



## Joseph S. Learman

November 20, 1945 - November 7, 2023

Joseph Stanley Learman, age 77, passed away at home Tuesday, November 7, 2023. Beloved husband of his late wife, Jeanne; dearest father to Stan (Linda) Learman, Steve Learman, Audrey (Tom) Shell, and daughter-in-law, Marta Learman; and most adored Grandpa of Joseph and Colin Learman; Connor and Emily Learman; Mitchell Manninen, Landon and Ethan Shell; Nicole (Matt) Margeson, and great-granddaughter, Helena Margeson.

Joe was also the cherished brother of Harv (Jane) Learman, Jerry (Annie) Learman, Carl (Dorothy) Learman, Rita (Roger) Woodruff, Dick (Sherrie) Learman, Jeanette (John) Hunt, Hal (Chuck Pokriefka) Learman, Rosemary Zink, Bernice (Darryl) Weltin, and his Buckley in-laws. He was the favorite uncle of dozens of nieces and nephews, and a treasured friend to many.

Born November 20, 1945, in Bad Axe, Michigan, to Stanley Albert and Lucille (Hessling) Learman, Joe was the fourth of their ten children. He grew up on a farm and attended a one-room schoolhouse in Bad Axe through eighth grade, graduating from Our Lady of Lake Huron High School in 1963. Joe left the farm for the city at age 18, earning a metallurgical engineering degree in 1968 from the University of Detroit, and later earned an MBA from Eastern Michigan University.

While Joe was a student at U of D in 1966, his sister-in-law, Janie, introduced

him to her roommate, Jeanne Buckley, who became the light and love of Joe's life. They married on April 20, 1968, and were joyfully together for nearly fifty years, until Jeanne's death in late 2017. Together, they built a life measured by a wealth of love in family, friends, and adventure, and they were truly a power couple in their shared sense of service and purpose in helping those in need.

Beginning his career with Federal Mogul as a metallurgical engineer, Joe moved on to work at Hoover Universal, later bought by Johnson Controls. He worked there for 20 years where he was plant manager of several automotive seating operations. After a successful career, Joe retired early at 54, providing payroll and accounting services to help support his wife's anesthesia business, pitching in to help his by then adult children with home projects and business ventures, and devoting much of his time to being with his grandchildren who he absolutely delighted in throughout all their stages of growing up.

"Smoke," as Joe was also known, was an athlete: a scratch golfer at his peak, a skilled tennis player, and one heckuva softball player. His nickname, he said, came from how fast he could run the bases. Smoke played softball well into his 60s and remained competitive with people half his age. He loved Detroit Tigers baseball and enjoyed attending several Tigers Fantasy Camps in Lakeland, Florida, meeting many of his baseball idols from the 1968 and 1984 World Series champions Tigers' teams. But the most special Tigers camp he attended was the one his sons Stan and Steve accompanied him to in 2008, where all three took the field together. Joe shared a special bond with daughter Audrey too. When given the chance from a young age to golf with her parents or stay home with a babysitter, Audrey, unlike her brothers, always chose golf, much to Joe's pride and joy. He enjoyed watching women's sports as much as men's and was a great supporter and cheerleader at all his children's and grandchildren's events.

Joe also enjoyed many travel adventures, including bicycling through the Florida Keys, a service trip to the Dominican Republic, golfing in Ireland and England, and European river cruises. Right up to his final days, Smoke remained active, continuing to workout and play golf and tennis regularly. We know his many friends and admirers on the golf course and tennis courts at Travis Pointe will miss his easy smile, quick wit, and dependable friendliness, if not the deceptive backspin he could put on returning a serve.

For as much fun and success as he had in family, career, and leisure time, Joe also had a remarkable ethic of service to others. While raising their own three children, Joe and Jeanne provided short-term foster care to 80+ children over the years through Ozone House, a center in Washtenaw County to help at-risk and homeless youth. After actively volunteering with Ozone for more than 40 years, Joe and Jeanne established the Learman Higher Education Fund to assist Ozone House clients with costs not typically covered by financial aid or scholarships. They were grateful for the way education changed their own lives, and it was important to them to pay it forward. Joe was also a dedicated supporter of Habitat for Humanity. He and Jeanne sponsored an entire home in Ypsilanti Township, and put in weeks of sweat equity to get it built, knowing what a difference it would make for a family to have secure, affordable housing.

Joe “Smoke” Learman exemplified throughout his life what he believed in: work hard, be kind and humble, serve others, stay positive, be grateful, and perhaps most of all, be present.

Joe’s smile was a mile wide and he shared it freely (to his kids’ delight, it could also take in a McDonald’s hamburger in a single bite). His grandchildren, now all grown, loved being with him and together they made the ordinary

extraordinary—lawn mower tractor rides, “Hot Dog Monday” golfing at Rustic Glen, playing cards and watching tv together, enjoying competitive games of ping pong, pool, or pickleball—any time spent with Grandpa Joe was time well spent.

Joe was not always a man of many words, but he had a special way of making people feel seen, loved, and cared for. He reached out to others and lifted them up seemingly effortlessly. His good humor and faith were unflinching. His positive impact on so many lives is immeasurable. His loss to us is heaven’s gain, and we know God holds him and Jeanne—happily reunited again—in the hollow of his hand, until we meet again.

Friends may join the family for a time of visitation on Sunday, November 19, 2023 between 2:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M. at the Robison-Bahnmler Funeral Home in Saline. Visitation will continue on Monday, November 20 from 9:30 A.M. to 10:30 A.M. at St. Andrew Catholic Church in Saline. A Mass of the Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 A.M. Fr. John Linden as Celebrant. Inurnment will take place in the St. Andrew Church Columbarium following the Mass. A luncheon will also be held at the Church. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in his name may be made to Habitat for Humanity or to Ozone House. To leave a memory you have of Joe, to sign his guestbook or for directions please visit [www.rbfhsaline.com](http://www.rbfhsaline.com).

# Cemetery Details

## St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church Columbarium

910 Austin Road  
Saline, MI 48176

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV **19**. 2:00 PM - 5:00 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

NOV **20**. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church  
910 Austin Drive  
Saline, MI 48176  
<https://standrewsaline.org/>

## Mass of Christian Burial

NOV 20. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church  
910 Austin Drive  
Saline, MI 48176  
<https://standrewsaline.org/>

## Inurnment in Columbarium

NOV 20. 11:40 AM (ET)

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church Columbarium  
910 Austin Road  
Saline, MI 48176

## Luncheon

NOV 20. 11:50 AM (ET)

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church  
910 Austin Drive  
Saline, MI 48176  
<https://standrewsaline.org/>

# Tribute Wall

SL

“Great man, Great Father, Great athlete. Thank you all for your kind words.

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**Stephen Learman** - November 19, 2023 at 12:58 AM

KP

“Condolences to the entire family. I know how much he loved his family because when we talked on the phone he always gave me the run down, especially on all his grandkids. He loved them so much.

*Joe was the nicest, generous and most caring man I have ever met. I loved him like he was my own dad and I will always cherish the time I spent with him.*

*Both Jeanne and Joe were such wonderful, kind people. I loved them both!*

*Love, Kim Piccini*



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**Kimberly Piccini** - November 19, 2023 at 12:49 AM

YO

“ I remember Joe Learman as a good boss and friend who helped me a lot when I was trying to make a life in the USA. I came to the USA in 1974, and Joe hired me in 1975 to work as a temporary metallurgical technician at the Federal Mogul Research Lab. During the job interview, my wife, who was pregnant with our daughter, was with me. This was an important moment in my journey to achieve the American dream.

When our daughter was born, Joe and Jeanne came to our house with a gift for the baby. I later applied to the U-M Engineering school part-time, and Joe helped me by allowing a flexible schedule for my courses. When Joe became the Plant Manager at Hoover NSK, I followed him. After finishing my degree at U-M, Joe helped me get a job as a staff Metallurgical Engineer at Ford.

As I worked for Ford, Joe and I became close friends. We played tennis together at TPCC and sometimes golfed at Radrick Farm GC or TPCC. When I retired from Ford, Joe and Jeanne congratulated me and threw a party at their house. They helped us in many ways, and I learned not just about work from Joe but also about being a good person and a true friend. I miss them. Rest in peace, Joe, free from pain and now with Jeanne. I forgot to say thank you to Joe and Jeanne for their help and friendship. I miss their smiles.

Young Kim

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Young - November 18, 2023 at 08:48 PM

DZ

“ Dianna Z. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph S. Learman.

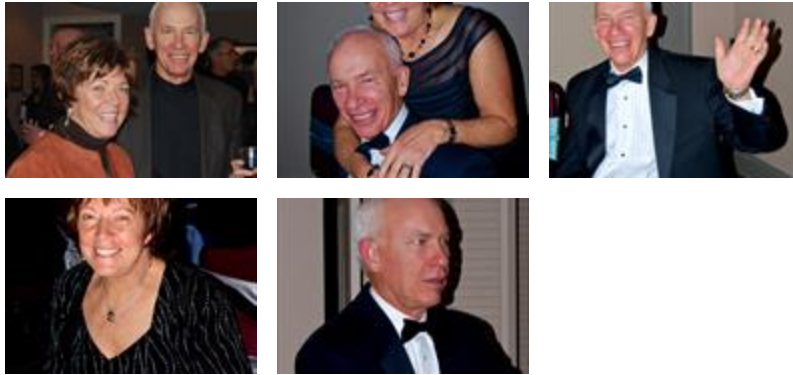
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Dianna Z. - November 18, 2023 at 12:53 AM

CD

“ It was an Honor to be friends with Joe & Jeanne and the whole Learman family. Joe was truly a Special human being and will be missed by all that knew him. Time Passes Much Too Quickly and this should remind us all to Enjoy Every Breath Life Gives us. I will always cherish the Tiger games we went to and of course Buddy's Pizza.

May you rest in harmony,  
Corey & Kathy



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COREY E. BAKIAN, D.C. - November 15, 2023 at 02:45 PM

SS

“ Joe and Jeanne were so kind and inclusive. They welcomed us to Travis Point with open arms and included us in many fun gatherings. This picture is from Sammy's grad party in 2017. After I moved to NZ Joe and I exchanged a few emails and I sent pics of places they had traveled to in NZ & AU. Joe always made a point of catching up with me when I came home for visits and is was wonderful to see his smile. He was a funny, smart, humble and very kind soul. He made a difference and he left a legacy❤️ Sally



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Sally Schmall - November 15, 2023 at 02:28 AM

DM

“ Joe was my best friend in grade school (Adams Siegel #3 ) and high school (OLLH) . He was the best baseball player I ever knew . I can recall climbing the pear tree close to their house and enjoying a nice pear. In high school Joe, Tom Cook and myself always hung out . Contrary to what Stanley thought Tom rather than me was the instigator of most of our outlandish adventures. Rest in peace friend. Dale Messing

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**Dale Messing** - November 14, 2023 at 11:35 PM

MG

“ Stan, Steve and Audrey,  
Love to you and your children at this time. It is pretty much impossible to describe how much Joe impacted so many lives and touched the heart of so many family members and friends. Joe, along with Jeanne, what a team, just were wonderful to be around at any given time. So happy Joe was still playing golf and tennis and doing well even with his Parkinson's. Quite an amazing guy!  
Love you all. Mary

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**Mary L Going** - November 12, 2023 at 06:06 PM

KI

“ *Mr. Learman was my Little League Baseball Coach, and I have a lot of good memories being on his team.*

*Also, Steve invited me over to their house many times, and I enjoyed playing baseball and football in their yard, and pool and ping pong in their basement.*

*Thank you to Mr. Learman and their family for all of the hospitality they showed me over the many years, and may God bless Audrey, Steve, Stan, and the Learman family.*

*Kirk Boettcher*

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**Kirk** - November 12, 2023 at 02:04 PM

KC

“ *Joe was treasured by so many. We will miss his huge heartwarming grin after cracking an insightful or goofy joke. Joe and Jeanne were always up for anything as indicated by their willingness to suffer an uncomfortable seat in the trunk of my car as a large group of tennis fans looked for a parking spot at the Cincinnati Open. Joe leaves an irreplaceable huge hole in our hearts.*

*Kathy & Eddy C.*



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**Kathy Christensen** - November 12, 2023 at 01:55 PM

BR

“ Joe was always great company on the golf course and a gracious host. He and Jeanne were the most welcoming people I knew. Because I was a friend of Stan's, I was automatically part of their family and welcome at their house any time. I have always been just a little jealous of the multi-generational family that the Learman family has. He will be missed.  
Brian Richards

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**Brian Richards** - November 11, 2023 at 12:27 PM

KD

“ Audrey, Stan, and Steve, I have been in touch this week with so many people across the US from Ozone House who got to bask in Jeanne and Joe's warmth and generosity. We are a drop in the bucket of all the lives and the families that "Smoke" and Jeanne impacted over the years. They never ceased sharing their gratitude and zest for life in the form of providing a home and a family for young people, literally building homes for families, and inviting others to dance in support of the community. The world is a better place because of your Dad's love, grace, and generosity, and million-dollar smile. Much love to you all and your entire family. Joe has left an amazing legacy.

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**Katie Doyle** - November 10, 2023 at 02:39 PM

LL

“ Stan, Steve and Audrey are hearts will be with you during time of sadness. Joe's smile was always a welcome site. Great neighbor, wonderful gentleman.  
Lynda Laycock

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**Lynda Laycock** - November 10, 2023 at 09:51 AM

LL

*So sorry for the typo.  
Our hearts will be with you during this time of sadness.*

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**Lynda Laycock** - November 10, 2023 at 09:55 AM

PA

“ *Joe and Jeanne were among the best friends we have had - dining, tennis, golf, even bicycling at Bar Harbour. I will miss that smile.*

*Phil Aquino*



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**Phil Aquino** - November 09, 2023 at 08:56 AM

LR

“ *Stan, Steve and Audrey. We are so saddened by Joe's passing. We could not have asked for a more kind and thoughtful neighbor. May God Bless Him and all of you. Lee and Sheila Reichenberger*

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**Lee and Sheila Reichenberger** - November 09, 2023 at 08:29 AM