



LEO A. MUZA

February 11, 1929 - August 18, 2018

Leo A. Muza, loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather passed away peacefully Saturday morning, August 18, 2018, at Saint Elizabeth Hospital with his family by his side. Leo was born in Oshkosh, WI, on February 11, 1929, the son of the late Leo J. and Mary (Jakobowski) Muza. He was married to Elaine J. (Hartman) Muza and together they had five children.

Survivors include his three daughters, Patricia (Dr. John) Lorfeld, Susan (Wayne) Traska both of Oshkosh, WI; and Ann (David) Koveck of Menomonee Falls; his two sons, Thomas Muza of Dale, WI; and Robert Muza of Oshkosh, WI; seven granddaughters, Attorney Paula A. (Bret) Hamer of Oshkosh, WI; Dr. Karen Lorfeld of Oshkosh, WI; Jamie (Eric) McGuan of Menasha, WI; Jessica (Rick) Vanden Bloomer of DePere, WI; Rachel and Meg Traska of Oshkosh, WI; and Adrianna Koveck of Menomonee Falls, WI; three grandsons, Lieutenant Commander David Lorfeld of Norfolk, VA; Alec Koveck of Menomonee Falls, WI; and Jackson Traska of Oshkosh, WI; and six great-grandchildren, Lukas and Nikolas Hamer of Oshkosh, WI; Gavin and Charlotte McGuan of Menasha, WI; and Lily and Hunter Vanden Bloomer of DePere, WI. Leo was preceded in death by his wife Elaine, as well as his brother John and his sisters Mary Rutz and Helen Schuster. He is further survived by many nieces, nephews, other relatives and many dear friends.

His business life had started in a rather unexpected way. On the way to a customer call in Fond du Lac, he and his father were involved in a tragic car accident, leaving three people without their lives, his father's included. Leo's life and career were defined by that tragic loss. The death of his father left a very large vacancy at the family business that Leo had to fill at the age of 24. Leo became President of Muza Sheet Metal along with the responsibility of 15 valued employees. The transition of the company from a small sheet metal shop to a respected, well-known business started to take form.

In 1957 Leo added another location to the business, starting Muza Metal Products, which diversified the business into metal fabrication. After running both companies for 17 years, in 1974 he sold the sheet metal business to his brother-in-law so he could concentrate

and devote his time and energy to the manufacturing business. With a strong commitment to performance, quality, and people, the business grew from a staff of 15 to a workforce of 150, generating 25 million in annual sales. In 1995 his son Tom was promoted to President and Leo assumed the title of Chairman of the Board. Tom purchased the business in 1997, becoming the third generation of Muza's to run the company allowing Leo to retire and enjoy the next chapter of Leo's life.

In May of 1950, Leo married Elaine Hartman—a lovely blonde girl from the west side of Oshkosh. With the flourishing business under his wing, they began their family.

Over the next 12 years the two were blessed with five wonderful children, three girls and two boys (Patricia, Thomas, Robert, Susan and Ann). Elaine had dedicated her life to raising their children so Leo could focus on developing the business; however, there was always time for family. His children have all gone on to lead rewarding, fruitful lives—both personally and professionally. His 10 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren were the highlight of his life.

In spite of being tragically thrust into the role of business manager and father, Leo's dream was to become a pilot. In 1965, his dream became a reality as he acquired his pilot license. Besides his family, flying has always been his true love. To date, he has gathered over 2,000 hours of flight time and has owned his own planes, using them both for business and pleasure. Leo was instrumental in the EAA relocation from Rockford, IL to Oshkosh, WI. Leo would take his two sons to Canada for many hunting and fishing trips and took his daughters to the mountains of Colorado for skiing. As many of you are aware, Elaine did not have the same passion for flying.

The highlight of his flying career was the opportunity to fly in a Czechoslovakian fighter jet. In 1994 he turned in his wings, but he never gave up his love of aircraft and flying and spending time with family and friends. He purchased the family cottage in Wautoma, WI in 1967 which allowed him to spend quality time with his children and grandchildren fishing, boating, skiing and swimming. It gave him many fond memories that he carried with him throughout his life.

Having called Oshkosh "home" his whole life, the cold, long winters did not seem to get any shorter. To help make it through, he and Elaine bought a condo in Florida, which allowed him to continue to enjoy golfing and fishing for more than just a few summer months. Inevitably, the condo also became another great gathering place for family over the years.

Oshkosh has been more than just a home for Leo. It is the place where he grew into the man, the husband, the father and friend that we all love and admire. He had a great sense of community and felt a need to give back to the city that had given him the opportunity and environment to succeed. He readily involved himself in many activities and committees both professionally and personally:

Chairman of Fox Valley Sheet Metal Apprentice Program; President of Fox Valley Sheet Metal Association; President & Director of Oshkosh Associated Industries; Director of Oshkosh Chamber; President of Oshkosh Pilot Club; Director of Western State Bank, M&I Bank, & Associated Bank; Director of Second Harvest Food Pantry; Member of the City of Oshkosh Planning Committee; Director of Mercy Hospital Foundation; Member of St Mary's Finance Committee; Chairman of Renaming & Dedication of Wittman Airport; Director of Hooper Building Foundation; Director of Oshkosh Industrial Development; and many fund-raising committees.

A Celebration of Life Mass for Leo will be held at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church in Oshkosh on Monday, August 27th at 3:30 PM. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made in his name to Blessed Sacrament St. Mary's Campus or to the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation-Alzheimer's Association of Greater Wisconsin Fund.

Comments



“ My husband Ken Hughes and I were friends and neighbors of Leo and Elaine. Many fond memories A favorite was sitting on our back porch watching the moon rise over the lake while watching the moon Landings on television with Muza and other friends and neighbors. My sincere condolences to the Muza family. Ken Hughes passed away on July 17,2018 in Madison WI. So good to have these wonderful memories.

Marilyn Hughes - August 25, 2018 at 12:16 AM