



John D. Zemak

May 7, 1947 - April 29, 2026

John D. Zemak, 78, of the Town of Tonawanda, New York, passed away peacefully at home on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, just as he would have wanted. Born on May 7, 1947, in DuBois, Pennsylvania, he was the son of John G. and Antoinette R. (Zmitravich) Zemak.

John proudly served in the United States Army and later retired after 36 years from General Motors Plant #4. He was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting, fishing, metal detecting, and spending time at camp with family and friends. Known as “Papa” to many, John had a gift for striking up conversations and making friends wherever he went. His greatest joy in life was his children, grandchildren, and family.

John was predeceased by his beloved wife, Gail E. Zemak (Finlayson); his sisters, Linda M. Zemak, Eileen Jacobi, and Ann Dukarm; and his sister-in-law, Rebecca “Bekki” Zemak.

He is survived by his children: Sandra Ryan; Robert (Alberta) Roth; Riannon (Chris Answeeney) Zemak; Heather (Justin) Friedline; James Gabioud; Nicole (Brian) Ginnane; and Mark Gabioud. He is also survived by his brother, James (Sheila Trigg) Zemak; his brother-in-law, Martin Jacobi; and his cherished grandchildren: Tom, Tabitha, and Kelly Ryan; Amanda and Robert Jr. Roth; Vivian Answeeney; Sunshine and Aurora Friedline; Ryann Orsini; and Kiele Gabioud. He leaves behind several nieces and nephews: Cameron (Austin Hill) Zemak, Morgan Zemak, MacKenzie Zemak, Katherine Zemak, Kelly Jacobi, and Katherine Ward, as well as his special friend and “supervisor” at

camp, Andrew Fronczak.

Family and friends are invited to gather on Monday (May 4, 2026) at Wattengel Funeral Home, 533 Meadow Drive, North Tonawanda, NY, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Military honors will follow. Interment will be held privately at Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

Mount Olivet Cemetery

4000 Elmwood Ave
Kenmore, NY 14217

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 4. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Wattengel Funeral Home (Meadow Drive)
533 Meadow Drive
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
(716) 693-0440
wattengelfh@gmail.com
<https://www.wattengel.com>

Military Honors and Burial

MAY 4. 7:00 PM (ET)

Wattengel Funeral Home (Meadow Drive)
533 Meadow Drive
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
(716) 693-0440
wattengelfh@gmail.com
<https://www.wattengel.com>

Tribute Wall

FW

“ Freedom Run Winery purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of John D. Zemak.



Freedom Run Winery - May 04 at 11:59 AM

LF

“ Love always the Roth & Ryan Family purchased the Enduring Grace for the family of John D. Zemak.



Love always the Roth & Ryan Family - May 03 at 07:20 PM



“ 89 files added to the album Life Tributes



Wattengel Funeral Home - May 03 at 09:36 AM

RM

“ Rebecca Michael purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of John D. Zemak.



Rebecca Michael - May 03 at 07:33 AM

LC

“ Love, Jennifer, Dina and Carrie planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John D. Zemak.

Love, Jennifer, Dina and Carrie - May 01 at 09:02 PM

LC

“ Love, Jennifer, Dina and Carrie purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of John D. Zemak.



Love, Jennifer, Dina and Carrie - May 01 at 09:02 PM

SF

“ Supervisor Andy and family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of John D. Zemak.



Supervisor Andy and family - May 01 at 03:27 PM

JS

“ Jim and Sheila purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of John D. Zemak.



Jim and Sheila - May 01 at 02:51 PM

MW

“ Mary Monter & Victoria Washington planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John D. Zemak.

Mary Monter & Victoria Washington - May 01 at 02:10 PM

JE

“ This is his cousin Jeanne from Lorain OH. I remember John and his siblings when they lived in DuBois PA on State Street with grandpa. We were a happy bunch of little kids. John will be missed and loved by all who knew him. I offer my condolences to his family. Now he will be in heaven with his parents and sisters living an everlasting life.

Jean - May 01 at 09:11 AM

LF

“ Love, the Combs Family purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of John D. Zemak.



Love, the Combs Family - May 01 at 02:06 AM