



Bernard "Bernie" Joseph Senske Jr.

March 2, 1932 - June 5, 2025

Bernard Joseph Senske, Jr., 93, of Rapid River Township passed away peacefully June 5, 2025, at his home with his loving family by his side. Bernie was born March 2, 1932, to Bernard Joseph Senske, Sr. and Nellie Angers on their farm near Standish, Michigan. He graduated from Standish High School.

Enlisting in the United States Army post high school, was fortunate to be stationed for basic training in Hawaii. Bernie served in the MPs during the Korean Conflict and after returning stateside, spent the remainder of his enlistment teaching in the motor pool at Fort Riley, Kansas.

June 26, 1954, he married Phyllis Marie (Wood), who survives. They enjoyed traveling, snowmobiling, camping, hiking, square dancing, rock hunting, playing dominos, watching movies, and were blessed to spend over 70 years together.

Bernie always had a love for mechanics and worked for various car dealerships in his 20's. He was also the proud owner of an Evenrude dealership and marina for about 10 years.

Cub and Boy Scout leadership activities led to many adventures including his favorites: camping in Mexico and camping in the mountains during an explosive electrical storm.

He retired to Rapid River Township in 1994 having been employed by IRECO/Dyno Nobel for over 20 years, manufacturing and selling explosives. Majoring in Industrial Arts at Northern Michigan University led to a lifelong love

of working with wood. From planting trees, harvesting, milling, and curing selecting the right wood for the right project, he created beautiful furniture and all kinds of useful items. Remodeling houses, drafting and erecting buildings, and restoring furniture were among his skills as a Master Woodworker. He also volunteered his time and talents to help restore historic buildings for Sleeping Bear Dunes.

His shop was always open to anyone who needed help with a project, whether it was a Cub Scout pinewood derby car, weathered lawn furniture, a broken toy, an urn for ashes, doll cradle, bookends, music stand, quilting frames. . . . the list goes on and on.

As an avid rockhound and accomplished silversmith he made many beautiful pieces of jewelry but always had a special love for the turquoise of the West. As an avocation he loved collecting old guns for shooting or restoration. During restoration Bernie would construct new parts to synchronize with the original mechanisms and sometimes carved new wood stocks.

Bernie enjoyed hiking throughout his life and in retirement was a member of the Traverse City Hiking Club, maintained a section of the North Country Trail and earned several 100-mile patches.

He was a lifetime member of the American Legion, supported the NRA and John Birch Society.

He is survived by sons Bernard Joseph III (Jeanette), Gerald Edward (Judy), David John, Steven Jerone (Roz), Jamie Eugene (Kim) and a daughter, Joy Ellen.

Six grandchildren: Amy, Ashly, Jeremy, Jason, Jeffrey and Austin. He was preceded in death by two grandchildren: "BJ" (Bernard Joseph Senske IV) and Haley Elizabeth.

Nine great-grandchildren: Jack, Bryce, Keira, Zak, Riley, Sawyer, Mariah, Mylee, Ava and Liam.

Two older sisters, Bernadette and Genevieve (both over 100 years old!) and younger siblings, Margaret, Henry and Eugene.

Bernie will be missed for his great stories and his great sense of humor.

A military service will be held at Maple Grove Cemetery, Rapid River Township at a future date.

Arrangements provided by Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home, our family serving yours.

Cemetery Details

Maple Grove Cemetery

Kalkaska, MI 49646

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall

CB

“ We were always happy to see Bernie's smiling face at DAR functions. My husband liked seeing him at WAA and talking tools and wood. Christine

Christine Brown - June 09, 2025 at 08:01 AM

RO

“ Phyllis & Family, We are so very sorry to learn of Bernie's passing. We thought so highly of Bernie, and he was such a friendly and happy guy. Our deepest sympathy to you and your whole family. This is such a huge void for Y'All, and the wonderful memories everyone must have. Draw on them, they do help. Take one day at a time and we will be in touch soon. Please call if we can help in any way. May God Bless each of you! Rest in peace Bernie! Your friends,

Will & Patty Rodgers

Rodgers - June 07, 2025 at 12:33 PM