



Harry M. Urbanski

February 20, 1928 - August 30, 2023

Harry M. Urbanski, 95, of Kingsford passed away peacefully at his home with his family by his side on Wednesday, August 30, 2023.

Harry was born February 20, 1928, in Wakefield, MI, son of the late Frank and Rozalia "Rose" (Pawlowski) Urbanski, both immigrants from Poland. He was the youngest of the Urbanski clan. Growing up he served mass every weekday prior to going to school. During the War, he found himself responsible for all the farm chores while his brothers served our country. He attended Wakefield High School, graduating in 1946. He then went to work for the Kimberly Clark William Bonifas Lumber Company in Marenisco, MI, as a green lumber piler. He was never afraid of hard work.

Harry married Mary Galiardi, his high school sweetheart, on July 2, 1949, at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Wakefield. Their wedding Mass was concelebrated by three priests. Their marriage was a love story of 74 years.

In 1950, Harry took a job as an underground ore hauler with Pick and Mather Co at the Sunday Lake Mine in Wakefield, MI. He worked in the mine for ten years before it's closing. At age 33, he decided to obtain a degree in teaching. Harry attended Gogebic Community College, earning an Associate of Arts degree in 1963. He then went on to Northern Michigan University to obtain his

Bachelor of Arts in Education in 1965. That same year he took a position as a math teacher with the Iron Mountain Public Schools. He furthered his education throughout his career, obtaining his Master of Arts Degree in Education from NMU. He retired in 1989. Teaching was his passion. His students affectionately called him Papa Smurf. He treasured the lasting friendships he made while teaching and prided himself on coaching middle school basketball. He jestfully claimed to be one of Tom Izzo's early mentors.

Harry was a member of St. Mary Queen of Peace Parish and committed many hours to prayer in the Iron Mountain Adoration Chapel. He was an altar server and usher until his health prevented him from doing so. He was a devout Catholic with a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, praying the rosary multiple times throughout the day.

Harry enjoyed family get-togethers especially during the holidays and birthday parties. Sadly, his "Five Gold Rings" will be forever changed in the family's traditional singing of "The Twelve Days of Christmas".

He took his card playing very seriously. Once he taught his family a card game, he was relentless. Whenever one or all of the five Urbanski brothers gathered at the cottage on Lake Gogebic or at the camp on Way Dam Road, you could be sure a game of poker, cribbage, smear, casino or pinochle would ensue. He loved being involved in two smear clubs: one with former employees of the public schools; the other, friends from the Way Dam area. Harry hosted at his camp frequently and was the scorekeeper for many years. It was no surprise that most years he was in the top four winners and of course he published the winners along with a photo in the Daily News. Harry treasured all the time he spent at his camp The Barnyard. It was his happy place. He was its architect and construction manager. He enjoyed many a day hunting and fishing on the lakes in the Way Dam area.

Harry was a good man and a true gentleman with a keen sense of humor. He will be missed by all who knew him.

He is survived by his wife of 74 years, Mary; three children; Elizabeth (Jeff) Stack of Norway, MI, Frank (Joan) Urbanski of North Sioux City, SD and Mary Kay (Carl) Johnson of Harvey, MI; grandchildren, Michelle (Brandon) Morey, Justin Urbanski, Ashley (Jeff) Bengtzen, Catherine (Nate) Doyle, and Emilie Stack; step-grandchildren, Lindsey (Nate) Swenson and Mandy (Lance Fischer) Johnson; great-grandchildren, Jaden Urbanski, Emma Jean Urbanski, Kash Urbanski, Priya Morey, Avalyn Morey, Colton Bengtzen and Isabella Bengtzen; and a step great-grandchild, Vincent Lebakken; many nieces and nephews.

Along with his parents, Harry was preceded in death by eight siblings, Celia Urbanski, Mary Bridgeman, Bernice Gibas, Sophie Boedighimer, John Urbanski, Charles Urbanski, Leo Urbanski, and Zigmund Urbanski and his beloved mother-in-law, Catherine Galiardi.

Visitation will be held from 5:00 to 7:00 pm CST on Monday, October 9 at the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home of Iron Mountain. A rosary will be recited following the visitation. A Memorial Mass will be offered at 11:00 am on Tuesday, October 10 at St. Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Kingsford. The Very Reverend Michael Woempner will officiate. Concelebrating will be Very Reverends Timothy Ekaitis and Janusz Romanek. Interment will be in the Wakefield Cemetery. The members of both smear clubs will serve as honorary pallbearers.

The family would like to thank the numerous staff of Evergreen Assisted Living, Optalis, Marshfield Medical Center Dickinson, Doctors Groeneveld and Shaker and Bellin My Home/My Care for taking such loving, compassionate

care of Harry.

Condolences to the family of Harry Urbanski may be expressed online at www.ernashfuneralhomes.com.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to the Carmelite Monastery, P.O. Box 397, Iron Mountain, MI 49801.

The funeral mass can be viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQJui0ciToo>

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

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **9**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

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

Memorial Mass

OCT **10**. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church
432 Edsel
Kingsford, MI 49802

Tribute Wall

TF

“ Terry & Marilyn and Family purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Harry M. Urbanski.



Terry & Marilyn and Family - October 06, 2023 at 12:03 PM

TF

“ Terry & Marilyn and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Harry M. Urbanski.

Terry & Marilyn and Family - October 06, 2023 at 12:03 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Harry M. Urbanski.



October 06, 2023 at 08:54 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Harry M. Urbanski.

October 06, 2023 at 08:54 AM

RG

“ Sympathies to the Urbanski family. There may not be too many folks still around that remember this great family.living in Wakefield. I delivered the Ironwood Daily Globe to them in the early 50's. Elizabeth was very young at the time. My dad, James Gilbert, knew everyone in both families. I knew most of them including the Urbanski boys. I seem to remember that Mary was a friend of the Beber girls as my dad called them even when they were in their 70's. Apologies for the late submittal but I live in Florida and the Wakefield News takes a while to arrive.

Rom Gilbert - October 05, 2023 at 06:07 PM

AJ

“ Annette J. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Harry M. Urbanski.

Annette J. - October 04, 2023 at 10:07 AM

AS

“ Al Judy Steve and Melissa Sloan purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Harry M. Urbanski.



Al Judy Steve and Melissa Sloan - October 03, 2023 at 08:32 PM

AS

“ Al Judy Steve and Melissa Sloan planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Harry M. Urbanski.

Al Judy Steve and Melissa Sloan - October 03, 2023 at 08:32 PM

JF

“ I am very sorry to hear about the loss of Mr. Urbanski. He was one of the best teachers that I had in grade school. He also had a great deal of influence on me and was a big part of me becoming an engineer. I remember his patience with us and he always made sure that we understood the material before moving on to new subjects. I also played basketball for him and he was a great teacher there as well. You will be missed Mr Urbanski may you rest in eternal peace.

John Fontecchio

John Fontecchio - September 12, 2023 at 11:20 AM

LM

“ Deepest condolences on the passing of Mr Urbanski. I am a past student and remember him fondly. He was a wonderful teacher, always kind and helpful. I fell in love with mathematics, thanks to his class and teaching skills. Prayers and sympathies to the family.
Laura (Cudnohufsky) Mainville

Laura Mainville - September 12, 2023 at 09:51 AM

SS

“ I am so very sorry for your loss. He gave all his family and friends a great legacy and fond memories.



Siri Sholten - September 10, 2023 at 03:34 PM

DS

“ A beautiful tribute to a life well lived. My condolences to the Urbanski family.

Debra J. Sleik - September 10, 2023 at 01:49 PM

MD

“ My husband and I both had the privilege of having Mr. Urbanski as a teacher in Junior high and Highschool at Iron Mountain. He was respected and adored by all of his students. We loved having him as a teacher and as a friend. He was always there for us weather we needed help with schoolwork or with life. We were blessed to be able to keep in touch with him later in life as members of St. Mary Queen of Peace church.He will be greatly missed by all of his students especially the class of 1986!! ❤️ You will always be in our hearts Papa Smurf!! ❤️❤️
Maria and Jeff 🙏

Maria DeMerse - September 09, 2023 at 11:29 AM

LA

“ Mr. Urbanski (Papa Smurf) was the best teacher I ever had the privilege of knowing. He taught with passion and laughter.



There was a big rival basketball game between Iron Mountain and Kingsford one time and I told him I'd bet \$1 that the team would win. He said he'd take that bet. I asked him if he wanted to pay me now or later, and he asked what I meant. I told him I never said specifically which team would win. He laughed and I smiled. He gave me \$1 on the spot.

So many fond memories of him. May he rest in peace.

My condolences to his many friends and family.

Lisa Anderson - September 09, 2023 at 09:03 AM

GB

“ So sorry to hear of Harry's passing. He was a special man. Our deepest sympathy, Mary, to you and your family.

Gus and Sandy Blom - September 09, 2023 at 07:02 AM

HL

“ Papa Smurf what can I say I had him as a teacher in junior high he was mad the class laugh. We also had him for a supervisor at 8th grade camp. I had injured my ankle so I couldn't do much so he taught me how to play cribbage. I still play it and smear and other card games he gave me the gift of that. I've been asked where I learned them all I would say is papa Smurf. I've been living in ironwood now and I worked with his niece when we both did home health. God bless your family and fly high with the angels prayers being sent. Heidi Dumke Lehto

Heidi lehto - September 09, 2023 at 02:40 AM

NW

“ Rick and I send our most heartfelt sympathy to Uncle Harry's lovely wife, Auntie Bombo, and their family. As his obituary states, Uncle Harry was ever the gentleman. Funny as an Urbanski, and always ready with a smile and a great laugh. We did not get to the U.P. much, these past years, but were always welcomed with warmth, and felt the love in Uncle Harry and Auntie Bombo's home. When you all get together, share a story about him and smile, we know there are many -- stories and smiles. May God comfort all of you during these very sad times. Love and hugs, always -- Nell (Boedigheimer) and Rick Wozniak.

Nell Wozniak - September 08, 2023 at 01:11 PM

OW

“ *My sincere sympathy and prayers to Mary and all of Harry's children and families.*

My children had the pleasure of having Harry as their teacher and often had fun stories about him enjoying his classes.

May your faith and the Lord give you comfort in your loss of this good man.

God be with you all.

Orice Walters



Orice Walters - September 08, 2023 at 12:04 PM