



Ronald Clyde Wilson

November 29, 1935 - January 12, 2025

Ronald Clyde Wilson, Sr., 89, of Kalkaska, Michigan and formerly of Ludington and Harrison passed away peacefully in Cheboygan, Michigan on January 12, 2025. He has been reunited with his loving wife of over 60 years, Joan Ellyn (Church) Wilson, who died in 2020. Ron was born on November 29, 1935 in Traverse City, Michigan to Clyde Wilson and Dorothy (Roberts) Wilson. He was one of four children.

Ron attended Alma College, Michigan Technological University, and Central Michigan University, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts in education. He then attended Wayne State University Law School, graduating with a Juris Doctor in 1965. He married the love of his life, Joan Ellyn Church in 1959 and the couple made their home in Ludington for the next thirty years. After Ron retired from law practice and Joan from teaching, they resided in Harrison, Michigan, and wintered in Bradenton, Florida.

Ron was the consummate country lawyer, maintaining thriving law offices in Scottville and Baldwin. He was regarded among his clients and peers as a fierce advocate and a force to be reckoned with on behalf of landowners and sportsmen, and made a name for himself through several landmark cases involving recreational canoeing, sport fisheries and real property boundary and survey issues.

In Ludington, the Wilsons raised eight children and were members of Ludington Community Church and Trinity Evangelical Free Church and were founding members of Mason County Right to Be Born (now known as Right to Life). Ron was a founding member and past president of the West Michigan Mycological Society. Despite the busyness of their lives, Ron and Joan always displayed great warmth and a welcoming spirit of hospitality, and the family home on Sherman Street was frequented by numerous visitors, relatives, American Youth Hostel travelers, wayward hitchhikers and missionary families over the years. Following retirement, Ron and Joan moved to Harrison, Michigan and enjoyed many winters together at Horseshoe Cove in Bradenton, Florida. During the final years of Ron's life, he was a resident of Kalkaska Memorial Assisted Living, where he and Joan enjoyed many deep friendships until her passing in 2020. Ron lived four years beyond Joan at Kalkaska Assisted Living where he carved wood walking sticks for anyone who wanted one and was well known for handing out chocolate candies to visitors and staff. He spent his final two months in Cheboygan, Michigan.

Ron was a man of many interests and talents, a jokester and storyteller. He loved to flyfish for trout on the Sauble and Pere Marquette Rivers, wading, often after dark in pursuit of brown trout, or in his handmade drift boat, and welcomed numerous guests over the years to hunt deer at his wooded acreage south of Custer. Later in life he developed a talent for woodworking and painting, creating a collection of lifelike carved fish of nearly every Michigan gamefish species. His knowledge of wild medicinal plants and mushrooms brought him renown throughout the state as he presented seminars and forays in the outdoor classroom of his beloved Michigan woodlands. His love for and extensive knowledge of nature, wild things and the God of creation lives on in his children and grandchildren, who are grateful for his legacy.

Ron is survived by eight children, Ronald Clyde, Jr. (Elizabeth) Wilson of

Traverse City, Jennifer Joan (Thomas) Kates of Holland, Rebecca Jayne (Roger) Cronk of Cheboygan, Scott Church (Amber Reeves) Wilson of Grand Rapids, Elizabeth Ellyn (Kenneth) Zimmerman of Midland, Sarah LeAnne (Dr. Jeremy) Holmes of Alden, Kathryn Joy (Joe) McAdam of Kalkaska and Amy Lynne (Kirk) Priest of Kandern, Germany, and his sister, Patricia Wilson May of Flowood, Mississippi.

He was predeceased by his parents, Clyde and Dorothy Wilson, by his wife, Joan and brothers Dennis Wilson and Jon Wilson.

Ron is also survived by 24 grandchildren, eleven great grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews. Ron and Joan dearly loved all their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Ron's body will be laid to rest in Greenwood Cemetery in Manton, Michigan in spring 2025. A memorial celebration of life will be held at First Congregational Church, 6105 Center Rd., Traverse City, Michigan on Saturday, January 18, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. The family will receive visitors between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. prior to the service. Donations in Ron's memory may be made to Right to Life of Michigan, the Gideons International or the charity of one's choosing. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

Previous Events

Final Visitation

JAN 18. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

First Congregational Church
6105 Center Rd.
Traverse City, MI 49684

Funeral

JAN 18. 12:00 PM (ET)

First Congregational Church
6105 Center Rd.
Traverse City, MI 49686

Tribute Wall



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Ronald Clyde Wilson.*



January 16, 2025 at 10:21 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Ronald Clyde Wilson.

January 16, 2025 at 10:21 AM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Ronald Clyde Wilson.*



January 16, 2025 at 08:31 AM