



Zygmund Bonkowski

November 11, 1914 - February 6, 2017

Zygmund Bonkowski, passed away peacefully at the age of 102 at Evergreen Assisted living in Kingsford on February 4th, 2017.

Zyg was born on November 11th, 1914 in Huntington, Pennsylvania. His parents were Albert and Josephine (Matusiak) Bonkowski, who emigrated from Poland and settled in the Chicago area.

While in Chicago, Zyg's first job (age 19) was as a cooper, making kegs to hold nails, screws and spikes. He was soon promoted to foreman, who oversaw the men who filled boxcars with the kegs. "Zeek" as he was called by his co-workers, was able to purchase his first car during this timeframe.

At age 24 he sold his car and joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and was stationed in Washington for six months. He was a 2nd cook, made friends easily and was able to see a bit of the country.

Once he left the CCC's, he went back to Chicago and worked at BR Ringwald & Co. a local lumberyard where he met his future wife, Anita Rumpf, who was the lumberyard's secretary / receptionist.

In 1941, he left Ringwald's to join his father at a steel mill, International Harvester. While on 3-11 shift, they got word that the Japanese had bombed

Pearl Harbor. At the age of 28, Zyg was drafted to United States Army. 'Bonky', his nickname given by his fellow Army buddies, served stateside making barracks, furniture and doing anything that was asked, including tele-typing for communications.

During his years away, Anita and Zyg kept in contact by writing letters to each other. They later married on September 7th, 1963.

Upon Zyg's return from the army, he worked for Spiegel's for a year doing carpentry work. He then made the move to Manhattan Lumber, where he was a union worker for 22 years doing carpentry work. He later left Manhattan Lumber and tried other cabinet shops. During that time in the 1970's Zyg and Anita built a home in Appleton, WI. While in Appleton, he was a self-employed cabinetmaker. Zyg was a skilled craftsman, making many of his own tools to further enhance his craft.

After retirement, Zyg and Anita built a home in Iron Mountain, MI. Zyg continued to make all types of woodworking projects, including the cabinetry for their home. Many folks have been the recipient of his handiwork. After Anita's passing in 2009, Zyg sold their home and moved to Evergreen Assisted Living where he was currently residing.

Both Anita and Zyg were very devoted members of St Mary - St. Joseph Catholic Church. They shared a deep Catholic faith, as well as love of family.

His favorite pastime throughout the years was playing the concertina for enjoyment and 'for the old folks' at various venues with his guitar accompanying friend, Ed Simbob. During his 102nd birthday get together they serenaded folks with a few of their favorite songs. Zyg's birthdate was extra special to him, as it coincides with Armistice Day and Remembrance Day, currently known as Veterans Day (which marked the anniversary of the end of

World War I at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918). Zyg was exactly four years old at the time and remembered that day clearly, as horns were blowing everywhere.

Until recently, Zyg was an active member of the Golden K's. He had strong opinions on politics, religion and the perils of society, as many friends and family members can attest. Zyg's stories, quick wit and charm will be missed by all who knew him. His 102 years of life and good health were in his words, "a true blessing".

Later in life, Zyg was especially appreciative for the close relationship developed with niece, Pat Hyland, and nephew Gene Peterson, who along with many others were there for him to ensure his wellbeing.

In addition to his wife and his parents, Zyg is preceded in death by his brothers; Joseph, Steven and Wally, his sister Phyllis, brothers and sisters in-law, and nieces and nephews.

Zyg is survived by multiple generations of nieces and nephews and countless friends.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday, February 8, 2017 from 9:00 to 11:00 am at St. Mary & St. Joseph Catholic Church in Iron Mountain. Funeral services will follow at 11:00 am at the church. Fr. Janusz Romanek will offer the Mass of Christian Burial. Burial will be in Cemetery Park. The American Legion Post 363 of Kingsford will conduct military graveside honors.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Dickinson County Cancer Unit Loan Closet.

Condolences may be expressed to the family of Zygmund Bonkowski online at www.ernashfuneralhomes.com

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

Cemetery Details

Cemetery Park

101 Cedar Ave.
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 8. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Mary & St. Joseph Catholic Church
414 Prospect Ave.
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

Mass of Christian Burial

FEB 8. 11:00 AM (CT)

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414 Prospect Ave.
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