



## Leonard R. Bietila Jr.

July 1, 1934 - May 12, 2015

Leonard R. Bietila, Jr., 80, of Breitung Township, passed away on Tuesday, May 12, 2015 at Dickinson County Memorial Hospital in Iron Mountain.

Len was born July 1, 1934 in Ishpeming, MI, son of the late Leonard R. and Gertrude (Jokinen) Bietila. He graduated from Ishpeming High School in 1952 and continued his education in the field of mechanical engineering. Len married Virginia Sironen on June 25, 1954 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Negaunee. He began working at the Butler Theater when he was just a kid, he then worked numerous jobs throughout his career. He worked at companies such as Fluor Utah, Braun and Aerojet, where he helped design some of the first missile test stands in California. Len started his own company, Bietila's Engineering, in 1971 in the Iron Mountain area.

He was an active member of First Covenant Church in Iron Mountain where he served as a deacon, a head usher for fifteen years and sang in the choir for many years. He was also a member of the Iron Mountain-Kingsford Kiwanis Club where he held all offices in the club and then became Lieutenant Governor. He was also a member of Toastmasters, ASME(American Society of mechanical engineers), a ski instructor, and a baseball coach.

Len was an avid golfer and he had belonged to Pine Grove Country Club and Oak Crest Country Club. Baseball was one of his favorite sports. In the 1950's he was selected to play on a minor league team, the Tigers, in California. He also enjoyed cross country skiing and downhill skiing and taught each of his

five children to enjoy these activities. He loved cars from his early childhood with his first word being “car” as an infant. His favorite car was a mustang convertible.

He loved watching sunsets at Lake Antoine with his beloved wife of sixty years, Gina. He especially enjoyed Saturday night sauna and watching the “Lawrence Welk” show.

Len is survived by his wife of 60 years, Gina; a son, Leonard III (Julie) Bietila of Norway; three daughters, Cynthia (Mark) Swan of Rozet, Wyoming, Sandra (Dean) Norlin of Colton, Oregon and Patricia (Kevin) Hooper of Ishpeming; a sister, Carol (Jerry) Bone of Saginaw, MI; 24 grandchildren, Penny(Jon)VanderPol, Jerod (Abby)Olsen, Polly Olsen, Ben (Kelsey)Olsen, and Brett Olsen. Jessica(Bryan)Lass, Jesse (Brittini) Swan,Natasha, Joshua , Jacob(Caitlyn)Swan, Caleb, Brandon, and Aaron Swan. Len IV Bietila, Laura (Andrew)Bailey, Amy (Dave Miller), Sarah Bietila. Dustin (Naomi)Norlin, Casey Norlin, Sierra Norlin, and Tyler Norlin. Stephen (fiancé, Sarah Parkkonen)Hooper, Kyle Hooper, and Kailey Hooper; 18 great grandchildren; Nathan, Samantha, Brianna, Sabrina, Hannah, Justin, and Simon VanderPol, Natalie Olsen, Isaac, Andrew, Luke, Benjamin, and Esther Lass, Logan and Aiden Swan, Jasper Miller, and Trevor and Austin Norlin.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Debra Olsen.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday from 4:00 to 7:00pm at the Erickson-Rochon and Nash Funeral Home in Iron Mountain and on Thursday from 9:30 to 10:30am at First Covenant Church in Iron Mountain. Funeral services will follow at 10:30am on Thursday at the church. Rev. Peter Erickson will officiate. Burial will be in Ishpeming Cemetery.

Pall Bearers will be Leonard’s grandsons.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial fund is being established in Leonard’s name.

Condolences may be expressed to the family of Leonard R. Bietila, Jr. online at [www.ernashfuneralhomes.com](http://www.ernashfuneralhomes.com).

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

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 20. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Erickson-Rochon and Nash Funeral Home  
901 Carpenter Ave.  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

## Funeral Service

MAY 21. 10:30 AM (CT)

First Covenant Church  
125 East H Street  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

## Visitation

MAY 21. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

First Covenant Church  
125 East H Street  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

# Tribute Wall

JN

“ *Mr. Bietila (Lenny) exhibited class in his composure and in the game of golf. I enjoyed some rounds in my town of Gillette, Wyoming, with his son-in-law Skip and Lenny. Lenny had a great golf swing and a wonderful game--even off the golf course he was interesting and had a broad skillset and could carry a great conversation. I'm going to miss his visits to Gillette--his family displays the charm that goes with Mr. Bietila--and they are all serious athletic competitors. But, moreover, Mr. Bietila (and his family) has an integrity that America needs. Our condolences to his wife and his family in this loss. Jim and Karen Naramore; Gillette, Wyoming*

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**Jim Naramore** - May 25, 2015 at 08:50 PM

MR

“ *I was very sorry to hear of Lens' passing! I've known him for a long time from years ago at the bowling alley; to the last 7 years golfing with him on Thursdays at Oakcrest golf club. He was a great sportsman and an even better gentleman! He will be missed. My sympathies go out to all of his family! Mike Rouse*

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**Mike R.** - May 20, 2015 at 03:45 PM

AO

“ *Your whole family is in our prayers. Our deepest sympathy to all of you.*  
*Ray and Ann Olds*

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**Ann Olds** - May 19, 2015 at 11:37 AM

LN

“ I just can't share enough great memories of Len from the Iron Mountain Kingsford Kiwanis Club where he was a member for 46 plus years... that is an amazing commitment to our organization! We are 61 members strong and there will be a strong attendance from a lot of members the next two days... as was one of the most respected and honored to him guys in our organization! It was great to know Len... you have made a footprint in my heart by me only being in this organization for 7 years. Thank you for your commitment! RIP Len! Lenore Nelson (Secretary of the local Kiwanis Club)

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**Lenore Nelson** - May 19, 2015 at 11:28 AM

JR

“ I have fond memories of him growing up in Ishpeming, skiing and later doing business. Great guy. My sympathies, John Ruusi

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**John Ruusi** - May 18, 2015 at 07:40 AM

MC

“ I was very sorry to read of Lenny's death. I've known him since we were kindergarten students in the Cleveland School in Ishpeming and we were both members of the class of '52. He will be missed by everyone who knew him.

Sincerely,  
Marjorie Petersen Carlson

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**Marjorie Petersen Carlson** - May 17, 2015 at 02:54 PM

CW

“ So very sorry to hear this sad news. I hope you will draw on your strength of your Faith to help you through this. Strength to your family in this awful loss.



*I still remember you & Len driving up to my home on Brown Avenue in Negaunee, looking so happy and full of life for the promise of things to come.*

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**Carolyn Wills** - May 16, 2015 at 03:06 PM

OW

“ My sincere sympathy to Gina and Len's family in their loss. It was always nice to see Len on the golf course or walking in the Mall whenever we chanced to meet. Our prayers are with you and all the family. God Bless you all.



*Orice Walters*

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**Orice Walters** - May 15, 2015 at 09:13 PM

AJ

*My sincerest condolences to Gina and Len's family. I knew Len very well in the Cleveland Location. We were good friends and played some baseball together. Len was a good player. The last time I saw Len and Gina was on the East side of L.A. in the 1950's. More people should be like Len was. God Bless You All!*

*Albie Johnson*

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**Albie Johnson** - May 17, 2015 at 03:17 PM