



Thomas Wendell Runkel

July 28, 1935 - May 8, 2026

Thomas Wendell Runkel, of Fife Lake passed away peacefully on May 8, 2026 at Quiet Creek AFC home in Falmouth, while watching the Detroit Tigers game. He was born on July 28, 1935 in Holt to the late Emil and Lydia (Plogsterd) Runkel.

Tom received his bachelor's degree from Ferris State, a master's degree from Michigan State and he was a diehard Michigan fan. During summer breaks while attending college he waited tables on The Badger Car Ferry.

Tom married his high school sweetheart, Lois Joyce Nankee on June 16, 1956. They were married 58 years when she passed. Together they lived in Jackson where he was a business teacher for 30 plus years and also taught drivers education for Jackson and Forest Area Schools for 25 years.

In 1969 Tom and Lois decided to build a house in Fife Lake. They were the architects, builders and worker bees on this project. Upon retiring in 1992 they moved to the Fife Lake house and enjoyed traveling to over 70 countries. Tom loved boating, watching sports and hosting friends and family at the lake.

Tom served as a board member at both the Educator and Employees Credit Union in Jackson and Forest Area Federal Credit Union for over 20 years.

Later Tom was blessed to meet Beth, a loving partner for his last 12 years of life. They enjoyed pontoon riding, traveling and riding around in the convertible.

Tom is survived by his children, Linda (Mark Boehm) Runkel of Niles, Ellen Ford of Newaygo, Andrew (Tammy) Runkel of White Lake, Sam (Anna)

Runkel of Fife Lake; his partner, Bethel Eckert of Fife Lake; grandchildren, Brad & Nate Runkel, Brooke (Alex) Calderon, Zack (Laura) Ford, Matt Ford and Adeline Ford, Sammy (Rieley) Runkel and Tommy Runkel; great-grandchildren, Jack and Abe Runkel, Dominic, Gia & Cain Calderon, Mikey & Lily Ford, Brody Ford.

Preceding Tom in death was Lois Runkel, his beloved wife; and son-in-law Mike Ford.

A Celebration of Life will be on Sunday, August 2, 2026 at Walton Junction Sportsman Club at 2:00 PM, 11207 E. County Line Road in Fife Lake.

In lieu of flowers the family is requesting memorial contributions to Friends of the Fife Lake Library, PO Box 254, Fife Lake MI 49633.

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

Upcoming Events

Celebration of Life

AUG 2. 2:00 PM (ET)

Walton Junction Sportsman Club
11207 E. County Line Road
Fife Lake, MI 49633