



Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S.

February 15, 1944 - January 23, 2024

In loving memory of Donald John Burkhardt

Donald John Burkhardt, a devoted husband, loving father, and proud grandfather, passed away on January 23, 2024, just before celebrating his 80th birthday. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Mary “Bernadette” Burkhardt (nee Faubert), their children Don (and his wife Heidi, of Okemos, MI) and Susan (and husband, Brad Airing, of New York) and his sister Ellen, a Dominican nun and his four grandchildren, Katie, Will, Sarah and Jacob. He was predeceased by his three elder siblings, William, Paul and JoAnn.

A devout Catholic, Don's educational journey was a testament to his commitment to learning and faith. Starting at St. Mary's Catholic Elementary School in New Baltimore, he later ventured to Framingham, Massachusetts, attending the Marist Junior Seminary for high school, fostering a deep connection with God that shaped his values throughout his life.

Upon completing high school, he returned to Michigan for undergraduate studies at the University of Detroit. His academic journey culminated in earning a DDS in Dentistry from the University of Detroit, laying the foundation for his distinguished career as a dentist in his hometown of New Baltimore.

Don was a beloved small-town dentist who left an indelible mark on the hearts

of those who knew him. Don's dental practice, Anchor Bay Dental Associates, became a cornerstone of the community, thriving under his leadership alongside friends and partners Joe Powers and Raymond McCracken. Patients adored him for his sense of humor, compassionate care and generosity.

Don's tireless work ethic was truly remarkable and extended beyond his professional endeavors. Even on Christmas Day, a time for rest, he could be found diligently raking the beach - apparently all the other chores had been done. His dedication to hard work went beyond necessity – it reflected his commitment to excellence and a desire to make the most of every moment.

Don's legacy is not just in his professional achievements but in the love, kindness, and faith he shared with family, friends, and the communities he served. His children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and in-laws adored him, and his impact will be felt for generations to come.

Don was an avid outdoorsman. He found joy in gardening, waterskiing, boating on Walloon Lake, and snowshoeing in Petoskey. His love for family was evident in the cherished moments spent skiing, boating, and fishing with his children and grandchildren.

Retirement allowed him to pursue passions like bridge at the Petoskey Bridge Club, an activity he enjoyed participating in with his beloved Bernadette, as well as community service, including volunteering at the local food pantry. Naples, Florida, provided respite from winter, but his heart remained in Petoskey, surrounded by the beauty of sunsets over the lake and lush vegetation.

Don was a lifelong teacher, imparting wisdom through example. Whether it was involving kids and grandkids in chores like waxing boats or painting

decks, he instilled the value of hard work and the knowledge of necessary life skills.

His love for sharing knowledge was evident in his habit of underlining important passages in books and passing them on to those he believed would benefit. Don recognized the wealth of knowledge he possessed and, with a generous spirit, aimed to ensure that his wisdom would continue to benefit and inspire future generations.

Don's legacy extends through his son Don, a dentist (orthodontist) like his dad in Okemos, Michigan, and his daughter Susan, a dedicated lawyer in New York. His love, influence and guidance will forever be cherished by his four grandchildren: Katie, William, Sarah, and Jacob Burkhardt.

In a heartwarming moment of joy, Don had the privilege of witnessing his daughter Susan unite in marriage with Brad, the love of her life, this past October. Dapper in his tuxedo, Don, alongside his wife Bernadette, proudly walked Susan down the aisle, creating a cherished memory of love and family before his passing.

Friends may visit with the family from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. prior to a memorial mass for Don at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday – February 3, 2024 at St. Martha's Catholic Church – 1100 West Grand River Avenue, Okemos, Michigan 48864. All are welcome at a luncheon reception which immediately follows mass.

Memorials in Don's memory may be made to the "Brother Dan's Food Pantry" c/o St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, 415 State Street, Petoskey, Michigan 49770 (231) 347-7423; or, The Mackinac Center for Public Policy, 140 West Main Street, Midland, Michigan 48640 P.O. Box 568 (989) 631-0900 (mcpp@mackinac.org).

A man of wisdom, kindness, generosity and unwavering love, Don touched the lives of those around him. His memory will live on in the hearts of family and friends, a testament to a life well-lived.

The Mass for Donald will be live streamed. Please use this link to watch the Mass. <https://st-martha.org/watch-mass>

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

FEB 3. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Martha's Catholic Church
1100 West Grand River Avenue
Okemos, MI 48864-3015

Memorial Mass

FEB 3. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Martha's Catholic Church
1100 West Grand River Avenue
Okemos, MI 48864-3015

Tribute Wall

ST

“ We have such wonderful memories of Don, whether sharing a meal, boating on Walloon, playing bridge or just visiting. What a dear, dear man. He will be greatly missed.

Susan Trimble - February 03, 2024 at 10:52 AM

FP

“ With deepest and most sincere condolences.

Frank Pleban

Frank Pleban - February 02, 2024 at 02:33 PM

PA

“ Precision Landscaping & Adam & Amy purchased the Enduring Grace for the family of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..



Precision Landscaping & Adam & Amy - February 01, 2024 at 09:16 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..



February 01, 2024 at 07:46 AM

GC

“ Greg and Cindy planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..

Greg and Cindy - February 01, 2024 at 07:46 AM

AB

“ Alex and Ashley Brannick purchased the Sweet Tenderness for the family of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..



Alex and Ashley Brannick - January 30, 2024 at 09:25 PM

TJ

“ So sad to hear of this; my condolences to all Don's family and friends.

I was one of Don's High School classmates at Marist Prep Seminary in Bedford, Massachusetts. I remember him as a very bright guy, a fine athlete, and friendly and outgoing in that characteristic Midwestern way -- and I don't think I ever saw him without his face lit up with a beaming smile. How fitting that his in his chosen profession he helped others maintain theirs.

As sophomores we both had roles in the annual "house play," which that year was "The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial." I played Lt. Barney Greenwald, the defense lawyer, and Don played Queeg's nemesis, the arch and cynical aspiring novelist Lt. Thomas Keefer. In the last scene -- a celebratory post-trial party -- the script called for me, drunk, angry, and ashamed of having to expose Queeg in cross-examination, to confront Keefer and, after my final line -- "Here's to you, Mr. Keefer; and here's to your book!" -- throw a glass of champagne in his face. It was really tough for me to suspend disbelief enough to do such a thing to so nice a guy as Don! But we both managed to stay in character and put it over the footlights successfully.

You beat me to the exit, Don. In the words of Marcus Aurelius: "You have embarked, you have made the voyage, you are come to shore." I anticipate renewing our friendship farther along. Vale, amice!

Tim Jumper

Tim Jumper - January 30, 2024 at 08:11 PM

GB

“ I worked for Donald Burkhardt from 1979 till his retirement. He was a fair, honest and good boss. He is in Heaven praying, waiting for his wonderful Bernadette and enjoying being with his family again. I have only fond and happy memories of him....
God bless all of his family.
Love,
Gloria Beauvais

Gloria Beauvais - January 30, 2024 at 09:21 AM



“ Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..



January 30, 2024 at 06:43 AM



“ We will be forever grateful that Don took a chance and hired a west side young dentist, Raymond McCracken (1979) to be his associate and later his partner.

To us, New Baltimore seemed like the outskirts of civilization but soon became our new home, where we were embraced with friendship, a wonderful place to raise our family and a kind, wise and patient boss in Don who shaped the dentist I was to become.

He taught me so much through the years both professionally, personally and even helped us pick out a home.

His patients loved Don, and respected his skills as a dentist, his generosity and his kindness when they most needed it....he created not just a practice but a family within the office.

Joe Powers and I endeavored to continue the practice with same sense of kindness, generosity and skills after Don retired. He always felt it was important to give back to the community and our practice supported Church festivals, sports teams, Bayarama and charity raffles. Anchor Bay Dental Associates was part of the community.

Don and Bernadette changed our lives in every good way possible, in work and in welcoming us to the community. How blessed we were by their friendship.

We will be forever grateful.

Raymond and Ellen McCracken



Raymond McCracken - January 29, 2024 at 03:35 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..



January 29, 2024 at 12:47 PM



“ Vince, Mark, Sean, and Staff planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..

Vince, Mark, Sean, and Staff - January 29, 2024 at 12:47 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..



January 29, 2024 at 12:01 PM



“ Happy Hour Ladies planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..

Happy Hour Ladies - January 29, 2024 at 12:01 PM



“ Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray was purchased for the family of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..



January 29, 2024 at 11:23 AM



“ Drs Freeman & Garrant and Staff planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..

Drs Freeman & Garrant and Staff - January 29, 2024 at 11:23 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..



January 29, 2024 at 03:51 AM



“ Maren Stadler planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..

Maren Stadler - January 29, 2024 at 03:51 AM

GS

“ This past summer, when my little grandchildren were visiting me, Don flagged us down on the road-did we want to come and see the butterflies-pre butterflies, being nurtured in their house? Of course we did! And my grandchildren learned from Bernadette, and my daughter in law Ash embraced the learning, and started her own "butterflies to be!" I saw Don and Bernadette walking down Lake Grove Rd on one of my last days before heading out for Denver-oh how he loved "our piece of heaven." We'll miss you Don and think of you often!

Gail Shulman - January 28, 2024 at 08:53 PM

SR

“ Suzanne R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..

Suzanne R. - January 28, 2024 at 04:33 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Donald J. Burkhardt, D.D.S..



January 27, 2024 at 04:24 PM

DA

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Dave & Laura Atchison - January 27, 2024 at 12:54 PM