Grain Co. in San Pierre, IN. He then worked for the United States Postal Service in North Judson and Valparaiso, IN. He worked for the Post Office for nearly 30 years.

Joe loved flying and anything to do with World War II airplanes. He had flown in a hot air balloon, different World War II airplanes, a biplane, a glider, a paraplane, and an ultra-light. One of Joe’s favorite places to be was in the mountains. He visited the Smoky Mountain National Park annually for many

years where he would go hiking up to the top of Mt. Leconte and other long trails, occasionally taking his kids with him. His other outdoor adventures included: white water rafting, canoeing, kayaking, riding roller coasters, and cross-country skiing. He traveled many trails around home and on vacation on his bicycle. Thanks to Joe who loved to take photos we have a record of all our adventures and family gatherings.

Travel was another one of Joe's pastimes. This interest was developed growing up when his family visited most of the country. He ended up having visited all 50 states. Joe visited many places in his travels: Canada, Panama, Mexico, the Bahamas, Switzerland, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and the Cayman Islands. But when asked where he would like to visit again, his reply was Ouray, Colorado. Over the years, Colorado was a family vacation destination many times.

Joe is survived by his wife Pat, sisters: Doris (Harry) Neumaier and Patricia Vanek, children: Lisa (Brian) Hesting and Joe (Jennifer) Vanek. Other surviving family members are his grandchildren: Lauren and Caidy Hesting, Keith (Jessica) Pingel and Kaitlyn (Victor) Torres, and four great grandchildren: Draven Pingel and Gabriel, Lucia, and Delilah Torres. Joe was preceded in death by his parents and two sisters Maryann Vanek and Alene Menis.

Arrangements are being made by O'Donnell Funeral Home in North Judson. There will be a small private family funeral service. A celebration of life will be held at a later date for family and friends.

Memorials may be given to Porter County's VNA Meals on Wheels program at <https://www.vnanwi.org/donate> or to the Starke County Humane Society at <https://starkecountyhumane.wixsite.com/schs>

# Tribute Wall

PT

“ I just found out last night that my buddy Joe had passed! I had not seen him for a couple of months and was wondering how he was doing. We spent a lot of time in the heat, in the cold, whatever it was we delivered the mail. I will miss you stopping by my house almost every week to catch up on the latest news about town and sometimes sharing a glass of wine. Rest in Peace my friend.....you gave it a good ride!

paul tolson - May 12, 2020 at 07:54 AM

GH

“ Garland & Sharon Hesting lit a candle in memory of Joseph J Vanek Sr.



Garland & Sharon Hesting - May 11, 2020 at 06:18 PM



Belinda Puchalski

“ Prayers to you and your family. He will be sadly missed.

Belinda Puchalski - May 11, 2020 at 12:30 PM

MP

“ Deepest sympathies and prayers to Pat and the entire family. Joe is in our Fathers heavenly home, Joe was a wonderful giving man totally.

Gods Blessing on each of you,  
Larry and Margie Pixey

margie pixey - May 11, 2020 at 12:21 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**O'Donnell Funeral Home** - May 10, 2020 at 03:42 PM

JK

*Sorry to hear of his passing. My dad and brother Wally worked at the San Pierre Elevator.  
John Krzyzanowski*

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**John Krzyzanowski** - May 10, 2020 at 05:53 PM