

RAYMOND R. "BEAR" FANTASKI



A beloved figure in the community of North Braddock, passed away peacefully on Sunday, September 24, 2023, at age 87. Born on January 27, 1936, in Braddock, Bear was a pillar of strength, kindness, and love to all who knew him.

Bear was a devoted family man, survived by his son, Mark (Michelle) Fantaski of Wexford; daughters, Mary (Andrew) Wood of Hampton, and Denise (Tom) Davis of

Forest Hills. He was a cherished grandfather to Matt, Greg, Abby, and Alaina Fantaski; Ian and Alex Wood; Sarah and James Davis.

Bear was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Dorothy E. Fantaski; and his siblings, Elmer, Tom "Boomer", Jack, Frances, and Sister Johnette Fantaski. He is survived by numerous nieces and nephews.

A proud graduate of North Braddock Scott High School in 1953, Bear went on to serve his country in the US Army during the Korean era. In 1961, he embarked on a successful career with the North Braddock Police Department, rising to the rank of Lieutenant. He was also a member of the Fraternal Order of Police. Bear exemplified what it meant to be a hometown community police officer, earning the respect and admiration of those he served. He retired in 2000 after 39 years of dedicated service.

In addition to his work in law enforcement, Bear was a lifelong member of the North Braddock Volunteer Fire Department. He was well-known for his volunteer work at Fire Department functions such as the North Braddock Fish Fry and the street fairs. Many will remember Bear's booming voice calling out "hold your corn" during the bingo games after someone shouted "bingo" to verify a legitimate win.

Bear was a member of the Sokol Hall in North Braddock and spent many years as a member of the Silver Sneakers alongside his wife, Dorothy. He was a devout Catholic and member of the former St. Joseph Church in Braddock, where many friends and family still kid with him years later after played the role of the Infant Jesus two years in a row during the Nativity, affectionately earning the nickname, "Baby Jesus."

An avid sports fan, he treasured attending games with his wife and children. Despite his many interests and commitments, Bear always prioritized family. His love for his family was evident in every aspect of his life, and his legacy of love and kindness will live on in their hearts.

Friends are welcome Friday from 2-8 p.m. at **PATRICK T. LANIGAN FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY**, 700 Linden Ave. at Cable, East Pittsburgh, PA 15112, 412-824-8800, where a Volunteer Fireman's Service will be held Friday at 5 p.m.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held Saturday at 10 a.m. in Sacred Heart Church of St. Joseph the Worker Parish.

Bear will be laid to rest with Military Honors in Braddock Catholic Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made in Bear's name to Veterans Leadership Program, 2934 Smallman St., Pgh., PA 15201, VeteransLeadershipProgram.org.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb