

Jake Kurth

The 2015 Otsego County Fair is dedicated to Jake Kurth; who was a supporter of the Otsego County Fair for many years.

The community lost a great businessman, employer, friend, father, grandfather and husband when Jacob "Jake" Kurth died unexpectedly Dec. 10 at age 70.

Jacob, or Jake as most of his family and friends know him by, is remembered first and foremost as a strong family man.

Strong work ethics were a constant as he grew older, as he continued to work through his high school education at St. Mary Cathedral School, where he graduated in 1963 until he went into the military and served as a proud member of the United States Army in Korea. After he and Nancy were married on May 17, 1968, he went on to work for Dodge Truck and Kalkaska Construction before starting his own J & N Construction.



With hard work and integrity, Jake was a successful and respected business man who owned and operated J & N Construction in Gaylord for 27 years and J & N Excavating in Granbury, Texas for 7 years. He attributed his success to not only the support of his family, but also his many devoted employees.

Though he had a tireless work ethic with high expectations for his employees, many remember how much compassion he would show to those working for and with him. One of the key reasons for his long stint of employment was the way Jake treated and interacted with his employees.

Jake was the proud grandfather of eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild who were each dearly loved. A lover of travel, he and Nancy were snowbirds that spent winters in Arizona with stops in Texas to visit his kids and grandkids. Jake loved adventure. He loved being outside. One of his most notable personal accomplishments was building a two-acre pond behind their home, which he used for his own enjoyment, but also as a way to spend more time with his grandchildren. He loved to bring his grandchildren out to the pond, where he taught each of them how to fish.

When he wasn't spending time with his family or working, Jake loved to gamble. He rarely lost and his family joked it may have been because of all the work he did, both for his business and in the community, especially for the Otsego County Fair. He used to say, "I give back so much, maybe God will bless me back at the casino". Jake loved to play on the slot machines and his family does not remember him losing too often. He enjoyed collecting and restoring antique cars. Together, Jake and Nancy traveled to various Polish festivals where they impressed many crowds with their ability to polka dance.

Aside from the casinos, Jake and Nancy traveled the country and the world, including trips to places such as Paris and Australia, where he enjoyed meeting even more people. The enthusiasm he had to meet new people and be with those he knew, worshipped with and loved is something he will be remembered by.

Thank you, Jake; for all you have done for the Fair, we really appreciated everything. You had a heart of GOLD. You will be missed enormously by your Family, the Otsego County Fair and our Community.