



## Leo K. Porter

August 3, 1930 - February 16, 2024

Leo K. Porter, Jr. of Harrietta passed away Friday, February 16, 2024 at Munson Healthcare Cadillac Hospital. He was 93. Leo was born August 3, 1930 in Harrietta, Michigan to Leo K. & Garnet L. (Ault) Porter.

He met who was to become his lifelong friend, partner and wife of 68 years, Betty Louise Fortelka, on a bus for a school trip to the International Livestock Show in Chicago. They continued to court while he attended Michigan State University and completed his program in Agriculture. They married on May 26, 1951 and moved to Leo's family dairy farm. After he served for two years in the Army in Korea, he and Betty picked up their life of farming. Betty preceded him in death on September 23, 2019.

By far, Leo's favorite pastime was polka dancing with Betty. They had close to 70 years to perfect their dancing together, and it showed. When they weren't harvesting hay or milking cows, they could always be found at a local polka dance. Leo said sometimes they'd rush in the house after doing chores, splash a little water on their faces, change their clothes and head to the dance floor!

He also loved farming, especially with Betty. They worked side-by-side for their entire married life and built a thriving, successful farm in Slagle Township. Their farm became the "go-to" place for anyone who needed hay or some

spare parts, wanted to talk farming or just wanted a piece of Betty's homemade pie.

In addition to his busy life farming, he found the time to serve on numerous local and State boards and organizations, including 41 years on the Slagle Township Board and many years on the Wexford County Soil Conservation District Board. Despite all this, he still found time to sit down with any visitors, who quickly became friends, and to always offer any help that was needed. He was a gift to the community who will never be forgotten.

He is survived by his daughters: Nancy (Craig) Gabier, Jill (Bob) Marsh and Peggy (Bob) Randel; sister, Elaine Fortelka; grandsons: Justin, Ian, Austin (Jami), Michael (Euphemia), David (Rachel) and Chris; granddaughters, Kristina and Heather; and great-grandchildren Sawyer, Kennedy, Payson and Hayden.

In addition to his wife Betty, Leo was preceded in death by a grandson Joel Raymond; a sister, Betty (Keith) Paul and an infant brother, Dean; in-laws Paul Fortelka, Mary Ann (Willard) Evens, and Carl (Betty) Fortelka.

Funeral services will be held 11:00 AM Friday, February 23, 2024 at Peterson Funeral and Cremation Services in Cadillac. Friends may meet the family Thursday, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Burial will be at Sixteen Cemetery in Harrietta at a later date. There will be a luncheon after the service on Friday at the Springville Township Community Center in Mesick.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Harrietta Fire Department or Mid-Michigan Honor Flight, PO Box 98, Gowen, MI 49326. An online guestbook is available at [www.petersonfh.com](http://www.petersonfh.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB **22**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Peterson Funeral and Cremation Services  
205 East Cass Street  
Cadillac, MI 49601

## Funeral Service

FEB **23**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Peterson Funeral and Cremation Services  
205 East Cass Street  
Cadillac, MI 49601

# Tribute Wall

KB

“ Leo will be so missed, a man of so much knowledge always sharing a memory of living in Harrietta. Condolences to Leo's family from the family of Herman and Austie Giddings Hilton, Sherman and Kelly Berkeypile

Kelly Berkeypile - February 26, 2024 at 02:30 PM

KC

“ I had the pleasure of meeting Leo when he came into my office at the Wexford County Veteran Services. He was such an inspiration! I was so sad to hear of his passing.  
Kathy Cline, Director of Veteran Services

Kathy Cline - February 26, 2024 at 11:24 AM

MH

“ Leo and Betty were friends of my parents, John and Shirley Habian. They were always spoken of most highly. And yes, I was a personal witness of their polka dancing skills. May they be dancing together again in a better place. Mitchell Habian

Mitchell Habian - February 23, 2024 at 11:37 AM

DP

“ Leo was such a wonderful man. He was around 70 when I met him. Rick and I would buy hay from him for our business. Rick was only in his 40's and Rick had a hard time keeping up with him.  
Leo worked hard and always had a smile on his face. He will be greatly missed. You and your beautiful wife can dance forever in heaven. Your work on earth is done,, may you rest in peace.

Diana Payne - February 22, 2024 at 01:00 PM

FM

“ From All of Us At Mesick Mold planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leo K. Porter.

From All of Us At Mesick Mold - February 21, 2024 at 01:49 PM

FM

“ From All of Us At Mesick Mold purchased the Tender Tribute for the family of Leo K. Porter.



From All of Us At Mesick Mold - February 21, 2024 at 01:49 PM

ER

“ It wasn't at all strange that Leo popped into my thoughts last week, he and Betty were dancing the polka at Don's and my 50th wedding anniversary celebration, sweeping by us with his wonderful whoop and a yip. I always think of them that way although there was much else that we shared through all the long years and four generations or so. Leo was a man of true character and kindness at all times, strong, dependable. We were blest to have known him, our hearts now are with his family. God rest, dear Leo.

Elsie Randall - February 20, 2024 at 08:20 PM

WB

“ Wexford County Farm Bureau purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Leo K. Porter.



Wexford County Farm Bureau - February 20, 2024 at 02:09 PM

CB

“ Leo was a very good friend of ours n a awesome person 💖

Claudia. B-Sniff - February 20, 2024 at 12:31 PM

ES

“ Love you Leo 💖💖



Erica Szegda - February 19, 2024 at 09:48 PM

ES

“ We lost a legend. Love you Leo 💖💖💖💖



Erica Szegda - February 19, 2024 at 09:47 PM

PL

“ I'M GOING TO MISS THE "MAYOR OF HARRIETA"

PAUL LADOCHI - February 19, 2024 at 06:47 PM

MA

“ What memories working with Betty and Leo at Caberfae for 10 yrs. Also, running into you every now and then at the store . I will miss all those stories. Condolences to the family.

MaryAnn Almquist - February 19, 2024 at 05:37 PM

BL

“ Leo was the kindest loving and honest person i have ever known. I am honored to have know him my whole life and he considered me as a friend . He will be missed by his family, friends and the entire community. RIP.

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**barb lazar** - February 19, 2024 at 04:01 PM

KP

Leo was our “go to”for hay for many years. He always always had a smile on his face with many stories to tell. A warm wonderful person! He left a legacy and will be missed.  
Darryl and Karen Petterson

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**Karen Petterson** - February 20, 2024 at 06:36 AM

PY

My condolences to the family and I'm so sorry to hear about the passing of Leo. I stopped to visit and talk with him as I've done often the last number of years the end of January and glad I did. He was such a giving man who always helped when we needed something at the A Frame next to the fire station. We hunted his farm for many years and have many great memories of he and Betty. My dad Bob and Leo shared a love for John Deere collectables and often sat in the kitchen at his house and looked at his collection. I'm sorry I missed the funeral but he will always be in my thoughts when I think of Harrieta.

Philip Youtsey

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**philip youtsey** - March 04, 2024 at 09:44 AM