



## Neil G. Ruffner

May 30, 1958 - May 9, 2021

Neil Ruffner, 62, of Zeeland, passed away peacefully surrounded by his wife and children on Sunday, May 9, 2021, at his home following a long courageous journey with heart failure and two years of progressing lung cancer. Neil was born May 30, 1958, in Mishawaka, Indiana, to Dan and Mary Ruffner. The Ruffner family moved to Zeeland when Neil was 7 years old. Neil was the middle child of three Ruffner children and graduated from Zeeland High School in 1976. He married Karen Smith January 19, 1979, and raised their children together in Zeeland. Neil started Ruffner Construction and worked 45 years as a construction contractor before retiring. Neil did countless projects and some of his larger notable projects were: Yntema Funeral Home, Residential Parade Home, cottages, FMB-Zeeland Main Street, many downtown Zeeland commercial properties, the New Groningen Schoolhouse, his children's homes. He finished out his career completing the Graphix Signs and Embroidery building. He was preceded in death by his parents Dan and Mary, father-in-law Paul Smith, and brother-in-law Tom Smith. Neil lived and worked by a lot of mantra's mostly passed down from his parents: Integrity, courage, respect, loyalty, "measure twice, cut once", "God had other plans for me!", "do it right the first time" along with a wealth of building trade knowledge and wisdom. Neil's kindness was also expressed in being willing to pitch in and lend a hand to family, neighbors, and friends. Neil expected perfection and quality in everything, his work and his personal life, followed closely by vehicle cleanliness, lawn equipment, trees, pools, boats,

etc. He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Karen, their children, and grandchildren: Anna and Kurt Lehnert (Jaxtyn, Kiptyn, Swayze, Nashtyn), Chris and Katie Ruffner (Makenzie, Elliott); sister Jan and Dave Raterink, brother Eric and Jayne Ruffner, mother-in-law Pat Smith, in-laws: Chris Montgomery, Sharon Baker, Phil and Beth Smith, Nancy Tratham, and many extended family and friends. A funeral service to honor the faith and life of Neil Ruffner will be held at 2:00 pm, Thursday, May 13, 2021, at Second Reformed Church, 225 East Central Ave., Zeeland MI 49464. Visitation will be 1-3&5-7pm Wednesday at Yntema Funeral home, 251 S. State Street, Zeeland MI 49464, also Thursday 1:00-1:45 pm prior to the funeral at church. Interment will be in Zeeland Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Holland Rescue Mission, or Harbor Humane Society.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Neil G. Ruffner*



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**Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes** - May 09, 2021 at 12:00 AM



“ *Neil G. Ruffner*

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August 31, 2022 at 01:26 PM



“ *"So sorry to hear of Neil's passing. He was a great guy, fun comrade through many years at Second Reformed Church and Zeeland Public Schools. Our sympathies to the Ruffner family."*

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**Dave and Barb Janssen** - May 13, 2021 at 12:00 AM



“ *"Neil was a warm and friendly person and will always be remembered for that. My thoughts and prayers for his family are with you all."*

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**Char VanBeek** - May 12, 2021 at 12:00 AM

RE

“Karen and family, we are very sorry to hear of the passing of your husband and love Neil. I was a friend of the family during our younger days and a close friend of Eric. Neil was a wonderful person and a very positive citizen in the community. Our prayers are with your family moving forward. Neil will be missed.”

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**Roger Elenbaas** - May 12, 2021 at 12:00 AM

BJ

“May God bless you and your family in this time of sorrow.”

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**Brenda and Dick Jones** - May 12, 2021 at 12:00 AM

CD

“Many hugs and prayer to his family! He was so amazing!!! He will be deeply missed!”

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**Carolyn DeBoer** - May 11, 2021 at 12:00 AM

TD

“Neil was a great guy, and a talented contractor. We did a lot of projects together in the FMB days....lots of Thursday nights on the boat. Jennifer and I extend our condolences to the family.”

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**Tom Dekker** - May 11, 2021 at 12:00 AM

PH

“Karen and family, so sorry to see that Neil has passed. You have my deepest sympathy.”

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**Pat Hoeksema** - May 11, 2021 at 12:00 AM

RW

“I really enjoyed our many times Drinking Coffee at franks in the mornings. Neal was always fun to be with and talk too. Rest in peace my friend.”

Russell Wolbers - May 11, 2021 at 12:00 AM

BK

“Neil was a great guy to work with, we did many projects with him over the years. Considered him a good, reliable friend. To the family, our deepest sympathies, he will be missed. From the crew at B&W Woodwork.”

Bruce Kruithoff - May 10, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JI

“Our thoughts and prayers go out to the entire family. Praying for peace and strength to carry you through this most difficult time. Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted❤️”

Jim - May 10, 2021 at 12:00 AM

EW

“Neil was an awesome person, father, builder and community member. So sorry to hear of his health issues. Will be thinking of the family.”

Ed Wirth - May 10, 2021 at 12:00 AM

KB

“Our hearts go out to the family at this sad time. Sending deepest sympathy”

Ken and Patti Bing - May 09, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JO

“*Truly a great man. Our family will miss his wisdom, kindness and friendship.*”

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**JJ Osga** - May 09, 2021 at 12:00 AM