



## Donald H. Drake

July 27, 1936 - December 20, 2020

Donald H. Drake of Ann Arbor, Michigan passed away after a brief illness on Sunday, December 20, 2020 at the St. Joseph Hospital in Chelsea, MI at the age of 84. Don was born on July 27, 1936 in Lodi Township, to the late Harold A. and Alma (Jedele Gensley) Drake. On December 3, 1954, he married the late Janet (Walker) Drake at St. John's Lutheran Church in Bridgewater, MI.

Don is survived by his eight children: Joddy (Fred) Hieber of Ann Arbor; Paula Drake of Ann Arbor; LeAnn Drake of Ann Arbor; Steven (Leslie) Drake of Ann Arbor; Jeffrey (Kelly) Drake of Saline; Brenda (Ralph) Hoelzer of Ann Arbor; Curtis Drake of Ann Arbor; and Mark (Angela) Drake of Ann Arbor. He also has 14 grandchildren: Kimberly (Kyle) Olberg; Erica and Dustin Drake; Britain (Lauren Langton) and Bennett Drake; Kelsey (Jay) Miller, Jacob, Derek, and Ethan Hoelzer; Michael and Andrew (Paige Downer) Drake; and Danielle Bunney, Gage and Ashton Drake; great-grandchildren: Kenley and Maverick Miller. Don is also survived by his sister, Katherine Fodor of Hemet, CA, and sisters-in-law, Audrey Gensley of Ann Arbor, MI, Pat Drake of Richmond, KY and many nieces, nephews, cousins and dear friends. He was preceded in death by his brothers: Ralph (Ruth) Gensley, Earl Gensley, and Robert Drake; and grandson Joshua Hoelzer.

Don was a lifelong dairy farmer which he shared with his sons. He was one of the founding members of the Michigan Tractor Pullers Association started in

1969 which he loved and was devoted to. Don was also proud to be involved with the Saline Community Fair, serving on the fair board since 1973. He was extremely proud to help establish tractor pulling at the Saline Fair. Most recently, you would see Don in the livestock barn or near the show arena watching all of his grandchildren showing their animals.

Don had a quick wit and some interesting little sayings that he shared with his children and grandchildren. He had a way to make you smile and add humor to situations unless it involved playing euchre. Don loved to play cards and it was never a true gathering unless some games were played. And don't forget the homemade wine. Don loved to make and especially share wine. For family and friends who were lucky enough to participate, the annual wine making was an event to be remembered. However, his greatest treasure and accomplishments were his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Friends may join the family for a Celebration of Life Gathering on Sunday, August 8, 2021 between 1:00 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. at the Washtenaw County Farm Council Grounds, Building A. 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in his name can be made to St. John's Lutheran Church, PO Box 13, Bridgewater, MI 48115. To leave a memory you have of Don or to sign his guestbook, please visit [www.rbfhsaline.com](http://www.rbfhsaline.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Lodi Township Cemetery

Corner of Textile Road and Ann Arbor-Saline  
Road  
Saline, MI 48176

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life Gathering

AUG 8. 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Washtenaw County Farm Council Grounds  
5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

# Tribute Wall



“ *Donald H. Drake*

October 23, 2023 at 01:07 PM



“ *Our love and sympathy to your family at this difficult time.*

**Scott and Patti Fosdick** - July 04, 2021 at 08:29 AM



“ *My prayers are with all of his family and friends. As kids we always felt welcome on our trips with Mrs. Walker to the Drake's home. Sending you all peace.*

**karen eisel** - December 30, 2020 at 09:24 AM



“ *Where do I start... as far back as I can remember Uncle Don always had that grin on his face and and sparkle in his eyes. I remember riding on the tractors and listening to his stories. Were a Dad to us when ours wasn't around and I will always cherish those memories. The smell on the pipe you used to smoke. Say hello to all our family in heaven with you. Until we meet again*

**Janice Mooneyham** - December 24, 2020 at 02:59 PM

Lisa  
Henes

“ *Condolences to all our cousins and families. We have so many cherished memories with him over passed years. Blessed to have gotten to know him so much more and thanks for teaching of wine making and drinking. Always put smile on my face and laughing with fast witted jokes during fair. Great man and will be greatly missed. Love Lisa and Wilbur*

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**Lisa Henes** - December 24, 2020 at 08:44 AM

VB

“ *Uncle Don always treated me as family and such a kind loving soul- sending prayers of strength to the family and Pa Drake i know you came and took him home- so many cherished memories on that farm- fly high with the angels honey RIP-*



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**vickie bennett** - December 23, 2020 at 09:03 PM

TN

“ *Trudy San Nicolas lit a candle in memory of Donald H. Drake*



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**Trudy San Nicolas** - December 23, 2020 at 02:02 PM

CG

“ *Such a gentle soul! Every memory of Don is with a smile on his face from ear to ear. We sure appreciated all the chicken BBQ's, the fireworks and neighborhood gatherings he and his family hosted. His infectious smile, sweet demeanor and generous heart will surely be missed. Our sympathy goes out to his entire family.*  
*Gary and Colleen Sweetland*

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**Colleen and Gary** - December 23, 2020 at 06:50 AM

MD

“ *Every year id decorate the christmas tree while grandpa lectured me on what spots needed more ornaments or more lights one time i remember doing it without him just so it was done and how upset he got because he wasn't there to help.. this year i didnt get the tree up right away and then when he ended up in the hospital i put off putting it up in hopes he'd be home to once again lecture me on decorating the tree as was our little tradition last night after the news of his passing with a little help i got the tree decorated with lights i sat in his chair by the window and did his usual of checking the tree for dark spots and looking out the window to see how the reflection looked never did i think such an annoying task would bring such pain to the heart and now realizing how much of it i took for granted i can say i truly miss you grandpa and honestly decorating a christmas tree is never gonna be the same no matter how much i hear you lecturing me in my head its just not the same but i swear to you some how i will find a way to make this christmas memorable even if i need a million lights just so you can see the house from up above never have i said these words to you but i love you and one day i hope to be able to lecture someone decorating the tree as you once did me*

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**Michael drake** - December 22, 2020 at 08:24 PM

CM

*That truly brings tears to my eyes Michael. Those are memories that you will cherish forever. Be assured he loved you too 😞. He was a wonderful man and loved by many. RIP Don.*

**cyndi Mclennan** - December 24, 2020 at 08:39 AM

LR

“ *Our prayers to all of you on the loss of a great and kind man who so many people loved dearly. He called everyone a friend and always had such a beautiful smile. He was an angel on earth and will be reunited with Janet and other family in the arms of our Lord.*

**Larry and Robyn Robison** - December 22, 2020 at 03:22 PM

CR

“ *Our sympathy to the entire family. May the message of Salvation bring you Peace. We will miss his smile and kind words at the Fair.*

*Scott and Carlene Rogers*

**Carlene Rogers** - December 22, 2020 at 09:29 AM

DN

“ *Always willing to lend a hand with a smile. May the angels greet him as he enters the gates of Heaven. God's peace and comfort to you during this time of sorrow.*

*Deborah (Jedele) Niedbala*

**Deborah Niedbala** - December 22, 2020 at 06:44 AM

BB

“ *Brenda Bristle-Warman lit a candle in memory of Donald H. Drake*



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**Brenda Bristle-Warman** - December 22, 2020 at 06:20 AM

SH

“ *Jeff and the entire Drake family sending our Sincere condolences for the loss of your dad .  
Jerry Sherrie Hill*

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**Sherrie Hill** - December 21, 2020 at 08:33 PM



“ *Don worked so hard for our SALINE FAIR .I believe He got a lot of others in the Drake family working voluntarily at the fair also .  
R.I..P. Dear man.*



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**Mary Hess** - December 21, 2020 at 08:23 PM

DH

*I have many memories of Don from going to paw paw to get grapes for the wine and doing a lot of sampling of different years to butchering chicken & turkeys for the chicken bbqs to working at the Saline fair and after the tractor pull events going and getting the wine he brought and passing it around ,those are some memories I have Rest In Peace Don*

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**David Hall** - December 21, 2020 at 10:11 PM



Carol  
Jedele

“ *Where do I start. He was such an wonderful person to be around. I remember his smile. Many times him and my dad would get to yacking and the smile and laugh from Don would always make me smile. Many prayers for the whole family.*

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**Carol Jedele** - December 21, 2020 at 08:16 PM