

Emil “Mike” Raymond Rufener

March 27, 1929 - December 25, 2021

Emil “Mike” Raymond Rufener, age 92, passed away Saturday, December 25, 2021, at Aster Retirement Community in Monroe where he had resided since January of 2021. He was born at home on March 27, 1929, in Sylvester Township, Green County, the son of Swiss immigrants, Jacob and Elise (Janzi) Rufener. He was a proud Veteran of the United States Army and served during the Korean War, 1951-1953, stationed with the Signal Corps in Salzburg, Austria. He married JoAnne Jeremiason on September 17, 1954, at St. Victor’s Catholic Church in Monroe. He lived his entire life in Green County: dairy farming with his parents until they retired, making cheese at Jefferson Center Coop in Twin Grove and later making Swiss cheese at Search Cheese Factory in rural Blanchardville. In 1960 he bought his farm in rural Monticello and fulfilled his dream of breeding and raising an entire herd of Registered Red & White Holsteins, the only one in the county. He also bred and raised two Registered Palominos. When he semi-retired, he bred and raised an entire herd of Natural Red Angus Beef. After earning his high school diploma in the 1970’s, he also earned his Wisconsin Real Estate Brokers License and sold real estate, specializing in farms, for Strout Realty.



Emil was an active member, for 55 years, of the American Legion, having served as Commander, Chaplain, and Poppy Chairperson for the Amstutz Marty Post in Monticello. He was also a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In later years, he was a regular at the YMCA for water aerobics and took up card playing at the Senior Center. He also became a member of the YesterYear Auto Club and the Moose Lodge. He was an avid reader and closely followed politics, always enjoying a lively debate over issues. He had many travel adventures. Two of his favorite trips were taking his wife and daughters to visit relatives in Switzerland and celebrating his 50th Wedding Anniversary on a Pilgrimage to Rome. He also enjoyed many summer days driving his pontoon boat on Lake Wisconsin. He kept a running file of jokes and liked to leave friends and strangers alike with a corny joke or saying.

Emil is survived by his daughters, Barbara (Larry) Solvey, Nancy Rufener, and Jayne (Chris) Rauch; his grandchildren, Patrick and Shannon Ballweg and Grace and Theo Rauch, three siblings: Gertrude Voegeli, Arnold Rufener, and Walt (Sandy) Rufener; his brothers-in-law, James (Sharon) Jeremiason and JD Jeremiason; his Godson, Jeff (Sue) Thompson; Special Friend, Lou Ann Hanson, and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife of nearly 63 years, JoAnne, and six siblings: brothers, Armin, Jacob, Erwin, and Ernest Rufener and sisters, Alice Camenzind and Erna Maske.

Emil’s family would like to extend its deepest appreciation to the loving and caring staffs of the Aster Retirement Community and Agrace Hospice.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 am Thursday, December 30, 2021 at St. Clare of Assisi Parish at St. Victor Catholic Church with Father Mick Moon as celebrant. Burial will follow service in Calvary Cemetery with committal prayers and full military honors.

Visitation will be held Wednesday, December 29, 2021 from 4:00-6:00 pm at St. Victor’s Catholic Church, a Rosary Prayer Service will be held for Mike Wednesday at 6:00 pm. Continued Visitation will be held Thursday from 9:30AM until the time of mass, at the church.

Shriner Hager Gohlke Funeral Home is assisting the family. Condolences may be sent to the family at: shriner111.com.

In lieu of flowers, the Rufener family is asking friends wishing to make a memorial donation in Emil “Mike’s” name to send their donations to the Green County Veterans Memorial Park, the Green County Family YMCA, the Monroe Behring Senior Center or the National Historic Cheesemaking Center.