



Karl E. Kraus

October 18, 1945 - September 12, 2025

The Honorable Karl E. Kraus, born October 18, 1945, gifted attorney, prosecutor, and judge; consummate community leader; and devoted family man, passed away peacefully on September 12, 2025 after a short illness.

Karl was born to Dr. L.G. and Barbara (Gardner) Kraus in St. John's, Michigan. Karl attended Immaculate Heart of Mary grade school and graduated high school from Grand Rapids Catholic Central in 1963. Karl attended Aquinas College for two years, then transferred to Michigan State University, where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree, cum laude, in Political Science, minoring in Police Administration, in 1967. Upon graduation, Karl attended the University of Detroit Law School for one year, then taught English and Social Sciences at Owen-Gage High School for one year. Karl then attended the University of Michigan Law School, graduating in 1971 with his Juris Doctor degree and was admitted to the State Bar of Michigan the same year. After earning his law degree, Karl was a staff attorney at the Michigan Court of Appeals in Lansing, Michigan for two years, then became an Assistant Prosecutor in Genesee County for two years. In 1975, Karl moved to Huron County and practiced law alongside Jim Umphrey, starting his own law practice in Bad Axe in 1977. Karl continued in private practice, partnering with John Ferris and John Schwedler to form Kraus, Ferris and Schwedler, P.C. law firm. In the early years of his law career, Karl served as the township attorney for Caseville, Port Austin, and Verona Townships. In

1981, Karl was sworn in as Huron County's Prosecutor, serving until 1989. During that time, Karl also became a licensed real estate broker and served on the Huron County Memorial Hospital Board of Directors. In 1989, Karl was appointed Huron County's 73rd District Judge by then Governor James Blanchard and served the bench until retirement in 2007. After retiring from the bench, Karl served as Executive Director for the Huron County Community Foundation, taught government and political science at Huron County Intermediate School District, participated in case evaluation through Huron County's 52nd Judicial Circuit Court, and served as a personal representative for several private estates. Karl was also a member of the Bad Axe Lions Club and Michigan Bar Association for over 50 years.

Karl believed deeply in helping and serving others, was a man of deep faith, loved sports, and most of all, loved his family. Karl's desire to help and serve others was the principal reason he chose law as his profession. Karl loved the law; he loved its fairness and its justness. Karl consistently used his legal expertise to help others, whether in the courtroom, from the bench, or in providing wise counsel to his family, friends, and colleagues. In his desire to help people, Karl served in the community, including sitting on several bank boards, serving as the Executive Director of the Huron County Community Foundation, and, most notably, volunteering with the Bad Axe Lions Club. Through the Lions Club, Karl worked at the Huron County Fair for more than two decades and recently helped establish a scholarship from the Lions Club that is awarded to Bad Axe High School students to help pay for driver's education training. A man of deep faith, Karl believed in God, seeking to lead a life that demonstrated his faith. Karl was a life-long Catholic and long-time parishioner at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Bad Axe. Karl found peace in his faith, which he carried with him throughout his life, including even through his illness. Karl loved anything sports-related and was always ready to talk about what was happening in the world of sport. Watching the Detroit sports teams or any golf tournament were always highlights, but Karl was most eager

to talk about sporting events of his alma mater, Michigan State. For years, Karl was a member of Verona Hills Golf Club and could be seen on the course several times a week. Karl enjoyed golfing with his friends and family; his golf friends were with him when he carded his first hole-in-one. More than anything else, though, Karl loved his family. Karl believed the most important aspect in life was family and served as a role model for everyone on the importance of family. Karl took great pride in watching his two sons grow up, play sports, pursue their professional interests, and start their own families. Karl loved his wife, Jan, and her three children. Karl and Jan enjoyed traveling, golfing, fishing, and spending time with all their children and grandchildren. Karl was especially proud of his 11 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Karl saw his grandchildren and great grandchild experience many of life's most important moments. Karl helped shape their character, stressed the importance of family, and the importance of pursuing personal dreams. Karl would do anything and everything for his family; and he did.

Karl is survived by son Matthew (Lisa) Kraus of Grand Rapids, Michigan; son Brian (Dana) Kraus of Rockford, Michigan; stepdaughter Carrie (Chris) Barrette of Utica, Michigan; stepson Joe (Morgan) Bator of North Branch, Michigan; and stepdaughter Brooke (Brandon) Russell of Rockford, Michigan. Karl is also survived by sister Karen (Dennis) McNeil of Muncie, Indiana; brother John (Arnette) Kraus of Grand Rapids, Michigan; and sister Kathryn (Damion) Nunzio of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Karl had 11 beloved grandchildren including Kaitlin (Joe) Koterba, Mackenzie Kraus, Morgan Kraus, Sara Kraus, Kyler Barrette, Jack Barrette, Jolie Bator, Easton Bator, Baylee Russell, Bryce Russell, and Briar Russell, and one great grandchild, J.D. Koterba. Karl also leaves behind his cherished friend, Debbie Decker, who was a great source of support and joy.

Karl is preceded in death by parents L.G. and Barbara Kraus, brother Stephen

Kraus, and wife Jan Kraus.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Thursday, September 18, 2025 at 11 am at St. Hubert Parish – Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Bad Axe. Burial will be in the church cemetery. Visitation will be held on Wednesday, September 17, 2025 from 4 – 8 pm at the Kaufman Funeral Home in Bad Axe or Thursday at the church from 10 am until the service time at 11 am. A rosary/scripture service will be offered on Wednesday at 7:30 pm at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be offered to the Bad Axe Lions Club, St. Jude Children's Hospital, or the American Cancer Society in memory of Karl.

Cemetery Details

Sacred Heart Cemetery

Bad Axe, MI 48413

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **17**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Kaufman & Co. Funeral Home, Inc.
84 Westland Dr
Bad Axe, MI 48413
(989) 269-3000
kaufmanfuneralhome@gmail.com

Rosary/Scripture service offered at 7:30 PM

Visitation

SEP **18**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St Hubert Parish-Sacred Heart Catholic Church
311 Whitelam St
Bad Axe, MI 48413
(989) 269-772

Funeral Mass

SEP **18**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St Hubert Parish-Sacred Heart Catholic Church
311 Whitelam St
Bad Axe, MI 48413
(989) 269-772

Tribute Wall



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Karl E. Kraus.

September 18, 2025 at 08:15 AM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Karl E. Kraus.



September 18, 2025 at 08:15 AM



“ What a good common person. His simple strength and honesty shared in every conversation with him at family occasions will be what I will carry forward.

Gregory Bator - September 17, 2025 at 09:51 PM



“ Kindest pure gentleman! Our world is less Cordial with his passing. Sympathy to his family and friends.

sally Bradr - September 17, 2025 at 09:31 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Karl E. Kraus.

September 17, 2025 at 01:38 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Karl E. Kraus.*



September 17, 2025 at 01:38 PM



“ *Sara Anderson lit a candle in memory of Karl E. Kraus*



Sara Anderson - September 17, 2025 at 01:16 PM



“ *My mom worked for several years with Karl. A couple memories were that he would allow my sister and I to come in the court room which was so fun and sit or go to his office when my mom was busy. I'll never forget him saying to my sister and I "I better not ever see you two in here" lol. That has stuck with me throughout the years. He had a very kind heart and cared a lot about others. He will be missed ❤️*

Courtney Chapin - September 17, 2025 at 10:51 AM



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Karl E. Kraus.*



September 16, 2025 at 05:58 PM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Karl E. Kraus.* ”



September 16, 2025 at 01:39 PM



“ *Rhonda, Greg and Amanda Matelski* ”



Rhonda Matelski - September 16, 2025 at 12:52 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Karl E. Kraus.* ”



September 16, 2025 at 11:05 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Karl E. Kraus.* ”



September 15, 2025 at 07:13 PM

KY

“ To all of Judge Kraus’s family and friends, Thinking of all of you with deepest Sympathy. I have always had so much respect for him. Great person and I loved his sense of humor too! So very sorry.

Kay Youatt - September 15, 2025 at 05:46 PM



“ Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Karl E. Kraus.



September 15, 2025 at 03:25 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Karl E. Kraus.

September 15, 2025 at 03:25 PM

AM

“ Matt and Brian, I am very sorry to hear this sad news. Praying for you and your families.
Love, Amy (Hartz) McArdle

amy mcardle - September 15, 2025 at 01:33 PM



“ Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Karl E. Kraus.



September 15, 2025 at 10:16 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Karl E. Kraus.

September 15, 2025 at 10:16 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Karl E. Kraus.

September 15, 2025 at 09:56 AM



“ Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for the family of Karl E. Kraus.



September 15, 2025 at 09:56 AM