



Vernon Everett Babcock departed this world on Saturday, Aug. 29 to return to God and be "home" again with his wife Donna. It is not with tears, rather, joy we celebrate his life and this reunion. Born on May 19, 1931, "Vern" was no stranger to hard work. As a young boy, he helped support his family by working in the fields close to home during the Depression in Grand Rapids. He was proud to have "set pins" once for Hall of Fame bowler, Marion Ladewig, to earn a pocketful of nickels. This work ethic and self-discipline would help guide the oldest son of five throughout his life.

Parents, Vernon E. Babcock Sr. and La Donna Levesque, raised their son in the Catholic faith. Though his childhood included a number of moves, his athletic prowess made him new friends with ease. A baseball star at Marne High School, Vern enjoyed success on the diamonds around Grand Rapids including Valley Field throughout his young adult life in the Grand Rapids City League. Perhaps, his crown jewel athletic achievement, however, was earning the championship in the 1950 State of Michigan "Golden Gloves" welterweight division at the young age of 19! Vern's ball playing days were a family event and where he made lifelong friends Harold Smith and Ade Stehouwer. Many laughs, dances and good times were had at "Laddy's". New Year's Eve with the Smith's was an annual event along with summer vacations in Elk Rapids!

His dedication to God and his family were the most important factors in his life. Vern was a dedicated employee of Consumers Power (Energy) for forty-three years. He served as a "Class A" lineman and braved Michigan's ice storms and hot summers to keep food on the table while working countless hours to take care of his family. He never complained and did his job every day to the best of his ability. As a father of six, he went to Kansas City along with many co-workers during a six-week labor "strike". His friend and neighbor, "Tiny" Elzinga, also provided work for him during that time. Vern always had a "can do" approach and saw to it that his family was taken care of. This virtue would be promptly instilled in his own children. Vern led by example and was a man of action. He was proud to usher at St. Pius X church in Grandville and then later at St. Mary's in Manistee. It is their new Northern Michigan home that he and Donna met new friends, enjoyed golfing, played cards and enjoyed a well-earned retirement.

There is no question that Vern was never the same after the passing of his bride of 67 years. That said, he was always available and happy to see and talk with his family. He was a true "old schooler" and often set in his ways but evolved with the times and worked hard to become better—like a faithful servant of God. He was affectionately called "Grandpa", Uncle Vern and "Dad" by his family. It is these titles that made him most proud.

Vern would insist that his greatest legacy are the children (and grandchildren) that survive him, Dianne (Gerald +) Lemke, Dan (Kathy) Babcock, Michael Babcock, John Babcock, James (Melissa) Babcock and Jane (Michael) Anstett. Grandchildren include Shane (Angela) Lemke, Jamie (Megan) Lemke, Caitlin (Randy) Mahar, Rocky (Courtney) Babcock, Alexandra Babcock, Micheal Babcock, Shane Anstett, Benjamin

Babcock and Jacob Babcock; great-grandchildren Dakota Lemke, Haleigh Lemke, Everett Lemke and Augustus Babcock.

Remaining family members include; sister, Ellyn (Edwin) Dominiak; in-laws, Delores (Romuald +) Falicki, Bernice (Art +) Wiest, Robert (Kathy) Wiest, Terry and Marie Sommerdyke and Nedila (John +) Babcock and many nieces and nephews that were dearly loved by their Uncle Vern.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to a number of true "angels on earth": Healthcare Associates Luanne, Betty, Lori, Mary, Becky, Kimberly and Yolanda. Your care for our father will never be forgotten and we will be eternally grateful. We would be remiss if we did not mention Hospice of Michigan workers Linda, Cindy, Lisa, Carrie and Christine and the nurses and doctors at Faith Hospice at Trillium Woods for all that you did for our dad as well.

Finally, all of us want to thank our sister, Jane, and our "brother", Mike Anstett, for the love you showed our father particularly over the past several months. The two of you put your personal lives on hold to take care of our father. We know that this was a daunting task and that you carried this out with such love and grace. Your gift to our father is something only a very precious few are able to bestow. Thank you from the bottom of each of our hearts. We will always be grateful to you both.

Family and friends will receive visitors from 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 3, at Matthyse Kuiper DeGraaf Funeral home, 4145 Chicago Drive SW, Grandville. A rosary will be said at 8 p.m. on Thursday at the funeral home. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 4, at St. Pius X Catholic Church, 3937 Wilson Ave., Grandville, with Fr. Chris Rouech presiding. Seating for the service must be reserved at [www.spxcatholic.org](http://www.spxcatholic.org) or by calling (616) 532-9344. Interment will follow at Resurrection Cemetery. If you are inclined to honor Vernon, kindly consider donating to "Whatsoever You Do" to help demonstrate the love of Christ to people in need online at [www.whatsoeveryou.do.us](http://www.whatsoeveryou.do.us). Condolences may be sent online at [www.mkdfuneralhome.com](http://www.mkdfuneralhome.com). Love You Forever, Dad!