



Rodney D. Zona

May 8, 1949 - August 2, 2024

Rodney Dell Zona, age 75 of Farwell, formerly of Waterford, passed away peacefully on Friday, August 2, 2024 at the McLaren Central Michigan Hospital of Mt. Pleasant. On May 8, 1949, Rodney was born the eldest of two children to Raymond and Anna (Wright) Zona in Pontiac, MI. Rodney was a lifelong resident of Waterford, MI, and was a proud graduate of Waterford Kettering High School in 1969. Soon after his graduation, Rodney served ten years for General Motors of Pontiac before taking employment with the Meijer Corporation—where he would serve thirty-plus years with the company as a grocery supply manager. When Rodney wasn't working, there was an excellent chance he was pursuing his great passion for trains. Labeling Rodney as a "Rail Fan" was putting it lightly, as he was a proud member of the Blue Water Chapter of the Michigan Train Club, an honorary conductor, and a frequent Michigan Transit Museum volunteer.

Rodney is survived by his sister Karen (Ron Lake) Crook of Farwell, his nephews John (Elizabeth) Keselring of Midland and Brian (Kasey) Crook of Montgomery, TX, and his nieces Kristine and Melissa Crook, both of whom reside in St. Clair Shores, MI. Other survivors include his great nieces and nephews Jayden, Jameson, Ethan, Mila, Sterling, and Callipoe, and his best friend Karl Joost of Chicago, IL. Rodney was preceded in death by his parents Raymond and Anna Zona.

In keeping with Rodney's wishes, cremation has taken place. A celebration of life service in honor of Rodney will take place at the Browns Corners Church

of Clare on Saturday, September 28, 2024 at 11:00 A.M. with Pastor Jeremiah Ketchum officiating. An interment service will follow at a later date at the Ottawa Park Cemetery of Pontiac. Memorial contributions in honor of Rodney may be directed to the Michigan Transit Museum. For those unable to attend services, online condolences may be shared on Rodney's tribute page at www.stephenson-wyman.com

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

SEP **28**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Brown Corners United Brethren Church
5540 S. Clare Avenue
Clare, MI 48617

Tribute Wall

TS

“ Coming here on April 6th 2026. My grandfather Ray Short has been telling me stories about Mr Rodney and his love of trains. The favorite story is when he drew a full size, very detailed locomotive on brown paper that stretched around the whole classroom. It took 3 days to get to the end of the paper. My grandad really thought highly of Rodney and I'm glad I get to hear the stories about him as well.

Taylor Slate - April 06 at 07:59 PM

GM

“ Rodney was a classmate at Williams Lake Elementary in Waterford and a fellow graduate of the WKHS class of 1969. We were in many classes together but I did not see him again until the 40th and 50th reunion. Despite challenges Rodney faced in school, he was always well liked and I fondly remember his mother working alongside my mother on "hot dog" days during elementary school. Rodney will be missed by those who took the time to get to know him.
Gary McPherson WKHS Class of 1969

Gary McPherson - September 28, 2024 at 11:04 AM

RJ

“ 14 files added to the album Rodney over the years at Michigan Transit Museum and one at 2009 Bluewater MI Chapter Banquet.



Robert Jackson - September 01, 2024 at 02:00 PM

KC

Thank. you so much for these. He was certainly a huge train fan.

Karen Crook - September 19, 2024 at 10:42 AM

RJ

You are certainly Welcome!

Robert Jackson - June 02, 2025 at 04:26 AM

JK

“ Rodney I've known you for as long as I can remember. You and my brother David attended school together and your thoughtfulness shined even when you attended his funeral. You always posted reminders of events about David and warmed my heart. I will miss your plethora of information I enjoyed reading. Such a sweet special person I am honored to know. RIP Rodney my condolences and prayers to his family and friends.
Sincerely Judy Beyette

Judy Beyette Kopka - August 18, 2024 at 01:25 PM

JV

My late husband, Paul, and Rodney became online and then in-person friends. Paul was born and raised in Drayton Plains so he and Rodney were quite the area historians. Rodney was a near genius regarding trains! We would sit with him at Meinrad and Dixie to watch Memorial Day parades. Now I know why he wasn't there last May. He was so kind and a gentleman. Rest in peace, dear friend.

Joy Verhey - November 30, 2024 at 09:13 PM

KM

I am a couple years younger than Rodney. Although I did not personally know him, I remember seeing him walking near Mason when I attended there. There were some really mean kids who used to yell things at him. It always bothered me. In more recent years, I read his interesting posts on the Pontiac Waterford memories Facebook page. I was happy to see that his life was good and that he had many friends. Rodney knew so much about our Waterford/Drayton Plains area! I looked him up today because I hadn't seen any of his interesting comments and I wondered what happened. My sympathies to Rodney's family and his friends. We have lost a kind and knowledgeable man from our community. Rest in peace, Rodney.

Karen Motzny - November 07, 2025 at 09:47 PM

AW

“*Rodney was an outstanding human being, always willing to share his railroad knowledge with anybody who asked. I benefitted many times from his input while writing articles for the Michigan Railroad Club newsletter. My railfanning experience was richer for having known him. Peace and comfort to all his family and friends.*
Andrew

Andrew Waggoner - August 16, 2024 at 10:07 PM

LS

“ This is such sad news..Rodney lived right across the street from me on Loon Lk Shores..In school, I would stand up for him when others wouldn't and he would protect me as well..He was such a delight and caring person..We had common things such as my dad worked for the railroad, and he always kept track of when someone passed away where,when,etc.He had a gift for that..And all the football scores,you could count on him for that..He will be greatly missed. Prayers go out to the family..RIP my friend,spread those wings and fly high...

Linda (Warthen) Sullivan - August 16, 2024 at 08:47 AM

MK

“ Rod was a Sevant! It was amazing how much information he could retain. Sorry to hear of your family's loss.

MK - August 16, 2024 at 08:17 AM

CS

“ Chris Siano lit a candle in memory of Rodney D. Zona



Chris Siano - August 16, 2024 at 12:19 AM

JC

“ Whenever I saw him at school or around Waterford always had a nice Hi to say and later when he connected with me on facebook he always said nice things. He was very sweet . Rip my friend!

Jackie Campana - August 15, 2024 at 10:50 PM

DR

“ Rodney was a great guy, had some good times with him at church and in high school ❤️🙏 RIP bud.

David Ross - August 15, 2024 at 10:09 PM

MB

“ Rodney was an incredibly kind soul and I enjoyed spending time alongside him while operating MTM's train rides. His passion was incredibly evident and he loved what he did. Thanks for being there for me.

Max Bozarth - August 15, 2024 at 03:54 PM

CH

Rodney is just an amazing person. I say 'is' because he is right now with Jesus.
Outstanding as an example to others of what turning the other cheek is all about, Rod impressed all us with his love for others.
Rodney was in my confirmation class at St. Stephen's in 'Drayton Plains'.
During our group oral test over all that we had learned Rodney excelled. He wasn't always easy to understand his exact words but it was extremely evident that he had all the verses, commandments, and creeds memorized better than any other of his teen classmates.
I know Rod and Ronny Meyers were good friends. Now that they are together again I'm sure they are experiencing the "Joy unspeakable and full of glory" together as never before.
Blessings to all his family. Thank you for being such a blessing to us too.
Charlie Hinson

Charlie Hinson - August 17, 2024 at 10:40 AM