



Robert James Fortier

May 5, 1932 - February 19, 2023

Robert James Fortier, age 90, passed away Sunday, February 19, 2023 in Chelsea, Michigan. He was a long time resident of Saline, MI. Robert was born May 5, 1932 in Saginaw, Michigan. He was a graduate of Holy Family Parochial School in 1950, after which he served his country as a US Army Corporal in the Korean War, during which he attended meteorology school and was stationed in Alaska. Robert's children and grandchildren were fond of hearing about his time in the Ski Patrol – which he joined before ever having touched a pair of skis.

Robert graduated from the University of Detroit Mercy with a BS in Electrical Engineering in 1961 – regularly hitchhiking back and forth between Saginaw and Detroit. During his time in college, Robert met the love of his life Shirley Ann House, who caught Robert's eye from across the Golden Glow Ballroom. The two began a beautiful marriage of 64 years on November 29, 1958. Robert started a long career in engineering at WJBK TV in Detroit before travelling across the country with his young family to Seattle, Washington (Boeing Aircraft); Huntsville, Alabama (Boeing Aircraft); Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Collins Radio); and finally to Saline, Michigan (Ford Motor Company). During his time in Seattle, he contributed to the design of the guidance system on the Minuteman missile program. Robert served his country yet again while in Huntsville, where he was proud to make significant contributions to the telemetry and guidance systems on the Saturn V rockets as a part of the

Apollo space program. His career culminated with his achievements at Ford Motor Company where he worked on Formula 1 racing teams and was awarded four Emmys for his work in developing telemetry systems that were used by ESPN to display on-screen graphics of real-time racing statistics from NASCAR racecars.

In retirement, Robert enjoyed travelling with Shirley in his Airstream which they used as snowbirds for 16 years at Traveler's Rest in Dade City, Florida. Robert was happiest giving rides to his grandchildren on his John Deere tractor, working in the yard with his wife Shirley, and spending time surrounded by his loving family while watching the bluebirds out his back window.

Robert's retirement was marked by the same devoutness and dedication to our Lord that guided him through his entire life. A long-time and active member of St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church, Robert attended mass daily alongside his wife Shirley and prayed daily Rosaries dedicated to the multitude of family and friends that he held dear. Robert was strong in his faith, rich in kindness, and known for his generosity.

Robert is preceded in death by: Father Joseph Fortier, Mother Elizabeth Fortier (Brettrager); Son Patrick Fortier; Sister Shirley Trepkowski (Fortier), and Brother Gerald Fortier.

Robert is survived by his treasured wife, Shirley Fortier (House) of Saline, MI; daughter, Mary (Fortier) and Eric Larsen of Ortonville, MI; son, Joseph Fortier of Port St Lucie, FL; daughter, Annette (Fortier) and Murray Zetterholm of Saline, MI; and daughter, Theresa (Fortier) and Albert Wang of San Diego, CA. He is also survived by his cherished grandchildren: Shannon and Christopher Yaw of Chardon, OH; Nicholas and Maria Larsen of Norfolk, VA; Anthony Fortier of San Antonio, TX; Michael Fortier of Palm City, FL; Patrick

and Lauren Zetterholm of Freeland, MI; Nicole Wang of San Diego, CA; Hannah Zetterholm of Saline, MI, and Jason Wang of San Diego, CA. Lastly, he was survived by his adored great grandchildren: Freja Brynn Yaw, Aiden James Larsen, and Theodore Ellis Zetterholm, along with a plethora of beloved nieces, nephews, cousins and close family friends.

Friends may join the family for a time of visitation on Thursday, February 23, 2023 from 3:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. at the Robison-Bahnmler Funeral Home in Saline. A Rosary Service will take place at 7:00 P.M. A Mass of the Christian Burial will be held on Friday, February 24th at 11:30 A.M. at the St. Andrew Catholic Church in Saline with a visitation being held starting at 10:30 A.M. Fr. John Linden as Celebrant. Military Honors will be held under the auspices of the Washtenaw County Honor Guard. The service will be livestreamed and can be viewed by visiting https://youtube.com/live/CIH_NQNAq0w?feature=share. A luncheon will be held following the service and will take place at the Church. Burial will take place in the Oakwood Cemetery in Saline, following the luncheon. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in his name may be made to the Church and envelopes will be available at both the funeral home and Church. To leave a memory you have of Robert, 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

FEB 23. 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>

Rosary Service

FEB 23. 7:00 PM - 7:40 PM (ET)

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301 E Michigan Ave
Saline, MI 48176
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rbfhsaline@hotmail.com
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Visitation

FEB 24. 10:30 AM - 11:15 AM (ET)

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

Mass of Christian Burial

FEB 24. 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

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

Luncheon

FEB 24. 12:45 PM - 2:30 PM (ET)

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

Graveside Service

FEB 24. 3:00 PM - 3:20 PM (ET)

Oakwood Cemetery
227 West Michigan Ave
Saline, MI 48176

Tribute Wall



“ *Robison-Bahnmler Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Livestream link for Robert Fortier's Mass in memory of Robert James Fortier*



Robison-Bahnmler Funeral Home & Cremation Services - February 21, 2023 at 11:06 AM

SB

*Dear Shirley and family,
We are so sorry to hear of your loss. Bob was always such a cheerful and generous person. It was a honor to have known him. Bob led a remarkable life and surely is resting with his Lord!
He will be missed by all!*

Sally and Joe Bernbeck

Sally Bernbeck - February 23, 2023 at 10:37 AM



“ *Robert James Fortier*

October 23, 2023 at 01:07 PM

PG

“ *Uncle Bob was one of the most kindest and caring gentleman I have known. At family gatherings, he was always smiling and making others laugh with his fun personality.*

He lead a remarkable life honoring his family, faith, and dedication to his career.

Wishing you peace and comfort in the days ahead and loving memories to hold in your heart.

Peggy House Glynn

Peggy Glynn - February 23, 2023 at 10:43 AM

DH

“ *I remember Uncle Bob was always a happy guy with a smile.*

Living in different states growing up may not have been good for the five Fortier kids, but I have great memories of us traveling to go and visit Uncle Bob & Aunt Shirley and my cousins , I can remember going to Huntsville, Alabama and seeing the rockets then remember going and staying at their home in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Damn, wonder why we didn't get to go visit the Fortier family in Seattle?

Great memories of Uncle Bob keeping Joe & I inline while hunting at the Sanford cabin !

Great memories with a great family growing up.

Dino House

Dino House - February 22, 2023 at 08:33 PM

SH

“ Shirley and family, I feel so blessed to have met Bob at a few of the House family reunions. What a remarkable life he led and wonderful accomplishments along with a strong faith. I was saddened to hear of his passing. Shirley and family, my thoughts and prayers are with you all and praying for peace and strength in the days ahead.

With love, Susan House (Dino's wife).

Susan L House - February 22, 2023 at 12:02 PM

DA

“ Dear Shirley and family, I am so very sorry to learn of Bob's passing. He was such a wonderful friend and neighbor when Ken and I first moved to Saline all those years ago. In fact, he was instrumental in our decision to move out this way. Always kind and helpful with all our questions about building a house! Ken always remarked on "something Bob said at work today" during those years they spent together at Ford. More recently, I am so glad for those times when I stopped by to see the two of you, Shirley, and I'll treasure those memories. Bob was a good friend always and he will be missed. My heart is with you. Diane Arnold.

Diane Arnold - February 22, 2023 at 11:02 AM

TH

“ Uncle Bob was such a kind and friendly man. When I was a middle school student, Aunt Shirley and Uncle Bob hosted my family for Thanksgiving weekend when they lived in Huntsville. When Uncle Bob took us to see the rocket boosters being developed there and some of the Mercury and Gemini capsules on display at the NASA complex, it was a special treat for me. I was fascinated by the space program, and Uncle Bob made our visit a dream come true for me. God bless Uncle Bob and Aunt Shirley and the Fortier family.

Tom House - February 22, 2023 at 05:27 AM

LZ

“ Dear Shirley and family, Words cannot express how loved each of you are. I will miss your dad a lot! I loved talking with him on the phone and visiting from time to time. Growing up your whole family always made us “Allen” kids feel welcome. We all have nothing but fond memories of your dad and entire family. I was blown away learning about all his accomplishments! I say this because he was so humble and never bragged. I find him nothing short of amazing. And he was the best role model ever. When I think of your dad, the words “simply good” come to mind. Keeping all of you in my thoughts and prayers. With Love, Lisa

Lisa (Allen) Zabonick - February 21, 2023 at 08:25 PM

JK

“ Saturday morning breakfasts (even as far way as Joe’s in PA and Theresa’s in CA); always an adventure. Lenten fish dinners. Cards and games in past years. Dancing and laughing at Tri-County for many years, as well as fun at Saline events. Tours of each of our home towns. Lately, long talks on the phone between Bob and Jim. So very very many good memories! Great friend for more than 40 years! ❤️❤️🙏🙏❤️🙏


Jim & Pat Kessler - February 21, 2023 at 06:37 PM

RZ

“ A great friend and neighbor for many years. Many wonderful memories of Bob and family
Blessings to Shirley and the Fortier family.
Ron Zerkel

Ronald Zerkel - February 21, 2023 at 01:21 PM

DS

“ May God cause His light  to shine in your hearts that will give you comforting strength during this time of sadness. Robert left a beautiful legacy here on earth to reflect his well being faithfulness in life forever! The Lord will provide for your comfort blessings! Drucie

Drucilla Singleton - February 21, 2023 at 08:27 AM

JC

“ Bob will be missed by so many at St.Andrews as he and Shirley were at mass almost everyday. Our sincere sympathy Shirley and the Fortier family. Our prayers are with you.
Clement and Janet Corona



janet and Clement Corona - February 20, 2023 at 02:31 PM

AF

Dear Shirley and your beautiful family: I am so sorry for your loss which is also my loss. Bob, being the kind of faith filled and kind man he was, he certainly has gained a high position in Heaven. Rest in God's Peace, Bob. With love and sympathy, Alice (Aunt Alice)

Alice Fortier - February 23, 2023 at 02:41 PM