



## Richard John Palonka

September 11, 1950 - March 28, 2015

Palonka, Richard J. Age 64. March 28, 2015.

Dear brother of Marian (Joe) Katich and the late Patricia Paul; proud uncle of Susan Hunt, David (Jackie) Katich, Joseph Katich, Kim (Peter) Howe, Jeffrey (Lena) Fuller, Kathy (David) Wasil and Steven (Sarah) Fuller; also survived by many great nieces and nephews; and beloved son of the late John and Mary. He will also be missed by his cat, Bubba. Rick loved anything to do with music. He was a self-taught musician, with a special emphasis on guitar, and a member of a band. He not only played several instruments, but he bought and sold numerous musical instruments and their accompaniments. Rick also enjoyed the outdoors, camping, backpacking, hiking and photography. Visitation Thursday 4 p.m. until the time of the service 7 p.m. at the Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Home, 705 W. Eleven Mile Road (4 blocks E. of Woodward), Royal Oak. Memorials appreciated to the Michigan Humane Society, 30300 Telegraph Road, Suite 220, Bingham Farms, MI 48025.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 2. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Royal Oak  
705 W. Eleven Mile Road  
Royal Oak, MI 48067  
(248) 541-7000  
royal@sullivanfh.com  
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

## Funeral Services

APR 2. 7:00 PM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Royal Oak  
705 W. Eleven Mile Road  
Royal Oak, MI 48067  
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# Tribute Wall

DR

“ I remember Rick fondly--when he lived in Ferndale, mid to late 70's(?)--every other Sunday was "Jam Session"--all friends, most musicians, would jam all day---feasting on tostados in between!!-- Rick had an ear for music--he would try different instruments--and could hold his own with most!! I remember one Christmas--he made necklaces for all the women who showed up on a regular basis---he knew I liked turquoise--I still have my necklace and wear it often--now it will bring a tear to my eye---such wonderful memories of some of the best times in my life. I'm sure he is rockin in heaven!! RIP, my friend!

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**Donna K Roy** - December 24, 2015 at 11:33 AM

WA

“ To the family of Richard Palonka: Please accept my sincere sympathy for the loss of your loved one. While we don't know one another, experiencing the devastation of losing a loved one is something we all face in our lives. The Bible promises a time when "death will be no more" (Rev 21:3.4) and assures us that God hears our prayers (Ps 55:22). I hope this brings you some peace during this difficult time.

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**Wanda** - April 06, 2015 at 09:42 AM

PZ

“ I met Rick 30 years ago he was always joking and had a smile on his face. he was a great friend i will miss him but will remember all the great times we had

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**Patty Zoppi** - April 02, 2015 at 02:45 PM

RH

“ *The first thing that always comes to mind about Unc was his attitude. He would always greet you in his gruff voice with a joke and a smile. When I was very young, I always viewed him as the "weird" uncle that every family has. But more recently, I really got to spend more time with him and grow closer, I discovered that his "weirdness" was in reality his authenticity - the man was proud of who he was and wasn't going to hide it from anyone.*

*The recent release of so many comic book-based movies gave Unc and the younger family members something to bond over, and our annual camping trips gave us the time to share our reactions and ask him questions on the background - he knew so much of it in such detail! He really was just a nerd, like me, and that made him easy to talk to. I loved hearing his adventures in his favorite video game, *Skyrim*, not because he was eloquent, but because of the simplistic, goofy way he'd go on about killing some dragon or hunting down some bandits.*

*Unc was proof that age is just a number. He never let go of the kid inside him, and he brought joy to so many of our lives because of it.*

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**Ryan Hunt** - April 02, 2015 at 01:43 PM

BH

“ I'll always remember the first camping trip we took as a group with Uncle Richard, which started one of my favorite summer traditions growing up. That first year he gave me the nickname Bernardo, because he felt that the effort and dedication I took into roasting my marshmallows for campfire s'mores mirrored that of a hard-working immigrant from Puerto Rico. From then on, at every family reunion, I'd be greeted by a friendly "Hey 'Nardo!" from Unc, which to everyone else, probably sounded like gibberish, but to me, him and the rest of the guys from the trip, it was a reminder of the times we'd shared together out in the woods bonding over talks of all the nerdy things we love.

My favorite moments were when we would be around the fire, deep in our talks about Marvel Comic lore, and Unc would be able to clarify what happened to which characters and when, because while we were just getting introduced to them through movies, Unc had grown up with them as a kid. I'm glad that I got to experience his love for comics and Sci-Fi, because I believe it's what managed to bring me close to him over his last few years. While the in depth talks about our favorite fantasy genres, video games, and superhero movies might bore some people to death, they are some of my favorite moments in life. I value those talks so much because they were about things we both love, and sharing that love for something with another person is one of life's greatest treasures.

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**Benjamin Hunt** - April 02, 2015 at 10:48 AM



“ Richard was one of the most sincere people I have ever met. In a world with so many fake/wanting to keep up with the joneses people in the world we live in, he was a real breath of fresh air. I will miss him and won't ever listen to music again without thinking of him. Beethoven's 9th symphony always makes me cry but those tears will have deeper more personal meaning now.

Love you Rick

R.I.P.

David Ankrom

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David Ankrom - April 01, 2015 at 11:27 PM



“ I met rick in 1997 at Techteam. For many years, we had continued a story via email about the origins of ttg. He was a great friend, and I miss him.

I regret not finding him in time to reconnect.

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Tracy Lafeir - April 01, 2015 at 07:35 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Richard John Palonka.



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April 01, 2015 at 03:17 PM

JR

“ I knew Rick from my years as a Ferndale hippie (or maybe we were all wannabe hippies, who knows anymore?). But whatever we thought we were, Rick was the real deal, true to himself and true to his friends. I remember Rick as a jack-of-all trades: leather smith (I still have the Swiss army knife sheath he made for me), carpenter, metalworker, gardener, and one of the finest natural musicians I have known. I can still see him pick up an unfamiliar instrument, some weird combination of strings and buttons, look it over and begin to coax sounds out of it until it suddenly produced a scale or melody. To a hack guitar player like myself that never met a scale or chord change I couldn't blow, that ability seemed like some kind of magic. And maybe it was. Rest well, Rick.

John D. Richards

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**John D. Richards** - April 01, 2015 at 03:09 PM

JA

“ Judging from the tributes so far written, it is clear that Rick continued to affect many people's since the thirty or so years since our paths diverged. Have a good rest, Rick, and soon I'll toast our friendship with a glass of Drambuie.

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**John U. Anderson** - April 01, 2015 at 01:59 PM

BL

“ Rick and I began our friendship back in 1997 when we started working together in Harper Woods and we continued that friendship over 15 years. He was such a kind soul, always a smile on his face and never held back from making me laugh. I've had the honor of being his work buddy and friend. Thank you Rick for introducing me to some cool music, giving me a nickname "Ratty", some valuable life lessons and most of all...you.

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**Billi Lumley** - April 01, 2015 at 08:36 AM

MP

“ I knew Rick from working at Techteam / Stefanini with him. He was and always be one of my favorite people. He taught me so much, not just about my job but about life. Whether it was going out for our "Dead Fish (sushi)" lunch dates or the two of us cackling over excel spreadsheets and trying to rule the world, he always had a smile on his face and a positive attitude. I will miss him so much.

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**Melissa Parker** - March 31, 2015 at 04:58 PM

MS

“ I WAS A BOY SCOUT WITH RICH.AT BARTHOLOMEW CHURCH IN DETROIT YEARS AGO.I KNEW HE LIKED MUSIC BUT ALSO LIKE THE OUTDOORS AND CAMPING!!!!!!

**MICHAEL SKELTIS**

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**MICHAEL SKELTIS** - March 31, 2015 at 04:11 PM

DK

“ Everyone talks about having a crazy uncle in their family. "You know how every family has that crazy uncle", they say. Well, Unc was crazy. But crazy in a cool cat kind of way, not the creepy way people usually mean. He was always a slight bit tilted with his life views. Marched to his very own special tune. I grew up seeing that slant, and appreciating it's very deliberate and practiced quality from my crazy Unc. A very intelligent man who chose to live his life as he wanted, not bend to social norms or pressures. That was his hippie beatnik influence. He chose to be light, enjoy people and daily life, and be happy by keeping his life simple. He put up with his crazy nephews and treated us like peers instead of stupid little kids, which let's face it, we were. He then bestowed that same important kindness to his nephews and nieces sons, the next generation of this crazy, most excellent family. This, above all the other wonderful things I'll always remember and respect about my crazy Pollock uncle, will be the memory I will cherish and hold close to my bruised heart. Thank you for being my crazy, tilted, goofy, wonderfully simple by design friend. I will miss you.

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**David "Davidson" Katich** - March 31, 2015 at 03:47 PM

NS

“ I met Rick working at Stefanini (TechTeam at the time) and he was always smiling, sharing funny stories and telling jokes. I'll never forget the hippie photo of himself he shared with me; I just thought it was the coolest picture ever! I will always have fond memories of Rick, especially everytime I saw him, he greeted me with "Kita Baby!". I give my sincerest condolences to the family and will keep you all in my prayers. Rick was one of a kind and will dearly be missed by all.

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**Nikita Smith** - March 31, 2015 at 02:56 PM

LK

“ When we lose a friend everything around us seems to stop. We even stop breathing for a little while. But the next day the sun comes up, life goes on and so must we.

*As his family and friends, each of us will grieve the loss of Rick in our own way. But, can we heal faster if we choose to celebrate his life?*

*We will not see his face across the table, or singing a song or in the lite of a campfire, but your memories of those moments will last forever. Embrace your memories of Rick. When you feel the time is right, take a moment and think back and a memory will surface and Rick will make you smile and the celebration of his life will continue.*

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**Larry Kazmirowski** - March 31, 2015 at 02:37 PM

KD

“ Rich was in the car pool I was in for a while going to St. Bartholomew Elementary School. I remember him always being kind and cheerful. Sending prayers up for the Palonka Family.

*Karen DeJager*

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**Karen DeJager** - March 31, 2015 at 01:51 PM

MA

“ Rick was always one to greet you everyday, regardless of what may have been facing him. We miss him at Stefanini.

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**Mark Alaszewski** - March 31, 2015 at 12:41 PM

GD

“ I knew Rich from grade school and Boy Scouts. My condolences to his family.

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**Gary Dzikowski** - March 31, 2015 at 04:57 AM