



## Donald "Joe" J. Keene

May 23, 1949 - May 19, 2023

Donald Joel "Joe" Keene

Donald Joel "Joe" Keene, 73, of Midland, Michigan was called home by Jesus on Friday, May 19, 2023, at Meridian Acres in Sanford. He was surrounded by his loving family.

Joe, the son of June and Harold Keene, was born on May 23, 1949, in Saginaw, Michigan. He attended Arthur Hill Tech before enlisting in the US Army and served from 1968-1970, including 14 months in Vietnam.

On July 25th, 1969, while home on leave, he married Debra Leigh Howe. They had been best friends since early childhood, and he loved to share memories of going across the street at five years old for Sunday chicken dinners cooked by his future Father-in-Law.

Joe was employed at GM Grey Iron Foundry as a Blast Operator for 25 years. After retiring, at the age of 46, you could always find him working on something. He went on mission trips to Biloxi, MS following Hurricane Katrina and served locally on the Bullock Creek Work Camp. He also worked as a handyman for Dr. John Pfenninger, taking great pride in caring for the beautiful grounds. As with most things, he enjoyed including Deb, so together they chose and planted the annual gardens. At home, they also enjoyed working in their vegetable garden together, alongside their grandchildren.

Joe loved to be outdoors. Some of his favorite activities were hunting, snowmobiling, and riding his Harley. In recent years, he enjoyed being a part of the Wednesday Riders. Joe and Deb also had fun cruising in their motorhome "Buttercup".

His greatest joy was spending time with the grandkids. You could always find Joe, alongside Deb, at school and sporting events. There wasn't a more proud PaPa there.

He leaves behind his wife, Deb, of 53 years, their four children; Brandon (Amy) Keene, Bryan (Kelly) Keene, Breeann (Chad) Helsel, and Brandi (Tim) Russ, and grandchildren; Evan and Logan Urchick, Nick and Zack Keene, Brayden and Brielle Russ, and Ellie and Wyatt Helsel. He also leaves behind his Father, Harold Keene and siblings; Kathy (Mark) Mikula, Mary (Jeff) Rowe, Carol (Bob) Wynn, and Harold (Karen) Keene, Jr, many nieces and nephews, special caregiver Lydia, the loving staff at Meridian Acres and countless friends as he never met a stranger. He was preceded in death by his mother, June Keene and his in-laws, Pat and Leigh Howe.

Cremation has taken place. Memorial service will be held on Thursday, May 25th at 12:00 noon at Midland Nazarene church, 5700 Jefferson Avenue, Midland, Michigan. Visitation will be held at the church from 10:00 am until the time of service. Private burial will take place later in Homer Township Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Midland Nazarene church or a charity of your choice.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY **25**. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Midland Nazarene  
5700 Jefferson Ave  
Midland, MI 48640

## Memorial Service

MAY **25**. 12:00 PM (ET)

Midland Nazarene  
5700 Jefferson Ave  
Midland, MI 48640

# Tribute Wall



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Donald "Joe" J. Keene.*



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May 24, 2023 at 07:24 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donald "Joe" J. Keene.*



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May 24, 2023 at 01:59 PM



“ *So sorry to hear of Joel's passing. When thinking back a few years I recall two strong memories. One was Joel and Deb arriving for a picnic on the Harley. It was so cute that I put together a short video for them. They got a kick out of playing it for the grandkids, showing their grandparents in a "movie". The other memory was Joel taking a friend's grandson out to fish in the lake. That young man was so delighted and came back to shore with several fish and admiration for a man who took time away from a social event to share that special time with him.*

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**Charmaine Girrbach** - May 23, 2023 at 01:19 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Donald "Joe" J. Keene.



May 23, 2023 at 11:41 AM



“ Deepest Condolences to the family. I rabbit hunted with Joe at our cabin up north, and loved visiting with him when I would see him outside his home, he was always a warm kind person. Prayers sent for the whole family.  
Rick & Deanna Allen.

Rick Allen - May 23, 2023 at 06:22 AM



“ Deb and family, sending our love and sympathy to you all. I remember he fixed our furnace on Christmas day many years ago. a special man.

faye crain - May 22, 2023 at 08:00 PM



“ I used to hunt with Joe and my brother Leo that worked with him. We had a lot of fun tramping the woods in the UP!



Frank Marietta - May 22, 2023 at 04:39 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Donald "Joe" J. Keene.

May 22, 2023 at 01:47 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Donald "Joe" J. Keene.



May 22, 2023 at 01:47 PM



“ *Joe always had a smile for everyone. As we walked by, it was always fun to see him on top of the "yellow bus" when he and Deb had been out traveling. If he was near the road, you could always count on a friendly neighbor type visit. We miss that and pray for Joe's family. With blessings, Jim and Phylis Strayer*

**Phylis Strayer** - May 22, 2023 at 01:11 PM