



Ralph James Nielsen

October 26, 1930 - June 1, 2025

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Ralph James Nielsen, beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend, passed away peacefully at home in Warren, Michigan, on June 1, 2025, at the age of 94. Born in the Village of Warren on October 26, 1930, Ralph was the son of Elvin and Martha Nielsen, who immigrated from Denmark in their early 20s to build a better life.

Ralph was a standout athlete at Lincoln High School, where he excelled in football, basketball, and track. He earned a scholarship to Western Michigan University to play both football and basketball. Though life took him in a different direction, he continued his athletic pursuits while serving in the U.S. Navy, where he played football and was even scouted by several professional teams. He served his country with pride and honor.

After his military service, Ralph returned home to Warren, where he built a life with his beloved wife of 67 years, Nellie (née Kerner). Together they raised two children: Rhonda Nielsen and James Nielsen (Cheryl). Ralph was a loving grandfather to Kristina Koerber (Sean) and Eric Nielsen, a doting great-grandfather to Amelia and Alexandra Koerber, and dearest friend of Joan Werry.

Ralph served his community as a dedicated firefighter, retiring as Captain from the Warren Fire Department. He also ran a painting business with his lifelong friend Vern Robilliard.

A charitable and selfless man, Ralph supported causes such as the Goodfellows and Boys Town, and quietly gave his time and skills to anyone in need.

He was the kind of person who showed up, lent a hand, and never asked for anything in return.

He was a devoted brother to Jean (Jim) Ewers and is preceded in death by his siblings Pearl Pedde, Evelyn Crane, and Alvin Nielsen.

A man of quiet faith, Ralph found great comfort in the 23rd Psalm, a passage he held close to his heart throughout his life. In accordance with his wishes, there will be no formal service at this time. Arrangements are entrusted to Rudy Funeral Home, Center Line, MI. A memorial celebration of Ralph's life will be held at American Polish Century Club, 33204 Maple Lane, in Sterling Heights, on Sunday, August 10th from 1pm to 4pm.

Ralph James Nielsen leaves behind a legacy of service, generosity, strength, and unwavering love for those he held dear. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered with great love. Please visit www.rudyfuneral.com to share a memory or light a candle.

Tribute Wall

JN

“ We sang together, we played ball, we golfed, and we had a few beers. But more than anything, you were always the first one to offer a hand when I needed it. Whether we were refinishing basements, installing hardwood floors, or painting rooms, I cherish every project we worked on together. We argued over whose way was the "right" way to get it done—each of us convinced we had the better idea—but through it all, we shared the one thing that mattered most: our love for each other.

Pop's, though you're no longer here with us, your memories will stay with me forever. You were my hero in every way, and I'll carry the lessons, the laughter, and the love we shared always. I love you, Dad.



James Nielsen - June 10, 2025 at 11:30 AM

JN

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories*



James Nielsen - June 10, 2025 at 11:23 AM

RN

“ 4 files added to the album Memories



rhonda nielsen - June 08, 2025 at 07:20 PM

JW

“ I was blessed to have Ralph as a dear friend for 38 years. In those years I came to love him for his integrity, generosity, honesty, his love of life and deep love of his family. He had a personality that made you happy to be with him. His clever "Ralphisms" will continue to ring in our heads. He had a great love of sports, water skiing into his 70s, softball into his 80s and golf into his early 90s. He was a "macho" man but also knew the words and could croon every standard tune you mentioned. Ralph will live on in my heart as he will for so many of us for so many reasons.

Joan Werry - June 08, 2025 at 10:20 AM

JN

“ 3 files added to the album Memories



James Nielsen - June 07, 2025 at 08:39 PM

KB

“ *Enjoyed working with Ralph. He was a mentor to many in the Warren F.D. Condolences to all the family.*

Ken Behnke - June 06, 2025 at 10:34 AM

JN

“ *1 file added to the album Memories*



James Nielsen - June 06, 2025 at 08:58 AM

EN

“ *Great man, great firefighter outstanding athlete!! I was proud to know Ralph*

EN - June 05, 2025 at 06:11 PM

LM

“ *Condolences to the family, sorry for your loss. 🙏🙏🙏.*

Larry McAuliffe - June 05, 2025 at 03:31 PM

LU

“ *Condolences to Rhonda, my dear friend, to her Mother and entire family. I never personally met her Dad but heard so much about her parents. Such kind, caring and loving parents.*

Lula - June 05, 2025 at 03:08 PM

TL

“ *Condolences to the Nielson family*

terry lamiman - June 05, 2025 at 01:28 PM

DS

“ *Condolences to Ralph's family. I worked with Ralph and he was a great firefighter and even better man. He will be missed.*

Dave Salyers - June 05, 2025 at 11:18 AM

AK

“ *Condolences to the family of Ralph, worked with Ralph at Warren Fire . A well respected man at the fire department and on the ball fields he played. RIP*

Al Kane - June 04, 2025 at 08:33 PM