



Donald B. Mathena

June 26, 1924 - January 3, 2021

On January 3, 2021, Donald B. Mathena rejoined the love of his life Gwen in their heavenly home. He passed peacefully, surrounded by the comforts of his own home, after enjoying a life well lived.

Don was born on June 26, 1924 to George and Bertha (Stowers) Mathena of Ada, West Virginia. Despite the struggles presented by America's Great Depression, Don lived his childhood days to their fullest helping his parents around their small farm, and timely tending to his daily chores so he could get to what he really enjoyed, football practice and games. Don remained a sports enthusiast his entire life. Before the time of high tech TV's, you would often find him on a Sunday afternoon in front of the family TV, a small black and white TV, and portable radio, watching and listening to three sportscasts at a time, so that he could keep up with his favorite teams. In addition to playing football when he was young, he enjoyed golfing and bowling throughout his adult life.

Don heeded Uncle Sam's call at the start of WWII and at the age of 17, left the family farm to enlist in the US Army. While serving in the European theatre, Don achieved the honorable rank of Sargent in the Army Air Corps, paving the way for him to serve as an assistant crew chief and perform maintenance on P-51 Mustang fighter planes. So began Don's life-long love of flying and aircraft. In his later years, he earned his private pilot license and owned his

own single engine plane for a period of time.

Don met Nova Gwendolyn (Gwen) Pitman while on leave in Detroit. It came as no surprise to anyone who knew him that Don waited a mere ten days to marry his sweetheart Gwen, upon his return from the war. Their love was true and they were totally devoted to each other. Don and Gwen married on September 25, 1945. Their love affair lasted sixty-six years until Gwen departed with Don holding her hand.

During their life together, Don was always a hands-on worker starting his career as a bump and paint man working on automobiles. But for most of his career, he worked in tool and die manufacturing for Eclipse Counterbore Company, which later merged with Illinois Tool Works. Don always had a great work ethic and enjoyed chatting with people. Even after he retired, Don took pride in making deliveries for Business Card Express where he could interact with people at the shop and along his route.

Don is survived by three beloved children; Margaret (Robert) Kirkland, Daniel (Cheryl) Mathena and Pamela Mathena. Don is also survived by six grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren, all of whom he absolutely loved and adored.

Don was a man of unwavering faith, attending and ushering at Calvary Baptist Church for years, before attending Grace Baptist Church in his later years. Don loved his extended church family dearly.

Public visitation will be at Grace Baptist Church (Birmingham, MI) on January 14th, 2021, at 12:30 PM, with a church service following at 1 PM. Viewers can access a livestream of the service at the following: gbcministries.com. The family will accompany Don's body for a private burial service at White Chapel Memorial Cemetery immediately following the church service.

In lieu of flowers, memorials to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital would be greatly appreciated.

Please feel free to share your memories at www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com

Cemetery Details

White Chapel Memorial Cemetery

621 W. Long Lake Road
Troy, MI 48098

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 14. 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Grace Baptist Church
280 E. Lincoln Street
Birmingham, MI 48009

Funeral Service

JAN 14. 1:00 PM (ET)

Grace Baptist Church
280 E. Lincoln Street
Birmingham, MI 48009

Tribute Wall

GR

“ Remember that frozen custard is much better than ice cream

granddaughter - January 13, 2021 at 09:31 AM

YB

“ Your great great grandson aidan (aka: Buddy) purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of Donald B. Mathena.



Your great great grandson aidan (aka: Buddy) - January 13, 2021 at 09:28 AM

JU

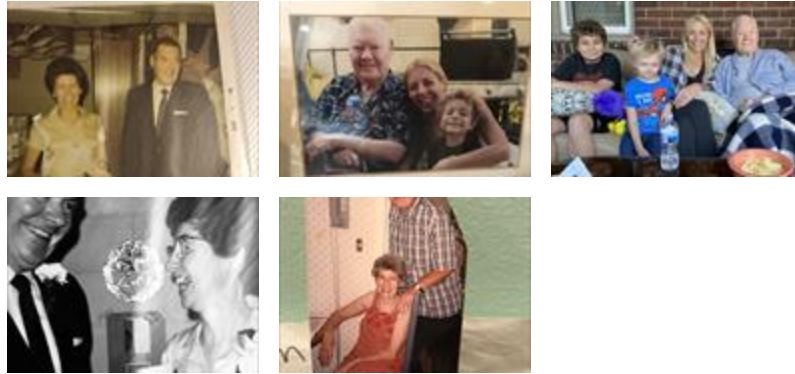
“ Jennifer AKA: ugly purchased the Rays of Light S pray for the family of Donald B. Mathena.



Jennifer AKA: ugly - January 12, 2021 at 09:47 AM

JK

“ You are forever in my mind forever in my memories forever in my heart in the bus to add mayonnaise ever met my life thank you for being the best grandfather what could ever ask for the world has lost an angel and ugly angel but I'll see you soon man I love you ugly



jennifer kirkland - January 09, 2021 at 02:08 PM

JK

It should read forever in my heart and you are the best man I have ever met in my entire life love your granddaughter also known as ugly

jennifer kirkland - January 09, 2021 at 02:13 PM