



## Richard Joseph LaBaere

March 14, 1939 - February 17, 2021

Richard Joseph LaBaere

March 14, 1939 - February 17, 2021

Richard Joseph LaBaere of Bruce Township, Michigan, formerly of Macomb Township, Michigan, passed away peacefully on February 17, 2021 at home. Richard (Dick) was born March 14, 1939 at his farm home on Romeo Plank Road to Elsie Mary LaBaere (Colpaert) and Albert Joseph LaBaere, and was predeceased by his brother, Henry Richard LaBaere. Dick is survived by his loving spouse of 23 years, Sandra Carter LaBaere, four children with Mary Joe Burns: Dr. Richard J. LaBaere II (Catherine), Joellen LaBaere Haines (Jon), Paul C. LaBaere (Beth), and Patricia LaBaere, and two step children, Kim DiMercurio (Eric) and Sara Maynard (Wayne). Dick enjoyed time with each of his 21 grandchildren, Matt and Amanda LaBaere, Gregory, Hunter, Parker, Rebecca, Richard and Ryan Haines, Paul Jr., Erica and Anna Lise LaBaere, Jack, Ella and Kate Block, Olivia, Elsa and R.J. Clark, Carter and Katelynn DiMercurio, Alyssa and Ryan Maynard and two great grandchildren, Kinsley Mettie and Raven.

Dick lived a full life and devoted himself not only to his family, but to his career at Utica Community Schools, Macomb Township Fire Department, and most of all, farming. He started his career in education at Utica as a 6th grade teacher and then became principal at Swartzkoff Elementary, Assistant Superintendent in Personnel and Labor Relations, until he became Superintendent of Utica Schools. Dick dedicated 31 years of service to

education. At the same time, Dick started as a volunteer fire fighter with Macomb Township and served 34 years before retiring as Fire Chief in 1998. Dick loved to golf and made extra "golf" money working as a driver for Heidebreicht Chevrolet in Romeo during his retirement. Dick's greatest passion was always farming and spending quality time with his family. He involved the entire family in the process of farming and having a roadside stand, where he taught many life lessons. Dick will always be remembered and loved for his quick smile, generous heart and willingness to help others. He taught those around him by example to be kind, patient and to never quit when the going gets tough. Dick will be missed, but his legacy of love and sacrifice forever lives on in the lives of those he touched.

\*\*\*Due to COVID-19, and in accordance with CDC recommendations and the Governor's Executive Orders, please be advised that the funeral home is limited to 25 people in the visitation/service room at any given time, please be mindful of your time at the funeral home as there may be others that may be waiting to pay their respects. Also, masks are required to enter the building\*\*\*

Visitation at the Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Home, 8459 Hall Road (3 Blks E. of Van Dyke), Utica, MI. Saturday 4:00 pm -8:00 pm and Sunday 1:00 pm -8:00 pm. In state Monday 9:30 am at St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church, 343 S. Main Street, Romeo, MI, until time of Funeral Mass 10:00 am. Interment Bruce Armada Cemetery, Bruce Township, Michigan. Family request donations to Utica Community Schools Foundation for Educational Excellence. Please share a memory at [www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com](http://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Bruce Armada Cemetery

Bruce Township, MI

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB 20. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wm Sullivan and Son Funeral Home  
8459 Hall Road  
Utica, MI 48317  
(586) 731-2411  
utica@sullivanfh.com  
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

## FD Pass & Review

FEB 20. 6:00 PM (ET)

Wm Sullivan and Son Funeral Home  
8459 Hall Road  
Utica, MI 48317  
(586) 731-2411  
utica@sullivanfh.com  
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

## Visitation

FEB 21. 1:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wm Sullivan and Son Funeral Home  
8459 Hall Road  
Utica, MI 48317  
(586) 731-2411  
utica@sullivanfh.com  
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

## Burial

FEB 22. 12:00 AM (ET)

Bruce Armada Cemetery  
Bruce Township, MI

## Instate

FEB 22. 9:30 AM - 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church  
343 S. Main Street  
Romeo, MI 48065

## Funeral Mass

FEB 22. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church  
343 S. Main Street  
Romeo, MI 48065

# Tribute Wall

AN

“ We are deeply saddened by the loss of your husband, father and grand father. Please accept our most heartfelt sympathies. Dick was a strong and wise man, who inspired many people both young and old. We cherish our memories of our 2018 visit to him and his family. He always will have a special place in our hearts. Dick will be truly missed by so many and we will include him in our daily prayers.

*Ann Pype - Filip Meuris and family, Belgium*

---

**ann** - February 21, 2021 at 11:33 AM

JK

“ Dear Sandy and family,

*We have all lost a good friend. Knowing Dick for these many years our family has stored many endless memories and wonderful stories that get repeated and repeated. Not only did I value our work years together, but we've also shared social doings and events that have kept us close. So many good times. Our sympathies are with you.*

*Love, Jim and Barb King and family*

---

**Jim and Barb King** - February 20, 2021 at 10:02 PM

ND

“ So sorry we are unable to attend the viewing. We are currently in Florida. Some of my fondest memories are growing up and going on Sunday afternoons to their farm for Elsie's famous cake and strawberries and spending time with my cousins, Dick and Henry.  
*Nancy & Frank Danko*

---

**Nancy Danko** - February 20, 2021 at 06:03 PM

JK

“ Dick was a good friend of mine for many years. We shared many golf days and the same cart most of the time. He us the only guy I knew who could use a driver all the way up to the green. But the score was never as important as sharing the day together. You Marty and Jessie had your own scoring method it was called dots ! I will always remember the laughs we had together and wish we could do it all over again.

*I miss you already !*

*Love Jeff*

---

**jeff krause** - February 20, 2021 at 11:51 AM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Richard Joseph LaBaere.



---

February 20, 2021 at 11:08 AM

JN

“ Dick was such a fine and gentle man. We knew him through UCS and the Fire Service. Always smiling and so caring. He gave generously to the world around him and we are all richer for having known him. May he Rest In Peace!

---

**Jacqueline K. Noonan** - February 20, 2021 at 09:12 AM

JA

“ Paul, my wife and i are so sorry to hear of your dad's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Jim & Betty Aleck

---

**Jim Aleck** - February 19, 2021 at 10:44 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Richard Joseph LaBaere.*



---

February 19, 2021 at 10:36 PM



“ *To the Labaere family, Dick and I first met at EMU..were fraternuity bros. and lived in the same house for two years, we had several classes together..dranks some BEERS..had a lot of good memories..shared some rides to and from Ypsi..Dick would drop me off at Gratiot..I lived in St. Clair,..that new CHEVY was a nice ride..so sorry for your loss...God Bless..Sincerely..Jerry Pruitt*

---

**Jerry Pruitt** - February 19, 2021 at 12:31 PM



“ *Richard you will be greatly missed.  
I enjoyed our time at the golf course and our conversations at the restaurant.  
your friend  
Larry*

---

**larry bott** - February 19, 2021 at 11:54 AM



“ *Carol Beck purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Richard Joseph LaBaere.*



---

**Carol Beck** - February 19, 2021 at 10:44 AM

BO

“ I am honored to have known Mr. Labaere. He will never be forgotten. I remember the times that his son Paul and I would stay out late at night and Dick would ask who kept his son out so late and Paul would say he was out with Frank Fields. To keep to heat of his fad off of me. Until we meet again.

---

**Bob Outer** - February 19, 2021 at 10:37 AM

 Carol Beck

“ We were blessed to have Dick and Sandy as our next door neighbors. My husband and Dick had matching lawn mowers. When the mowers became silent it meant they had stopped side by side to chat and share a cold beer. Dick was a man always there to help and always giving. We had some serious conversations, but mostly laughs. Dicks sense of humor never failed. I knew when we heard his tractor passing our house, he was on his way to his favorite pass time, his farm. He would show up later to gift us with produce he had harvested that day. Sandy taught me how to make creamed corn from the sweet white corn Dick grew. Men like Dick and friends like this are far and few in life, we were truly blessed to know this man. I take Peace in knowing that Dick loved Jesus, so I know where he is and I will see him again. You will be so very missed here, you touched many lives. ❤️

---

**Carol Beck** - February 19, 2021 at 10:31 AM

BL

“ One of the best and respected! He was my principle at Schwarzkoff Elementary in 1968 and 1969. He was very kind and supportive in what I would do for my profession later in my life. He truly made a difference in my life at a very early age, Thank you ever so much Mr. LaBarere. You made a difference.  
I will never forget you.

---

**Brad Lowe** - February 19, 2021 at 09:57 AM

DL

*Brad,  
Well said and to go further. Dick and I got to work with one another at the dealership level. He was always positive with a sharp eagle eye memory, like it just happened.  
BTW...Brad you were a neighbor of mine when you lived on Dart and I, on Valiant*

Donald Jeffrey Likins - February 20, 2021 at 02:02 PM

MM

*“ he was a teacher and then Principal in Sterling Junior High. I remeber him though out my school years in Utica schools*

Mary Murphy - February 19, 2021 at 09:10 AM



*“ Pink Roses and Lily Grass (Silk Cemetery Flower s) was purchased for the family of Richard Joseph LaBaere.*



February 19, 2021 at 05:15 AM

LP

“ ‘Mr. LaBaere’ was one of the UCS leaders who made our community a wonderful place to live & our district a great place to learn and teach. He was also one of my father’s dearest friends, and was included in many of Dad’s funniest & favorite stories during their decades of friendship & working together.

*In the 50yrs or so that I knew him, Dick LaBaere was always warm & welcoming, friendly & funny, happy, caring & kind to all of us. I always smile when I think of his big grin, great laugh, and the twinkle in his eyes (like on our Saturday visits in October, when he’d say, “You kids can have any pumpkin out there that you want..and can carry back here to your dad’s car” (so 3 hrs later, we’d return..both of them laughing in the LaBaere driveway, as they helped us load our 5lb pumpkins into the car)...or during one of the many crazy ‘Larry & LaBaere’ stories that the Smith kids were lucky enough to hear ‘when we were old enough’. (We’re still hearing new ones;))*

*Dick LaBaere will always be loved & fondly remembered by our family. I’m very thankful that we were lucky enough to have him in our lives, and am sending my sincerest condolences to all of the LaBaere family during this difficult time.*

*Lisa (Smith) Prestininzi*

---

**Lisa (Smith) Prestininzi** - February 18, 2021 at 09:42 PM

KM

“ I am so sorry to hear this sad news about Mr. LaBaere. He was a true friend to my mother, Mrs. Marlene Reinhold, and our family. Prayers and thoughts go out to his family.

---

**Kristin Miller** - February 18, 2021 at 03:54 PM



“ *Pretty Please was purchased for the family of Richard Joseph LaBaere.*



---

February 18, 2021 at 03:26 PM



“ *So sad to hear about Dick, but so enjoyed the friendship that I had with him working at UCS. Always with a smile and a laugh he would brighten the moment with his presence. His contribution to education will continually be felt by so many. Dick enjoyed his family, his work and friends. He will be missed. Prayers to Sandy and family.*

---

**Dave Turrel** - February 18, 2021 at 02:56 PM

JS

“ We are so saddened by the news of Dick's passing. He has been a dear friend of our family for so many years in so many ways. His love of family and friends was seen in every aspect of his life. The "scavenger hunts" and many other social events we shared during our years with Utica Community Schools are engraved in our minds forever. What fun we had! One of our dearest memories is when we would take our grandchildren to Dick's roadside stand and he would help them pick out the "very best" pumpkins for Halloween. He seemed to enjoy it as much as they did. More recently, Dick made many phone calls to Larry to trade stories, tell jokes, and lift Larry's spirits during his final illness. Thank you Dick for all the smiles you brought to his face during a very difficult time. Our family will always remember that. Our prayers and deepest sympathies to the loving family of our long-time dear friend, Dick LaBaere. What a blessing to have known this charismatic gentleman. He will be missed by all who know him. Sincerely and with love, Joan Smith and family

---

Joan Smith - February 18, 2021 at 01:39 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Richard Joseph LaBaere.



---

February 18, 2021 at 12:29 PM