



Donald "Donnie" L. Drake

February 7, 1948 - May 10, 2025

Donald Lynn Drake, age 77, of Saline, Michigan, passed away peacefully on Saturday, May 10th, 2025. Born February 7th, 1948, in Ypsilanti, Don lived a life defined by his absolute devotion to family - it wasn't just a part of who he was, it was everything to him.

A proud veteran of the United States Army, Don served his country honorably during the Vietnam War. Following his military service, he began his career as a carpenter before joining Ford Motor Company, where he built a distinguished career spanning decades. Don spent the majority of his time at the Ford Milan Plastics Plant, where he rose through the ranks to hold several management positions, including Assistant Plant Manager. His expertise and leadership abilities led him to corporate engineering with Ford in Dearborn, Michigan, where he worked until his retirement.

Don's love for his family was the beating heart of his existence. Nothing in this world mattered more to him than his wife, children, and grandchildren. Every decision he made, every dream he pursued, was with his family in mind. The home he built on Sunset Lake wasn't just a house - it was his gift to his family, a place where love flowed as freely as the water, where laughter echoed across the lake, and where memories were crafted with intention and joy. His eyes would light up with pure happiness whenever his family gathered around him, and his love was felt in every hug, every shared meal, every moment together. He didn't just tell his family he loved them - he showed it in countless ways, big and small, every single day.

Don was an avid athlete who played fast-pitch softball for nearly three decades. His passion for outdoor life was evident in his love of hunting, fishing, golfing and maintaining his immaculate lawn and landscaping. Nothing brought him more joy than hosting family cookouts filled with music and cocktails, turning ordinary afternoons into treasured memories. His favorite moments were spent lakeside, enjoying a good cigar, listening to music, and taking boat rides with his beloved dogs, always happiest when surrounded by those he loved.

Don is survived by his loving wife of almost 40 years, Anita; his children, Adam (Whitney) Drake and Kerri Drake; his stepchildren, Kelly Chantelois, Patrick Chantelois, and Michael Chantelois; his sisters, Sue Drake-Trachet and Beverly Drake-Camp; and his cherished grandchildren, Libby (Oliver) Mephram, Leigha Chrysler, Lauren Chrysler, David Chantelois, Kacie Chantelois, Brandon Drake, Drew Bergman, and Paige Priest. He was preceded in death by his parents, Ruth Bell Lange and Vernie Clay Drake. Friends may join the family for a time of visitation on Tuesday, May 27, from 3:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. at the Robison-BahnMiller Funeral Home in Saline. Visitation will continue on Wednesday, May 28 from 10:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. at the St. Andrew Catholic Church in Saline. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11:00 A.M. with Fr. John Linden as Celebrant. Following the service, military honors will be provided under the auspices of the Veteran's Honor Guard of Washtenaw County. A luncheon will also be at the Church. Burial will take place privately in the Oakwood Cemetery in Saline. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in his name may be made to St. Andrews Catholic Church (<https://standrewssaline.org/online-giving>) or The Golden Retriever Rescue of Michigan (www.grrom.com). To leave a memory you have of Don, to sign his guestbook or for directions please visit www.rbfhsaline.com

Cemetery Details

Oakwood Cemetery

227 West Michigan Ave
Saline, MI 48176

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 27. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Robison-Bahnmler Funeral Home & Cremation Services
301 E Michigan Ave
Saline, MI 48176
(734) 429-9760
rbfhsaline@hotmail.com
<https://www.rbfhsaline.com>

Visitation

MAY 28. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
910 Austin Dr
Saline, MI 48176-1157
(734) 429-5210

Mass of Christian Burial

MAY 28. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
910 Austin Dr
Saline, MI 48176-1157
(734) 429-5210

Luncheon

MAY 28. 12:10 PM (ET)

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
910 Austin Dr
Saline, MI 48176-1157
(734) 429-5210

Tribute Wall

LO

“ Good Day,

Do you need a loan? Are you in need of a personal or business loan to pay your debts or start a new business or expand your business?

Then contact: zenithloanfirm(A)gmail. com

LOAN OFFICER - January 29 at 04:55 PM

CM

“ *Don was the best boss I had in my life time. Worked for him at the Milan Plastics Plant. He was a vrry caring boss-best ever. Just lost my wife to cancer too. Almost 58 years. May both rest in peace*

Carl McBride - May 27, 2025 at 09:20 AM

RD

“ *It was with great sadness that we learned of Don’s passing. Don was a good neighbor, a good friend, and a better man! He had a big heart and would do anything for his family and friends. I had the honor of sharing a last name with Don, working with him at Ford, and sharing many similar life experiences in our pasts. When we would come North, we would always try to spend time with Don and Anita and enjoyed going to dinner, playing some golf, or just riding on the lake. We enjoyed traveling with them to places like Hilton Head, northern Michigan, and even a River Cruise in Europe. It was an honor to call him our friend! He will be missed.*

Roy & Jerri (the “Other Drakes on the Lake”)

roy drake - May 25, 2025 at 02:34 PM

TC

“ In St Andrews there is a special space where all the "cool" Catholics sit
It was here that I met Don & Anita. After church Don would share stories of recent trips and about raising an energetic pup.
We shared a common interest in fires so I tried to keep him in fire wood.
My one regret was that I didn't get him out to my lake to catch a 24" large mouth bass. How often do we put off not knowing what is to be?
Now there is one less "cool" Catholic in this world but I know that God has a better seat for Don.
Eternal rest grant on to him oh Lord.
Tom

Tom Chulig - May 19, 2025 at 02:27 PM

TL

“ It's with great sadness that I write this message. Don Drake was my best friend. I loved him like a brother. He was a man of honor. He loved his family and his friends. I will truly miss my brother.
Tom Lund.

THOMAS LUND - May 19, 2025 at 08:51 AM

HR

“ I'm sending my deepest condolence to the Drake family Don was a great friend of mine we worked at Ford motor company Milan he was my department manager my name is Harold regrind Robertson I worked in Regrind department we shared a lot of laughter together and hard work a great and fair guy for all of my friends from my from Milan and the UAW it was an honor no it's such a great guy thank God bless your family be safe Harold's "REGRIND" Robertson !!!
Keep the faith

Harold Robertson - May 18, 2025 at 07:57 AM

MH

“ Dear Anita and All of the Drake Family,

I was heartbroken to hear about Don's passing. Please accept my deepest condolences during this difficult time.

I had the privilege of knowing Don during our school years. We spent many hours of practicing and playing sports together, studying, and were also bandmates. That was a combination that not many could pull off with the kind of dedication and energy he always added to whatever he was attempting to do. Don will be remembered as a gifted athlete and a talented musician but, more than that, he was a true friend in an important time in my life. We had many laughs that we shared along the way. I consider myself lucky to have had "Donnie" as my friend.

As great as all that was for me, it is trumped by his love and dedication to his family. He was so very proud. I am so glad that he made your lives so much brighter. You are in my thoughts and I hope that you find comfort and solace in the many lives that Don touched.

With deepest sympathy,

Michael S. Hughes

Michael S. Hughes - May 16, 2025 at 01:52 PM

PM

“ We send our condolences to Don’s family. Don was a dear friend and neighbour and we have many happy memories of times spent with him and Anita - from weekly lunch and movie afternoons to fabulous vacations and cruises. He certified as a SCUBA diver in Grand Cayman and we had many excellent dives there. Don would cover the achievements of his grandchildren with great pride. It should be noted how much he loved his dogs and how they loved evening boat trips with him while he calmly puffed on a cigar. He was always there for us - be it assembly of cribs for great nephews or driving us to airports or hospital appointments. Don managed the transition from successful career at Ford to enjoying a wonderful retirement. He always had time to be a York Woods Board member and the ‘go to” person who managed all issues pertaining to Sunset Lake. We miss him.

Carolyn and Paul Myers

Paul Myers - May 15, 2025 at 04:53 PM



“ Our deepest sympathies to the Drake and Chantelois families! Donnie was a kind and generous man and will be greatly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him! His memory will live on, in the hearts of many!
Much love, Nan and Sandy



Sandy Hargrave - May 15, 2025 at 12:59 PM

DO

“ Deepest sympathy to the Drake family and friends. Haven't seen any of the family for years. Sue, I remember when you came to work at R&B while you were in high school. That's when I met your family. I seen that your mother passed away and now Don. You are all in my thoughts and prayers. Sincerely, Doris (Lindemann) Miller



dorismiller1941 - May 14, 2025 at 06:06 PM

GJ

“ I've been Don and Anita's next door neighbor on Sunset Lake for 29 years. Don was always meticulous about his yard and flowers, and I will miss seeing him frequently going around on his tractor mowing his lawn, which was the envy of the neighborhood. He was a kind and gentle man, always a good and helpful neighbor. He recently assisted me in selecting and transporting rose trees for my side yard to match his own, in clearing out undergrowth from the large pine tree in front of my house, and in resetting stones to prevent erosion along the lake. Don loved Sunset Lake, and he could often be seen on quiet evenings peacefully boating with his family, friends and dogs across it. I will greatly miss my neighbor and friend.

George Jabol - May 14, 2025 at 05:40 PM