



## Richard J. Piontek

July 14, 1929 - January 17, 2019

January 17, 2019. Beloved husband of the late Gertrude (nee Giras); loving father of Richard F. (Terrie), Daryl (Diane), Laura Piontek (Stuart) Harper, and the late Gregory Piontek; cherished grandfather of Rick, Marie, Hannah, Matthew, Stuart Jr., Macuen, Ben, Lindsay, and Anna; great-grandfather of Luke, William, James, and Frances; dear brother of the late Emily, Chuck, and Millie; also survived by nieces and nephews. The family will be present to receive relatives and friends on Sunday from 4-8PM at the DANIEL R. SMOLAREK FUNERAL HOME, 2510 Union Rd., Cheektowaga (2 blocks south of William St.) where a funeral service will be held Monday at 10AM. Burial St. Matthew's Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Buffalo City Mission. Richard was a volunteer fireman for Doyle 1 for over 50 years. He was a member of Cheektowaga/Sloan school board for many years as well as a past Holy Name member at St. Josaphat's Church. He was a Marine Corp Veteran. Please leave condolences and share memories at [SmolarekCares.com](http://SmolarekCares.com)

# Cemetery Details

## St. Matthew's Cemetery

180 French Road  
West Seneca, NY 14224

# Previous Events

## Visitation

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

Cheektowaga - Daniel R. Smolarek Funeral Home  
2510 Union Road  
Buffalo, NY 14227

## Funeral Service

JAN 21. 10:00 AM (ET)

Cheektowaga - Daniel R. Smolarek Funeral Home  
2510 Union Road  
Buffalo, NY 14227

# Tribute Wall



“ *Dear Rick,  
I'm saddened to hear your father has passed from this life. My brother John and I truly miss Greg, as well. We all shared some great times and I'm happy for the memories. Be well. You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers. -James Werick*

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**James A Werick** - January 22, 2019 at 01:17 AM

“ Reflections of Richard J. Piontek

*Where does one begin to reflect on their father, a Great Man by many accounts. He was the greatest dad and role model, who never had one of his own. He never met his father, who died when he was an infant, and his mother died when he was a very young teenager. He had to go it alone from a very young age.*

*He had humble beginnings, the kind he made sure we never had. Once he told me that his mom couldn't afford fresh apples, but the neighborhood kids would give him theirs when they were done eating them and he would finish them, eating every part of the core and spitting out the seeds. It made me understand a lot about what it was like to raised during those lean times. As a result, He always made sure we had a lot of our own fresh fruit and vegetables growing up, and he never lost his desire for a good piece of fresh fruit to his very last day.*

*He had good friends to grow up with though, it helped him through it all. His close friends became our relatives and remained his friends throughout their lives.*

*After his mother died, he moved in with his eldest sister Emily until he joined the Marine Corp where he learned to 'square himself away' as they say. He learned the order and discipline that guided with him the rest of his life. He joined during the Korean War and was made an instructor after boot camp, which saved his life as many of those he went to boot camp with did not return from Korea.*

*He knew what was important in life, family, friends, country followed by food and music of course. He loved life in every respect and reveled in tasting it.*

*Dad was an electrician by trade, working as an Electrical Foreman at Bethlehem Steel until it closed. He was one of the smartest men I have ever known, always thinking, always either fixing or trying to*

*improve the process on something. A MacGyver, using expedient methods as the military would refer to it.*

*He knew so much about so many things, electrical, plumbing, auto mechanics, he never paid anyone to fix anything. He was the smartest man I ever knew, he was our Wikipedia before Wikipedia was invented. Once I asked him how he learned to do so many things. He said, I helped people, that's how I learned. If someone was working on their car, I offered to help, if they were working on their home plumbing or repairing anything I helped them and learned'. I was struck by this revelation. His reward for helping others was gaining knowledge, what a great life lesson.*

*Music was very important to my dad, he played the accordion early on, his brother was a Jazz musician, a bass player, and our brother followed in his footsteps. We all played an instrument. Music brought him joy throughout all of his trials and tribulations. Listening to and singing with Frank Sinatra and many other of his favorites, was his ultimate favorite thing to do and was always a part of our car rides to and from anywhere. He once said to me, I hope you always listen to music like this and think of me when you do. We will dad.*

*He was a tough Marine father though, especially for my brothers, he had high expectations which were sometimes hard to live up to, but served us all well in the long run. He softened up as life went on and we grew independent. His role went from a disciplinarian to an advisor, encourager and friend.*

*Although he never went to college, he had a PHD in life, he read the paper from cover to cover daily and never forgot to fill us in on any new inventions, new recipes, new health or science discoveries or theories on UFO's and Sasquatch (Big Foot). He loved a mystery and followed all the of the story lines that might uncover one.*

*We learned so much from this man:*

- we learned the importance of family as we watched him celebrate*

*each of our life successes, especially those of his grandchildren. He was our biggest cheerleader and encouraged us all to aim high and go for it all!*

- *We learned to NEVER stop learning, it keeps life*

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**Rick, Daryl and Laura** - January 22, 2019 at 12:35 AM

RL

*Continued:*

*We learned so much from this man:*

- *we learned the importance of family as we watched him celebrate each of our life successes, especially those of his grandchildren. He was our biggest cheerleader and encouraged us all to aim high and go for it all!*
- *We learned to NEVER stop learning, it keeps life interesting.*
- *We learned that having passion for something in life is what drives achievement and is a great quality to possess.*
- *We learned to respect everyone who crossed our path, and find out their story in life; he was interested in everyone and looked for their best selves; He always found a way to encourage them to achieve their dreams.*
- *We learned the importance of being an honorable person; it garnered his respect and admiration.*
- *We learned that music is the international language that connects us all, and is very important in life, love and happiness.*
- *We learned that humor is the best medicine*
- *We learned that having good food and family is a luxury to revel in and be thankful for, coming together to enjoy it is one of life's greatest gifts*
- *Most of all, we learned to Never, ever give up.*

*Thanks Dad.*

*We were so blessed and privileged to have you as our father and our children's grandfather.*

*I know that Jesus is saying to you now, well done, good and faithful servant, Well done.*

*Rick, Daryl and Laura*

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**Rick, Daryl and Laura** - January 22, 2019 at 12:39 AM

LS

*Uncle Rich cared for everyone. Helped everyone. Loved everyone, He was a man for others. I will carry the happiest times I spent with him forever.*

Lee Anne Shaheen - January 25, 2019 at 07:30 AM

EO

*Semper Fi, my dear Uncle, Semper Fi. We love you so much!*

Ellen and Jeffrey Osborn - January 25, 2019 at 07:55 AM

EO

*Dear Laura, Rick and Daryl, You wrote such a positively beautiful tribute to your Dad. Thank you for continuing your Dad's spirit of love. He will always be a guiding light.*

Ellen and Jeffrey Osborn - January 25, 2019 at 08:02 AM



“ *I was so very sorry to to see Richard had passed away. I will always remember his wonderful smile, great sense of humor, and engaging personality. I will especially miss seeing him at the family gatherings and celebrations. He always made it a point to attend.*  
*Doug Michalak*

Doug Michalak - January 21, 2019 at 10:18 PM

EO

“ *Here are four really special people dancing to live music at a party. How wonderful that I had them in my life.*



Ellen Osborn - January 18, 2019 at 10:46 PM

LS

*They are dancing again. ❤️❤️❤️❤️*

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**Lee Anne Shaheen** - January 19, 2019 at 10:09 AM

LS

“ *Uncle Rich was one of those rare individuals who always made everyone feel welcomed and special. His positive attitude and genuine smile made me feel like a million bucks every time we were together. I am blessed to have been his niece for so many years. Much love, LeeAnne Jarrot Shaheen*

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**Lee Anne Shaheen** - January 18, 2019 at 05:17 PM