



## Larry Wesley Karkela

January 1, 1940 - March 24, 2026

Larry Wesley Karkela, age 86, of White Bear Lake, Minnesota, passed away peacefully on March 24, 2026.

Larry was born on January 1, 1940, in Hibbing, Minnesota, to Emilie (Skoe) and Wesley Karkela, both of whom preceded him in death. He was raised in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, where he developed a strong work-ethic, a lifelong appreciation for the outdoors and the close-knit values of family and community.

Larry graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering and went on to earn his Master of Science degree in electrical engineering through the University of New Mexico while working at Sandia Laboratories. During his time there, he contributed to the development and testing of nuclear warheads in service to his country. He later returned to Minnesota, settling in the Minneapolis area where he raised his family and built a successful general contracting business, Karkela Construction.

Larry was united in marriage to Sharlene (Stenborg) from 1960 to 1977. In 1999, he married Joyce (Sadako), with whom he remained married.

He was a devoted father to his son, Steven W. Karkela and Steven's partner,

Rhonda Braatz; and his daughter, Lori K. Murphy and her husband, Paul Murphy. He was a proud grandfather to Lori & Paul's children: Maggie (Nick) Zehring, Samuel Murphy, and Eve Murphy, and a cherished great-grandfather to Maggie & Nick's sons; Ezekiel, Aiden, Theodore, and Alexander.

He was preceded in death by his brothers, Tom and David Karkela. He is survived by his siblings, Karen (Cush) Minar, Ron (Linda) Karkela, and sister-in-law Peggy Karkela, along with many beloved nieces and nephews.

His love of the outdoors was the impetus for him to build his beloved RedPine-7, in the Minnesota Northwoods, where family and friends could find him ready for winter or summer adventures followed by campfires and cigars. RedPine-7 facilitated his love of both snowmobiling and boating. Beyond RedPine-7, his life-long dedication to snow skiing had him visiting Park City, Utah annually for over 45 years, even skiing when he was 82 and conquering black diamonds until well-past his 75 birthday. He was passionate about politics and held strong conservative values. Above all, his Christian faith was central to his life. In his later years, he devoted much of his time and talents to Christian outreach, helping build and remodel homes for those in need, and actively participating in causes he believed in.

A visitation will be held on Saturday, March 28, 2026, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at Washburn-McReavy Northside Chapel, 2901 Johnson Street NE, Minneapolis, Minnesota, followed by a funeral service at 11:00 a.m. Interment will take place later that day at 4:00 p.m. at Calvary Cemetery in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 28. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Northeast Chapel  
2901 Johnson Street N.E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55418  
(612) 781-6828  
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

## Chapel Service

MAR 28. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Northeast Chapel  
2901 Johnson Street N.E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55418  
(612) 781-6828  
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

## Graveside Service

MAR 28. 4:00 PM - 4:30 PM (CT)

Itasca Calvary Cemetery (Grand Rapids)  
1700 State Highway 169 East  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

# Tribute Wall

BD

“ *Bridget and Al, Peg and Tom, Pat and Dee purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Larry Wesley Karkela.*



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**Bridget and Al, Peg and Tom, Pat and Dee** - March 27 at 04:20 PM

BD

“ *Bridget and Al, Peg and Tom, Pat and Dee planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Larry Wesley Karkela.*

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**Bridget and Al, Peg and Tom, Pat and Dee** - March 27 at 04:20 PM

JM

“ *Jon and Pamela Miner purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Larry Wesley Karkela.*



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**Jon and Pamela Miner** - March 26 at 12:33 PM

RH

“ *RoJean, AJ, and Max Holler purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Larry Wesley Karkela.*



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**RoJean, AJ, and Max Holler** - March 25 at 06:45 PM

CS

“ Chris DelGreco and Gary Sparks purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Larry Wesley Karkela.



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**Chris DelGreco and Gary Sparks** - March 25 at 03:22 PM

TF

“ The Morris Family purchased the Enduring Grace for the family of Larry Wesley Karkela.



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**The Morris Family** - March 25 at 10:51 AM