



Japhet "Jeff" Ludvik Kakach

August 4, 1927 - January 7, 2025

Japhet Ludvik Kakach was born in Hopkins in on August 4, 1927, to Hattie Victora Hudec and Ludvik Kakach, and was the youngest of five children. In his younger years, "Jeff" grew up in Eden Prairie on farms with his siblings, Pauline, Milan "Mike," Lydia, and Richard "Dick," helping on the farm, milking the cows and growing raspberries. When Jeff was about twelve, the family lost the farm and moved to Hopkins, and Jeff went to Hopkins schools. Soon thereafter, his beloved mother passed away.

To make some money, Jeff did odd jobs, one was working at Smetana Drug in Hopkins, another making raspberry boxes at a box factory across from the old Hopkins theater. More than once, the high school principal had to hunt Jeff down at one of his jobs when he skipped classes. Then, he got a job working 10-hour nights at Minneapolis Moline, where his dad and most of his family worked or had worked. (In those days, everyone worked for Moline.) Jeff began with firing molds and shoveling coal, a dirty job but he said, "Moline had showers," and after a while Jeff moved up to working on the production line with thresher and combine parts. He told the story that the old hands on the day line told him not to work "so fast" as he was raising the expectations that management had of everyone's quotas. At Hopkins High School, he met Lessley Hansen, and they became a steady duo in their junior year.

During high school, Jeff played football, wrestled, was on the golf team, was a

thrower on the track team and was on the basketball team as part of the Kelly, Korsmo, and Kakach trio who took the team to the state tournament under coach Butzie Maetzold. He also played trombone in the school band and for games and talked about running to the stands to play his trombone during halftime at the school games. His trombone meant a lot to him as his mother took in laundry and saved up to buy it for him at a time when they had little money.

Jeff graduated in 1945. During his last year and a half in high school, Jeff moved in with his friend Paul Kelly's family, who made him an area to sleep on their front porch. He had a special connection to Mrs. Angie Kelly, who became like a second mom to him. After high school Jeff went into the marines where he served at Camp Pendleton, Camp Lejeune, and Parris Island. After his father died in 1946, Jeff finished his service in Maryland and New York processing soldiers returning from WWII.

On September 19, 1947, Jeff returned from the service and married Lessley at Hopkins Congregational Church. He worked for a while with his father-in-law at Moberg Auto and Capital motors. He drove the first Tucker automobile from Chicago to Minneapolis. Unfortunately, the Tucker broke down east of Minneapolis and Jeff had to tow it with his car. Jeff also worked in construction at Steel Timber Bridge company before beginning his future careers in the meat and grocery business and with the floral shops.

Jeff learned meat cutting and worked in his brother Milan's meat market where he developed a love for pickled herring and good steaks. He also raised rabbits in Eden Prairie with his brother Milan. Then he moved to working for Fairway foods, managing grocery stores, and opening Jeff's Fairway in Mound in 1957, Minnesota, and the second Jeff's Fairway in Excelsior. He also managed and then owned Jeff's Fairway in Aberdeen, South Dakota and lived in Warner, South Dakota. In 1965, Jeff became a regional manager for

Corporate Fairway Foods and was back in Minnesota and by 1969, he worked for his brother Milan at the greenhouses, growing and selling roses and took over that business from Milan in 1971. In 1975, he bought the building on 10th Ave in Hopkins and opened Glenrose Floral and then opened the Minnetonka Glenrose in 1977 followed by stores in Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska and Plymouth. He turned the Hopkins 10th Ave building into a mini mall with a variety of stores and shops. As a businessman, Jeff was active, serving and donating in the many cities in which he had businesses, especially Hopkins, and was honored for his contributions by being selected the Grand Marshall of the Hopkins Raspberry Festival Parade in 1999. As a business owner, "Mr. Jeff," as he was affectionately called, was at heart a merchandiser and was always remodeling and moving things around and making his stores new and different, sometimes to the groans of his employees. Floor plans changed often, and Jeff loved making the changes, especially just before a holiday. Jeff was always grateful to his employee family for the care and contributions they made to Glenrose.

He and Lessley had six children, Lida, Paul, Penny, April, Beth, and Julie. After Lessley passed away in 2008, Jeff lived in a townhouse in Eden Prairie for a short time, stayed at his Lake Mille Lacs home, lived with his daughter Beth in Big Lake and then moved to live with his daughter April and husband Steve in Eden Prairie and Dassel.

As an adult, Jeff was a sportsman and was an avid fisherman and golfer (He had a 146-yard hole in one at the Lake Hallie Golf course in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin in 1967). He loved the Twins, the Vikings, the North Stars (now the Wild) and the Timberwolves. For many years he held season tickets for the Vikings and the North Stars, generously taking family members and friends to games to share his love for sports. He also cheered on and gave sports advice to his grandchildren and great grandchildren. He loved fishing and

boating at his Mille Lacs lake home and loved hosting fishing and golf weekends for family, employees, and friends.

As a father, Jeff would do anything to help his family. He built and remodeled many of our homes, gave us work in his stores, and extended help when we needed it, and Jeff always stayed connected with his siblings. Always proud of his Czech heritage, Jeff enjoyed bantering with family and Czech old timers in Hopkins and was always happy when someone brought him kolaches.

Although he was a soft-spoken person, Jeff's faith in God was a cornerstone of his life and when he could no longer attend church, he watched Jimmy Swaggert ministries and listened endlessly to Jimmy's music. His last day on earth, when he could not talk much, he was listening to Jimmy music and Ray Stevens' song "Everything is Beautiful," and speaking "Praise God" over and over.

There is so much more that could be said about Jeff's life-97 wonderful and exciting years.

Jak se mas...roses...pickled herring...kolaches...Praise God....he scored. Rest in Peace Mr. Jeff.

Service and memory sharing will be held on Saturday, January 25, from 1 to 4 pm, with a visitation for one half-hour prior at Washburn-McReavy Chapel 7525 Mitchell Road, Eden Prairie. Internment at Grandview Cemetery in Hopkins in the spring.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 25. 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Eden Prairie Chapel
7625 Mitchell Road
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Memorial Service

JAN 25. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Eden Prairie Chapel
7625 Mitchell Road
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Reception

JAN 25. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

Eden Prairie Chapel
7625 Mitchell Road
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Memorial Service for Japhet "Jeff" Ludvik Kakach in memory of Japhet "Jeff" Ludvik Kakach



Washburn-McReavy - January 10, 2025 at 05:15 PM

HW

“ Dear family, on behalf of the Dick and Violet Hilsen family I would like to express our condolences for the loss of one so dear to you all. Both of your parents were special to mom and dad and we enjoyed being with them also when growing up. Your father had such a kind and welcoming personality. May you find comfort in your memories. With Sympathy,
Holly Hilsen Widen and family.

Holly Widen - January 12, 2025 at 11:27 AM

FD

“ 1 file added to the album Jeff Kakach



Funeral Director - January 10, 2025 at 04:27 PM