



## David Hekkanen

September 9, 1947 - January 26, 2025

David Edward Hekkanen, age 77 of Chesterfield since 1976, passed away on January 26, 2025. Dave was born on September 9, 1947 in Detroit, Michigan to John (Ed) and Alice (nee Curotte) Hekkanen. Beloved husband of the late Denise. Loving father of Deanna (Michael) Girard, Renee (Matthew) Williams and Michelle (Kevin) Kolath. Dear grandfather of his namesake David (Brianna), Taylor, Dylan, Trevor, Ezra and great grandfather of Julian. Dave was predeceased by his parents and his sister, Trudy (Ron) Ballard.

Dave was a true American hero. Drafted into the Army on his 18th birthday, he served in the Vietnam war. He was awarded a Bronze Star (with a V for Valor) for bravery above and beyond the call of duty because he moved through enemy fire to successfully rescue fellow wounded soldiers and bring them to safety. After sustaining gunshot wounds to his head and arm, Dave was also awarded a Purple Heart. He freely shared his Vietnam experience, and he especially captivated his grandkids with the incredible circumstances he faced and overcame.

On December 28, 1966, while on Army leave, Dave married the love of his life, Denise, in Detroit, Michigan. Together, they enjoyed 54 years of true love and devotion to each other, their three daughters, and their grandchildren. Dave always enjoyed spending time with Denise, especially their trips to Las Vegas and the Motor City Casino.

The love Dave poured into his wife and daughters created a beautiful family dynamic filled with togetherness and support. Dave was always focused on the most important parts of life and although he loved to talk and tell stories, he was also an incredible listener who left everyone feeling validated and encouraged. He often offered a gentle reminder that most issues are “minor” and that “life goes by in the blink of an eye.”

Dave found true joy in his grandchildren and great grandson. As their number one fan and an avid lover of sports, he attended many of their sporting events and encouraged each of them in all their endeavors.

Dave's love extended to close friends and extended family. He built special bonds beginning in his early years in Detroit and on the Kahnawake reservation through his adult years in the neighborhood, at work, the golf course, and at the bowling alley. He treasured these friendships, which lasted decades.

In the latest years of his life, Dave persisted through lung challenges. His doctor called him his "miracle patient." He met every obstacle with a positive attitude and a will to move forward, which allowed him to spend so much quality time with his family and friends.

Dave's family is forever grateful for his love, devotion and constant support. There is comfort in knowing that he has joined Denise, who he has so dearly missed, in heaven. A military service at Great Lakes National Cemetery is planned for a later date and information will be shared when available. The family welcomes donations to the Disabled American Veterans organization as an expression of sympathy.

# Tribute Wall



“ I just learned of Dave's passing. Dave and I were next door neighbors during our school years. We connected briefly after our military service, but I hadn't seen him in several years. I will always remember Dave as a bright and positive person, who I enjoyed knowing. Rest in peace my friend.

Frank Corcoran

---

Frank Corcoran - April 25, 2025 at 07:51 AM

CR

“ I am so saddened to learn of Dave's passing. I met him while working at a dental practice and have known him for many years. I was fortunate to have had the pleasure. He was a kind man and will be missed by many.

---

Cindy Richards - February 06, 2025 at 10:53 AM

TT

“ I was fortunate to become friends with Dave (heck) about 35 years ago . Through those years we spent many great times on the golf course in Michigan and North Carolina. I was always amazed at his positive attitude. Always friendly, always a gentleman. Dave really was one in a million. His love for his family always shone through, whenever he talked about his daughters or his adventures in Las Vegas. Heck was a great storyteller and innately funny. Many times through the years he said he was the “ luckiest man alive “ because he married Denise and had such a great family. Dave, we were the lucky ones! Until we meet again, rest easy my friend.

---

Tom Tadrzynski - February 03, 2025 at 11:51 AM

VG

“ David was one my absolute favorite patients. He had such a great vigor for life and he was so adamant about getting things done despite his great limitations. Obstacles were just challenges and he loved his family so much. I was truly priveleged to know and treat David and his loving wife.

*Dr. Gordon*

---

**Victor Gordon** - February 03, 2025 at 08:49 AM

LF

“ I was fortunate enough to have met Dave and the family while Deanna and I worked together. I soon learned what an amazing and wonderful man and veteran he was. I pray for peace, strength and healing for the family. 🙏

---

**Lori Fenech** - February 02, 2025 at 04:17 PM

SS

“ Thank you for your friendship. I will miss you But I know you are at peace Till we all meet again in the big casino in the heavens

---

**sharon shuttle** - January 31, 2025 at 07:02 AM

EG

“ Rest in peace my Friend.

*EDward Ginther and Family. (Related to the Hunt Side)*

---

**Edward R Ginther** - January 29, 2025 at 08:59 PM

RS

“ First I would like to share my condolences to all those fortunate to have Dave in their lives. Whether family or friend, we are all very lucky to have known this amazing man! I met Dave at CanAm Mold in 1988 just a few months before my 19th birthday. Dave ran the boring mill and I ran the radial drill right next to him. I knew exactly NOTHING but Dave was always happy to teach me whatever he could to make my job easier. He taught me how to sharpen a drill and so much more. I loved talking with him and learning about his life and how life is precious and we should treat it that way. He was more than a coworker, he was my friend. I recently reunited with the whole crew at our friend Tim Tromley’s retirement party last June. I was shocked that Dave remembered me since I was 54 then and the last time I saw him I was in my twenties. It made me feel great to talk with him after all these years. As you all know, he was just as funny now as he was over 30 years ago. So I say THANK YOU to my friend and God Bless him and all of those who loved him!! Your buddy, Rob

Rob Srbinovich - January 28, 2025 at 02:02 PM

KA

“ I didn’t know him very well but I loved his stories. What a great story teller. I could tell he lived a great and interesting life. So very lucky to have met him. Thank you Deanna for introducing me. My heart breaks for you and your family  
Kelly Anglin

kelly anglin - January 28, 2025 at 10:58 AM

RG

It was a privilege to know Dave. We are grateful for his contribution to our family....Deanna, David, Taylor, and now Julian.

Ruth Ann Girard - January 28, 2025 at 11:59 AM

JL

*My favorite memory of Dave is of him and Chuck skipping across Dave's front lawn. Best human being to ever hit this earth and a true hero. He loved Denise with every fiber of his being. I will miss our phone calls. Love you girls like you were my own.*

---

**Judy LaPointe** - January 28, 2025 at 02:44 PM

ML

*Dave was a charter member of a group of us that would meet in North Carolina annually for a long weekend of golf. He was given the nickname "Hekk" because there were more than one Daves in the group.*

*Hekk loved to play golf, and he loved the annual North Carolina trip even more. But, because of his war wounds, Hekk had a difficult time elevating the golf ball, Most of his shots were very low to the ground and sometimes rolled along the ground. This type of shot became known to our North Carolina group as "Hekk-nique". And whenever Dave or anyone in the group would produce a similar shot, we would all tip our caps and say "Nice Hekk-nique".*

*Dave never let his limitations dilute his passion for golf, he never complained about his injuries, or the pain he endured to play the game. He never used his injuries as an excuse. And that's the way he lived his life.*

*Dave was my hero, and although I miss him, he is a part of me, and will always be with me.*

*Deana, Rene and Michelle. You girls stepped up to make the last four years of your dad's life a happy time, I want to tip my cap to all of you and say "Nice Hekk-nique"*

*Mike LaPointe*

---

**Mike LaPointe** - January 29, 2025 at 10:40 AM



*Tears of love are flowing as I read the comments above.  
Dave and his beautiful wife Denise were so special to Mike and I. We  
have always felt so blessed to live in "the neighborhood " a few doors  
from the Hekkanens when our children were babies.  
We will certainly miss visiting Dave on our future trips to MI! I love the  
bond he and Mike continued and I know Mike will be lost without his  
weekly talks with his buddy!  
Deanna, Renee and Michelle we love you and your families. Prayers  
for peace in knowing your sweet, fun, beautiful parents are together  
again!  
Jan LaPointe*

---

**Jan LaPointe** - January 29, 2025 at 12:30 PM