



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

Tribute Wall

JM

“ Karyl and I were so sorry to read of Tom's passing today. Tom and I played basketball for Ferris State in the middle '50's. We reconnected when we both had cottages and young families at Fife Lake. Our families took many trips together. The highlight was a two week trip on the Trent Severn Waterway in our small boats. Our sympathies go out to Tom's family. We look forward to the day when we will be reunited in heaven.
Jan and Karyl Mangus - Bryan , John, and Steven

Jan Mangus - June 07 at 11:55 AM

DS

“ Rest in Peace, Mr. Runkel.
It brings me great joy thinking that you and Mrs.Runkel are taking your long walks around the lake together again!
As children of educators we certainly were blessed, bee-bopping up and down Lakeshore Drive, in and out of the lake and the woods all summer. “Uncle Runkel” always had a huge smile and a contagious laugh ...perpetually teaching the value of FUN in life!

And just like our grandparents, you left us with a foundation of faith, cherishing our community of family and life long Fife Lake friends growing “old-er” together. Most importantly, you and Mrs Runkel have left an AMAZING family to carry on your legacy!

Dree Stryker - May 15 at 12:55 AM

JS

“ I have lots and lots of fond memories or deer hunting with Tom , his dad Emil ,a few of the Snyder clan , and my Dad Gene ,brother Rich , and Joe Willis ! So many good times Ànd laughs . I knew Tom was an awesome guy from the git go ! We all loved Lois too . Can't say enough about Tom . We will miss him dearly . Mà y he rest in eternal peace . Jim - Linda Schultz ❤️❤️❤️🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏

jim schultz - May 12 at 05:47 PM

SR

Awesome Jim. My dad has often talked about hunting in the green marsh off of supply rd.. And the stories of hunting 🍷👍

Samuel Runkel - May 12 at 11:53 PM

LD

Beth prayers and thoughts are with you. So sorry for your loss. Love , Tom & Lois

Lois I Darrow - May 15 at 07:51 AM

NN

“ Prayers for the whole family. I was blessed to know Tom his final three months. I visited him every few days at Quiet Creek. Nice to get to meet family members, especially Sam at QC and at Ebels Store in Falmouth. Treasure the memories. Nate Nelson

Nate Nelson - May 11 at 07:59 PM

SR

Thanks Nate. I will still see you around

Samuel Rubkel - May 12 at 08:58 AM

SR

Thanks Nate. I will still see you around

Samuel Runkel - May 12 at 08:59 AM

JA

My family has known the Runkel's since 1973 when we had the cabin on Fife lake and spent a lot of time with their family. We shared many yummy meals with them and they did with us. Sam and Anna, Andy, Linda, and Ellie were all like an extended family. Dick and I spent time on the boat trips and the pontoon rides and loved it all. I am so happy to have been able to visit Tom and Lois often and they would always come visit with us when we came up to the cabin. Rest in peace dear friend and to all of the family prayers for peace and comfort. Love you all.

Janet Aspinall 🙏❤️

Janet Aspinall - May 12 at 11:54 AM

SR

Thank you Janet. We all loved your family. You were so nice to us and had such a beautiful family. I remember Bob and Hilda so vividly. He had came to check out my 46 Chevy truck back at my dad's garage when I was 20 years old. He had such great stories. Love you very much

Samuel Runkel - May 13 at 12:01 AM

JA

“ So sorry to hear of Toms passing. Tom was our neighbor on Fife Lake. He was a good guy and always friendly. He will certainly be missed. Love and prayers to the family. ❤️🙏 Jim and Linda Abram

Jim and Linda Abram - May 11 at 07:39 PM

SR

Thanks Jim and Linda

Samuel Runkel - May 12 at 09:00 AM

DM

Tom and Lois were the best neighbors. Tom stood up for me at the Credit union Board when we were trying to help start up Crossroads Farm for youth helping to know Jesus in their hearts. He was always about helping a community grow. His family would stand up to help anyone. He will be missed for his smile and laughter.

Barb and Denny

Dennis Meyer - May 14 at 10:26 AM