



Rexford Terwilliger

May 21, 1935 - April 28, 2019

Rexford "Rex" M. Terwilliger, 83, of Iron Mountain, passed away on Sunday, April 28, 2019 at the University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison, WI.

He was born May 21, 1935 in Detroit, Michigan, son of the late Patrick and Mickey (Smith) Terwilliger. Rex graduated from Farwell High School in 1953 and completed his undergraduate studies at Northern Michigan University where he excelled in both football and track. He obtained his Master's Degree in Physical Education from Central Michigan University.

Rex began his teaching and coaching career in Marion, Ewart and Cadillac, Michigan. At Ewart his duties included not only coaching football, but also lining the field and driving the bus to the games. In 1966 he moved to Kingsford and taught K-12 Physical Education for the Breitung Township School District for 24 years. While there he coached football, basketball and girls track. Following his retirement from Breitung in 1990, Rex continued coaching football, tennis and girls track for over 20 years in the Iron Mountain School District. He was also involved in the North Dickinson football program.

"Mr. T" worked endless hours with his track teams, holding practices on Saturdays and Sundays for those who wanted extra help. He treated all of his athletes with dignity and respect and always encouraged them to reach their full potential. He was a fierce competitor and strived to instill that spirit in others. Rex could be heard across the field yelling, "Let it go!" That seemed to

be his mantra not only in sports but in how he lived every day of his life.

Rex married Janet (Perla) Fontecchio on November 28, 1980 at St. Mary & St. Joseph Catholic Church. He was an active member of St. Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Kingsford. He loved to dance and thoroughly enjoyed participating in Jukebox Memories for several years. Rex was inducted into the Northern Michigan University Sports Hall of Fame for football and track in 1992 and the Upper Peninsula Sports Hall of Fame in 2000. He enjoyed spending time outdoors, playing poker and smear, hunting and had a true passion for fishing. Family was Rex's number one priority and he enjoyed nothing more than spending time with them.

Rex is survived by his wife, Janet; five children, Wade (Rico Baca) Terwilliger of West Palm Beach, FL, Wayne (Kathy) Terwilliger of Armada, MI; Jodi Terwilliger-Stacey of Littleton, CO, Marisa (Randy) Bartels of Milton, WI, and Cristina (Zach) Thomas of New Albany, OH; one brother, Al (Myra) Terwilliger of Clausen, MI; seven grandchildren, Jeffrey, Jimmy and Edye Stacey, Gavin and Grant Bartels, Zara and Zola Thomas; and several nieces, nephews and extended family members.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his mother and father-in-law, Joseph and Jeane Perla, and a brother and sister-in-law, Terry and Moreen Terwilliger.

Visitation will be from 2 pm until 5 pm Sunday, May 5, 2019 at Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home in Iron Mountain. A brief prayer service will be held at 4:45 at the funeral home. Funeral services will be held Monday, May 6 at 11:00 am at St. Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Kingsford. Father Michael Woempner and Father Francis Dobrzanski will concelebrate the Mass of Christian burial. Interment will be in Cemetery Park.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial will be established in Rex's memory.

Condolences may be expressed to the family of Rex Terwilliger online at www.ernashfuneralhomes.com

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

Cemetery Details

Cemetery Park

101 Cedar Ave.
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 5. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

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

Memorial Mass

MAY 6. 11:00 AM (CT)

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

Tribute Wall

LB

“ Rex was always so welcoming....I have loving memories around every time spent hanging out at your house. My deepest thoughts and prayers are with all of your loved ones.

Larry Babcock - May 05, 2019 at 06:41 PM

WK

“ I have many memories of Coach Terwilliger, and I can still visualize him cheering at the Kingsford track during the one and two mile runs. He was cheering for the Flivver, of course :). He was always a good dad and admired by many athletes. The family welcomed our family for all of our years growing up together. I'm sorry for this difficult time and I hope the good memories get easier. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

With love to all of you,
Wendy Kriekels (Babcock)

Wendy Kriekels - May 05, 2019 at 06:27 PM

PW

“ Pamela Walker lit a candle in memory of Rexford Terwilliger



pamela walker - May 05, 2019 at 06:22 PM

PW

Rex was my brother-in-law in late 60's early 70's.He was always fun to be around.I would tell him he looked like Dick Van Dyke :)

pamela walker - May 05, 2019 at 06:25 PM

PW

*My deepest sympathy to Wade, Wayne and Jodi. Love you.(((HUGS)))
from Aunt Pam*

pamela walker - May 05, 2019 at 06:27 PM

KM

“ *Wayne and family, sending my deepest sympathies to all of you.
Kristen Engquist Marshall*

Kristen Engquist Marshall - May 03, 2019 at 08:20 PM

MP

“ *Mrs. T, Wayne, and family,*

*Please accept my deepest sympathy for your loss. Keeping you and
your family in my prayers.*

Melissa Porta

Melissa Porta - May 03, 2019 at 04:00 PM

TK

“ *A great player & coach. It was an honor to play for him. Rest in
peace coach.*

Tim Kearney

Tim Kearney - May 03, 2019 at 11:41 AM

TB

“ *Mr T. always had a cheerful smile and a warm welcome. He always wanted all the kids to succeed, even those of us from the rival school! My childhood memories are filled with little incidents like crayfish catching and cooking; summers by the pool; and practising on the balance beam he made for Jodi. Every sport was catered for at the Terwilliger's! Then in the teen years babysitting Marisa and Cristina or being out and about and around in the old grey Toyota with the canoe securely fastened on top, being driven first by Wayne and then by Jodi. In the background he was always there - another 'dad' always busy making and creating and with always a word of wisdom. Our sincerest sympathies go out to Janet, Wade, Wayne, Jodi, Marisa, Cristina and all the grandkids and family. He's a great guy who will be deeply missed by us all.*

With all our love and prayers,

Traci Blundell and family

Traci Blundell - May 03, 2019 at 11:40 AM

TD

“ *Sending you all my love, hugs and prayers! Rex left a life long impression, on me with his compassion and positive ways! Jodi & I we're best friends, in Grade school and her kindness, caring, fun personality has left a mark, on me to this day! I had so much fun spending nights at your house, in Quinnesec, as a child! He will be sadly missed, but his spirit will live, on through so many! Peace and love to all, of the family! Tina (Barribeau) DeCremer!*

tina deceremer - May 03, 2019 at 09:07 AM

DB

“ *David & Kathy Beauchamp lit a candle in memory of Rexford Terwilliger*



David & Kathy Beauchamp - May 02, 2019 at 07:47 PM

DA

Rex Terwilliger - A wonderful man and an inspiration to all! May you rest in peace.

David - May 02, 2019 at 07:50 PM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Rexford Terwilliger.*



May 02, 2019 at 07:43 PM

MT

“ *I'll never forget Rex he was a wonderful neighbor. Jan you are all in my prayers you have my deepest sympathies.*



Mary Jo Trepanier - May 02, 2019 at 04:20 PM

JG

“ I've always remembered Mr. Terwilliger fondly from my grade school gym days. He truly cared about us kids & enjoyed his job. I'm definitely blessed to have known him.

Jessica Geniesse - May 02, 2019 at 05:54 AM

JJ

“ I can't help but remember just how amazing he was. I remember being happy when he would be our gym teacher or just walking around Quinnesec and seeing him. His encouragement and energy was amazing. Will miss you terribly.

Jenny Johnson-Gonzales - May 01, 2019 at 12:32 PM



“ Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Rexford Terwilliger.



May 01, 2019 at 10:18 AM

TA

“ Terry Awrey lit a candle in memory of Rexford Terwilliger



Terry Awrey - May 01, 2019 at 08:14 AM

TA

"If you can keep your head, while all others around you are losing theirs, then you are truly a man my son"

Thanks for life's lessons. Rest In Peace Coach!

Terry

Terry Awrey - May 01, 2019 at 08:19 AM