



Dr. Donald P. Heilala

February 20, 1952 - January 19, 2021

Donald P. Heilala, DPM, retired podiatrist, of Republic, Michigan, formerly of Iron Mountain, passed away at home on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, following a lengthy illness in the care of his family and caregiver.

Dr. Heilala was a podiatrist in private practice in Iron Mountain and then Kingsford for 34 years. He was on the medical staff at DCHS for 34 years. Dr. Heilala was also a podiatry consultant at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center for many years.

Dr. Heilala was born February 20, 1952, in Marquette, Michigan, to Lorraine (Ringuette) Heilala and Ralph Heilala. He graduated in 1971 from Republic-Michigamme High School and then went on to graduate with a B.S. from Northern Michigan University. He graduated from the Illinois College of Podiatric Medicine in Chicago, Illinois, with his DPM in 1983.

Don was a pivotal member of the Republic-Michigamme High School boys varsity basketball team with his 3 point shot (back before it was a 3 point shot). Don enjoyed basketball, downhill skiing, golf, the family dog Max, family vacations, and going to camp with his friends during hunting season. He also enjoyed his crew at B & B Tire. He enjoyed his visits with family in Alaska, especially visiting with his nephew and fellow podiatrist, Matt.

He was a past member of the Elks, IMK Rotary, Pine Grove Country Club, and the Chippewa Club locally. He was a member of the Michigan Podiatric Medical Association, the American Podiatric Medical Association, and was board certified in Foot and Ankle Surgery by the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons. He was also past president of the UP Chapter of the Michigan Podiatric Medical Association.

Dr. Heilala is survived by his wife of 42 and 1/2 years Patti (Petersen). They were married at St. Francis Xavier Church in Spalding, Michigan. He is further survived by his three sons: Andrew Heilala of Austin, Texas; Dr. Adam (Lindsey) Heilala of Columbus, Ohio; and Alex Heilala of Ann Arbor, Michigan. He is survived by his brothers, James (Myrna) Heilala of Sun City West, Arizona, and Robert (Barbara) Heilala of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He is also survived by his mother-in-law, Anne Petersen; his aunt and uncle, Dolores and Robert Poag; aunt, Patricia Kaleva; sisters-in-law, Beth (Brian) Waitrovich, Susan (Mark) Lemke, Ruth (Terry) Szapa, Anne (Jeff) Heino and brothers-in-law, W. Mark (Denice) Petersen and Nick (Lisa) Petersen; as well as numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ralph and Lorraine Heilala; father-in-law, Walter Petersen; brother-in-law, Leo Vish and his beloved dog, Max.

Special thank you to his physician and best friend Michael Saigh, MD, the Emergency department, the hospitalists, the ICU nurses and Radiation Oncology at Dickinson County Hospital who were so good to him.

Visitation will be from 9:00 am -10:30 am on Thursday, July 8, 2021, at the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home in Iron Mountain. Funeral services will follow at 11:00 am at St. Mary Queen of Peace Church in Kingsford. Fr. Mike Woempner will offer the Mass of Christian Burial. Burial will be in Cemetery Park.

Condolences may be expressed to the family of Dr. Donald Paul Heilala online at www.ernashfuneralhomes.com.

The family has entrusted the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home with the arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Cemetery Park

101 Cedar Ave.
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 8. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Erickson-Rochon and Nash Funeral Home
901 Carpenter Avenue
Iron Mountain, MI 49801
(906) 774-7676
nashfuneralhome@gmail.com
<https://www.ernashfuneralhomes.com/>

Mass of Christian Burial

JUL 8. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church
600 Marquette Blvd.
Kingsford, MI

Tribute Wall

BD

“ Patti: I'm sure you don't remember me but My husband Barry and Don were classmates at podiatry school in Chicago. I remember the stories of your annual trips to Alaska in the summers. My sincere condolences on the Don's passing. What a wonderful life he led! I found his obituary while googling several of the classmates on Barry's class photo. Barry passed away in 2015 and I am just now getting through some things. Peace to you and your family. I know it's so difficult. Hold on to the wonderful memories....
Bunny Daub

Bunny Daub - January 09, 2022 at 02:36 PM

DP

“ Dear Patti and family, Just read in APMA news today about Don passing. Can not really explain my feelings except Don will leave a void in my life, He was always a friend starting from 1st year of med school, I last spoke with him at the Midwest 2 years ago. Fondly remember the time on Mackinaw Island for the Mich. Society meeting that Don invited me to provide a lecture for. May the GOOD LORD comfort and watch over you all !! Mark Pfeifer Classmate 1983

Dr. Mark Pfeifer - April 15, 2021 at 09:18 PM

PH

Thank you Mark for your kind words of remembrance and condolence. We will be having a funeral Mass for Don the week of July 5.
Patti, Andy, Adam and Alex

Patti Heilala - April 30, 2021 at 01:04 PM

PH

Thank you Mark for your kind words of remembrance and condolence. We will be having a funeral Mass for Don the week of July 5. We all miss him so much!

Patti, Andy, Adam and Alex

Patti Heilala - April 30, 2021 at 01:07 PM

MM

“ Dear Patti,

Today while reading the APMA news I was saddened to read about Don. The last time

I talked to him was at the MidWest Podiatry conference 2 yrs ago in Chicago. May

God comfort you during this difficult time.

Mike Meyers Classmate 1983

Michael G MEYERS - April 15, 2021 at 07:18 PM

PH

Thank you Mike for your kind words of remembrance and condolence. We are planning a funeral Mass for Don the week of July 5. We miss him so much.

Patti, Andy, Adam and Alex

Patti Heilala - April 30, 2021 at 01:16 PM

DM

“ Dear Patti. Still can't stop thinking about The Pod. Of all the people that have passed in my lifetime it appears Don's passing have affected me the most. Still think about him almost every day. Can't imagine your grief. Still so sorry. Much love Don

don maule - March 23, 2021 at 05:39 PM

PH

*Thank you Don for your kind words of condolence and remembrance. We are planning to have a funeral Mass the week of July 5, We will post it in the Daily News. We miss him so much.
Patti, Andy, Adam and Alec*

Patti Heilala - April 30, 2021 at 01:18 PM

BP

“*Dear Patti and Sons,
Vickie and I are so sorry to hear of Donnie's passing. As friends since childhood, he leaves us with a lifetime of fond memories. We are so proud of what he accomplished in life and the legacy he has left, and we will miss our good friend "Antti". He was a great teammate, with a fantastic pull-up jump shot from "way down town".
With prayers and sympathy, Bruce and Vickie Pantti*

Bruce Pantti - January 27, 2021 at 01:17 PM

PH

Thank you Bruce and Vickie for your condolences and prayers. Patti and Boys

Patti Heilala - January 27, 2021 at 05:49 PM



“*1 file added to the album VA*



Jackie Granquist - January 27, 2021 at 06:36 AM

PH

Thanks, Jackie, for the nice picture. Don enjoyed working with you and the crew at the VA

Patti Heilala - January 27, 2021 at 12:50 PM

TL

“ So sorry to hear of Dons passing. He was always a great friend and I will miss the rehashing our Republic /Channing basketball rivalry. You have my deepest sympathies Patti and sons. RIP old friend.

todd lindeman - January 26, 2021 at 04:15 PM

PH

Thanks, Todd

Patti Heilala - January 26, 2021 at 07:15 PM

RL

“ Patti and family, Suzanne and I send our deepest sympathies and love. I will always remember Don's lasting friendship and his kind gestures. It's easy to know how he was always referred to as "the good doctor" among his friends at gatherings. He will never be forgotten. We pray for you to cope through the journey ahead. Rich and Suzanne Larson

Rich Larson - January 26, 2021 at 01:29 PM

PH

Thank you, Rich and Suzanne
Patti

Patti Heilala - January 26, 2021 at 07:16 PM

DS

“ Patti
I'm so sorry to learn of Don's passing. He was awesome to work for. I loved that he was open to new ideas.
I pray you and the boys will find comfort in the wonderful memories you created as a family.
The Shea's

D. Shea - January 26, 2021 at 10:38 AM

PH

Thank you. Patti

Patti Heilala - January 26, 2021 at 07:18 PM

DL

“ *Condolences and prayers to the family. Don had a heart of gold and anyone who ever met him had a friend for life. Having known him for decades both Wendy and I will miss him.*

Doug and Wendy Laurila

Doug Laurila - January 25, 2021 at 01:10 PM

PH

Thank you Doug and Wendy, Patti

Patti Heilala - January 25, 2021 at 06:07 PM

 Cindi
Weber

“ *Sending our condolences and prayers to your entire family. We are so sorry to hear about your loss of a good father and husband. Please know you are in our prayers. The Weber Family, Tony, Cindi, Andrew and Adam.*

Cindi Weber - January 25, 2021 at 11:06 AM

PH

*Thank you, Weber Family.
Patti, Andy, Adam and Alex*

Patti Heilala - January 25, 2021 at 06:09 PM



“ *Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant was purchased for the family of Dr. Donald P. Heilala.*



January 25, 2021 at 08:46 AM



“ *Pat and family, Our sincere condolences on Don's passing. It was always a pleasure to see You and Don. He was a wonderful individual with a kind heart. He will be missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Clark & Bobbi Sullivan 🙏🙏*



Clark Sullivan - January 23, 2021 at 08:24 PM



Thank you Clark and Bobbi

Patti Heilala - January 23, 2021 at 08:56 PM



“ *Robyn Dennocenzo lit a candle in memory of Dr. Donald P. Heilala*



Robyn Dennocenzo - January 23, 2021 at 04:04 PM



Thanks, Robyn.

Patti Heilala - January 23, 2021 at 08:04 PM

RC

“ Dear Pat and Family,
We are so sorry to hear about Don. I missed seeing you both on our walks in the neighborhood after you moved. He was amazingly strong about his illness and you were so supportive of him doing everything you could throughout the difficulties of it all. Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

With sincere sympathy,

Cynthia and Rod Gordon

Rod nd Cynthia - January 23, 2021 at 01:00 PM

PH

Thank you, Cynthia and Rod.

Patti Heilala - January 23, 2021 at 01:15 PM

MS

“ To the family of Donald P. Heilala,DPM You have our condolences for the loss of your loved one. We were patients of his for years & had many good conversations during our visits with him. We prayed for him & with him & talked about the Lord. We missed him after closing the practice due to his health. God bless you Patti & the family from John & Mary Ann Sorby.

Mary Ann Sorby - January 23, 2021 at 10:17 AM

PH

Thank you John and Mary Ann.

Patti Heilala - January 23, 2021 at 01:14 PM

SH

“ Dear Heilala Family, I am so sorry to hear of Don's passing! My thoughts and prayers are with you. We would run into Don at football and basketball games as Teddy's and my children Christopher, and twins Joey and Ryan from I.H.S. would always look for a great Heilala competing from Iron Mountain. I just lost my husband, Teddy, on March 31, 2019, and feel the grief of your loss. Don was always an outgoing, pleasant, kind person. Once more, our thoughts and prayers are with you. Susie Heilala, Ishpeming

Susie Heilala - January 22, 2021 at 12:41 PM

PH

Thanks, Susie. Sorry to hear of your husband's passing. Patti Heilala

Patti Heilala - January 23, 2021 at 09:43 AM

BP

“ Dear Heilalas,

I am so sorry to hear about Don's passing. You guys were like a second family to me for so many years and I have great memories of the way Don could strike up a conversation with anyone. I don't think there was a single time when we went out to eat where he didn't have at least two or three people to say hello to at a given restaurant. I also have a vivid memory of Don doing a little off-roading in one of your suburbans to get us out of traffic after a SummerFest Concert at Pine Mountain (pretty sure he plowed right through a ditch). Any way that you slice it, Don was a character who brought a lot of warmth and humor (and plenty of talk!) to our lives on Evergreen Drive and to the whole Iron Mountain/Kingsford community.

You all are very much in my thoughts, and all the Plungers send our most heartfelt condolences to you.

-Brady Plunger

Brady Plunger - January 22, 2021 at 12:00 PM

PH

Thanks Brady we really Appreciate it

Patti Heilala - January 23, 2021 at 09:42 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Donald P. Heilala.*



January 22, 2021 at 09:24 AM



“ *Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of Dr. Donald P. Heilala.*



January 22, 2021 at 09:07 AM



“ *Dear Patti, Andy, Adam and Alex,
I'm sorry to hear of Don's passing. I treasure my memories of giving the anesthesia for his surgical cases at DCMH for many years. His jokes and laughter in the OR were infectious. He was a great surgeon and friend. You all have my sincere condolences on your loss of a wonderful man. He will be missed by many.
Much Love,
Peggy Couturier*

Peggy Couturier - January 21, 2021 at 08:20 PM



Thank you, Peggy. We all miss him so much

Patti Heilala - January 23, 2021 at 09:45 AM



“ *Joy Carlson lit a candle in memory of Dr. Donald P. Heilala*



Joy Carlson - January 21, 2021 at 04:09 PM



Thank you, Joy.

Patti Heilala - January 23, 2021 at 09:46 AM

DM

“ Dearest Patti Andy Adam n Alex. I am so sorry to hear of the passing of my dear friend and fellow trouble maker The Pod. We enjoyed so many good times and laughs at golf n basketball. My deepest condolences to u all. Much love. Don. 🙏

don maule - January 21, 2021 at 01:13 PM

PH

Thank you, Don. You guys had a lot of fun together! We miss him so much. Patti and boys

Patti Heilala - January 23, 2021 at 09:49 AM