



Alan David Janowiak, age 77 of Free Soil, Michigan, died Wednesday, December 31, 2025. He was born on August 28, 1948 in Manistee, Michigan and was the son of the late Alvin F. and Leona M. (Shack) Janowiak.

He grew up with a competitive spirit and quiet determination that carried him through life. Through his high-school years at Manistee Catholic Central, he made his mark as a standout athlete in both basketball and football. His passion for the game, and the way he encouraged younger players, helped shape future athletes who came through the program long after he graduated. After graduating from MCC with the class of 1966, he spent a year at Michigan Tech where he earned his certificate of Forestry and developed a love for the Upper Peninsula.

He carried his passion for athletics into his young adulthood where he spent many years playing fast-pitch softball in the Mason County league, building friendships, and many memories along the way. It was where he met the love of his life, Mary Jo and the two would go on to marry, at Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Manistee, Michigan, on June 28, 1975, and build a beautiful family.

He found his peace in the outdoors, whether hunting, fishing, trapping, and gardening. The U.P. became his second home, and year after year, he headed north to spend time hunting with his son, Rexx. At home, his garden was a source of pride, a place where his patience and care always paid off.

He cherished traditions, including one especially meaningful one: the Janowiak Polish sausage recipe passed down from his father. He guarded it with pride and gratitude, and over the past several years shared it with his son, Casey ensuring the legacy continues. Additionally, each year he looked forward to helping host the Knights of Columbus beaver dinner with his father and brothers.

Above all, his greatest joy was his family. Family was truly the center of his world, and he cherished time spent together, especially Sundays surrounded by his parents, siblings, nieces, and nephews at the Janowiak family cabin. He loved watching his four children grow and build lives of their own and was deeply proud of the adults they became. He welcomed each son-and daughter-in-law with open arms, and his grandchildren became his greatest joy.

Al is survived by his wife of over 50 years, Mary Jo Janowiak of Free Soil, MI, his daughter and son-law, Nicole and Curtis Smith of Free Soil, MI, his daughter and son in-law, Heidi and Adam Knudsen and their children, Lucy and Eli Knudsen of Ludington, MI, his son and daughter in-law, Rexx and Maria Janowiak of Pelkie, MI, his son Casey Janowiak (Nicole Towns) and their children, Sawyer Janowiak and Ryker Pratte of Ludington, MI, two brothers and sisters-in-law, Ron and Vicki Janowiak of Holland, MI, and Jeffry and Heather Janowiak of Manistee, MI, two sisters and a brother in-law, Susan Merkey and Jane and Terry Walker all of Filer City, MI. Numerous nieces, nephews and cousins also survive him.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Friday, January 9, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Manistee with Reverend Shabu Kunnathoor Celebrant. Burial will follow at Mount Carmel Cemetery also in Manistee.

Relatives and friends will pray the Rosary, on Thursday evening, January 8, 2026 at 8:00 p.m. at the Herbert Funeral Home in Manistee. The family will receive friends at the funeral home on Thursday evening from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and on Friday morning from 10:00 a.m. until leaving for the church at 10:40 a.m.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the family, to assist with final expenses. The Herbert Funeral Home of Manistee is in charge of funeral arrangements.