



## Spencer ("Spike") James Sokolowski

August 8, 1931 - January 10, 2026

Spencer ("Spike") James Sokolowski passed away peacefully on January 10, 2026, after 94 years of extraordinary life.

Spike was born on August 8, 1931 to John and Marie Sokolowski in their modest Northeast Minneapolis apartment, above what later became known as "Sokol's Bar". Spike's father, a professional boxer early in his life, and his mother, a 1935 graduate of the Minneapolis College of law, instilled in Spike a strong value for education and commitment to community service.

Spike attended Holy Cross grade school, Edison High School, and the University of Minnesota. His college years were interrupted when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving his country honorably around the world for four years. When Spike returned from the Navy, he finished his studies at the University of Minnesota, graduating with a business degree (BAA) in 1957. After college, Spike married the love of his life, Dolores ("Dee") Foley. They were married for almost 65 wonderful years. They raised 4 children in their Minneapolis, and, later, Coon Rapids home on the banks of the Mississippi River.

Shortly after they were married, Spike and Dee moved to Detroit where Spike worked for Ford Motor Company. Influenced by his mother's legal education, Spike returned to Minneapolis and enrolled at the University of Minnesota Law School in 1959, graduating in 1962. Spike practiced law in several Columbia Heights law firms, and served as Columbia Heights City Attorney, before eventually starting his own law practice.

In 1970, Spike ran for and won a seat in the Minnesota House of Representatives. There he met Governor Wendell Anderson, who appointed Spike a Judge of the Anoka County Court. Spike loved being a judge and served the communities of the 10th Judicial District for almost 30 years, acting as Chief Judge for a number of years. Even after reaching mandatory retirement age, Spike asked the Governor to appoint him to any District Court in the State that was in need of judicial assistance. Spike continued to serve in this role across the State into his 80s. When asked what he enjoyed most about being a judge Spike often said that he loved serving the public and making a difference in people's lives. Spike's dedication, integrity, and commitment to the communities that he served has made them a better place for us all.

Outside the courtroom, Spike enjoyed tending to his gardens, especially his prized rose gardens, playing bridge and cribbage, and puzzling. He was a proud and enthusiastic supporter of his kids at their many sporting events. Spike loved downhill skiing and took the entire family on many memorable family ski trips. Spike took up running in his 40s, joining the North Suburban Striders running club and participating in hundreds of running races across the Midwest. Spike was the race director for the Anoka Halloween Race for 25 years and the Bunker Hills Fun Run for almost as many. Spike later combined his running with biking and swimming and became a competitive triathlete, until into his late 70s.

Spike was a man of profound faith. He attended as many prayer services as he could, counted Catholic priests as his good friends, and always had one of his many rosaries not far away. Spike led a strong Christian life by example, with a kind word and enthusiastic smile for all he met, offering a helping hand to those in need, and even dispensing leniency in his courtroom when someone deserved a second chance in life.

Spike is survived by his loving children and their spouses, Joe (Lindsay) Sokolowski, Jim (Deanna) Sokolowski, Ann (Don) Wilson, and Laura (Doug) Jaeger, Grandchildren Nick, Jack, and Ruby Sokolowski, Katy (Jacob) Ogren,

Abby Sokolowski, Alec Wilson, Alicia (Nick) Kaufman, and Spencer, Ben, Parker, and Meredith Jaeger, Greatgrandchildren Lincoln Kaufman and Penelope Ogren, as well as many nieces, nephews, friends and colleagues. Spike was preceded in death by his wife Dolores, his parents, John and Marie, his sister, Mary Jane Gustafson, his brother, Jack, and his infant son, John Spencer.

Mass of Christian burial will be held on Monday, January 26, 2026, at 10:30 am at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 9100 93rd Ave North, Brooklyn Park, MN, with visitation starting at 9:00 am.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made in Spike's name to St. Therese at Oxbow Lake or Sharing and Caring Hands.

[Washburn-McReavy.com](http://Washburn-McReavy.com)

Robbinsdale Chapel 763-537-2333

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 26. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church  
9100 93rd Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

## Mass of Christian Burial

JAN 26. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church  
9100 93rd Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

## Reception

JAN 26. 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM (CT)

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church  
9100 93rd Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

## Graveside Service

JAN 26. 1:45 PM - 2:15 PM (CT)

Gethsemane Cemetery (New Hope)  
8151 42nd Avenue North  
New Hope, MN 55427

# Tribute Wall



“ Bountiful Rose Basket was purchased for the family of Spencer ("Spike") James Sokolowski.



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January 24 at 11:15 AM



“ Tom, John, Nancy and Jim Jasinski planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Spencer ("Spike") James Sokolowski.

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Tom, John, Nancy and Jim Jasinski - January 24 at 11:15 AM



“ I graduated with Spike as members of the Minneapolis Edison High School Class of 1949. There were several outstanding members of this class who went on to distinguished careers. Spike was one of them. I had many conversations with him at our annual class reunion luncheons, the last one being at our 75th reunion luncheon at Jax Cafe a couple of years ago. With his passing, there aren't many classmates left. Spike truly became a community leader and his leadership will be missed n Anoka county and beyond for many years to come. May he rest in peace.  
Lowell Ludford

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Lowell Ludford - January 19 at 02:45 PM

JF

“ *My sincere condolence to the entire Sokolowski Family on the passing of Spencer! Many fond memories meeting Jim's family throughout the years.*

*Sincerely,*

*Jean Freismuth (Malik, Deanna's Sister)*

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**Jean Freismuth** - January 19 at 12:53 PM