



Rex K. "Cuz" Smith

April 20, 2026 - April 23, 2026

Rex K. Smith (Cuz), age 93 of Cadillac passed away at home in the care of his family on Tuesday evening, April 14, 2026, with the Detroit Tigers playing on his TV. He was looking forward to being with his wife, Judy E. Smith, who passed away on March 27, 2026. Rex was born in Tustin, MI on October 30, 1932, to Gertrude and Harold Smith. He was grateful for his childhood in Tustin fishing the creek with his brother, betting on fights at the gas station, and playing all sports. One summer he had to work his grandpa's farm where he learned a lot, mostly that he didn't want to be a farmer. In 7th grade, the family moved to Evart and Rex graduated from Evart high School.

After graduation, Rex attended Western Michigan University for one semester before enlisting in the U.S. Army, serving in the army medical corps assigned to a field hospital living in a tent during the Korean War, but was fortunate enough to be stationed in France where he was able to play football in the Serviceman's League with his team winning the France Championship. He also enjoyed visiting Paris. After his time in the Army, Rex attended Grand Rapids Junior College where he played football and baseball. His lifetime athletic accomplishments are too numerous to mention, yet he never talked about them and whenever asked would defer to another subject. Rex was a key figure in GRJC's march to the National Junior College Football Championship in L.A. Rex then attended Central Michigan University where he completed his Bachelor's and Masters degrees. While at CMU he again

played both baseball and football and was CMU's baseball MVP in 1959. He maintained lifelong friendships with some of the players and coaches from CMU.

Rex taught physical education and skill builders English at Cadillac High School his entire career. While at CHS, he was the head coach for football, tennis, and golf and an assistant track coach. He rarely went to town without meeting a former player or student that would relay a story to him from their days at CHS. He loved all sports and continued to play fast pitch softball well into his 50's. He especially enjoyed playing for the Jock Shop and the Party Bar (his picture is on the wall in a couple of spots). After softball, Rex turned to golf and thoroughly enjoyed playing at the Cadillac Country Club into his 90's. He enjoyed his Thursday stag day with friends and just going out alone in the evenings to hit shag balls. He and Judy even won the Couples Championship in 2015.

Rex and Judy lived in the same house from 1987 until their passing. The house had a swimming pool and Rex loved that pool. If you know him, you know he was not a handy man; however, he learned to care for the pool and it was always clean and maintained. He frequently said had he known how great it was to have a pool, he would have had one his whole life.

Rex and Judy enjoyed a wide circle of friends and he truly enjoyed getting together for cards, golf, watching boxing matches on TV, or just because. He hosted a ping pong league in his basement many winters while teaching and Wednesday poker night even through this winter.

Rex was a wonderful grandfather, taking an active interest in his grandchildren and great-grandchildren's activities, rarely missing a sporting event, concert, or birthday party. He was kind, funny, and loving with all of them.

In retirement, Rex and Judy spent many happy winters in Florida where he enjoyed golf, friends, cards, and the sun. He also spent many years delivering for Meals On Wheels and volunteering at Munson Hospital. He was generous, kind, and thoughtful - sending out cards to friends and family on a weekly basis.

Rex is survived by his children, Shad Smith (Becky) and Lisa Werner (Kurt), step-children Kevin W. Kearney and Johanna C. Carey (Jamie); grandchildren Brooke Smith (Ryan), Matthew Smith (Emily), Michael Smith, Izzi Lopez (Andres), Brianne Fogal (Paul), Daniel Fisher (Melanie), Logan Knott, Aleah Safago (Joseph), Kyle Kearney, Jillian Bigony (Adam), Jay Carey, Cole Carey, and Catie Carey; along with many great grandchildren. He is also survived by sisters-in-law Phyllis Smith, Dorothy Stenman, Barbara Laino, and Margie VanDyke, along with brother-in-law Jerry Schultz. Rex also leaves a devoted circle of nieces and nephews with whom he always enjoyed getting together.

In addition to his wife, Judy, he was preceded in death by his parents, stepfather Ivan Buss, in-laws William and Dorothy Faunce, brother Richard (Jack) Smith, foster-daughter Mary Rosenberry, step-daughters Melissa A. Kearney and Michele C. Ward. Rex was also survived by his sister Renee Schultz, but she passed away on Sunday April 19, 2026.

Cuz will be deeply missed but fondly remembered in the many lives he touched.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the First Presbyterian Church in Cadillac on Friday, May 1, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. with visitation starting at noon. Family and friends will gather at the Willow Greenhouse following the service for fellowship and a beer. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Hospice of Michigan or Love, Inc. An online guestbook is available at www.petersonfh.co

m.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 1. 1:00 PM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church
221 E Harris St
Cadillac, MI 49601-2195
(231) 775-7111

Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Rex K. "Cuz" Smith.



May 01 at 08:04 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Rex K. "Cuz" Smith.

May 01 at 08:04 AM



“ *Love, Melissa Palepu* purchased the *Enchanted Cottage* for the family of Rex K. "Cuz" Smith.



Love, Melissa Palepu - April 29 at 10:43 AM



“ *Love, Melissa Palepu* planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Rex K. "Cuz" Smith.

Love, Melissa Palepu - April 29 at 10:43 AM

KM

“ Rex was a great teacher, always wore a hat when he could. He will be missed by all his family and friends He Remember his students when he seen them.

Kevin/Carla Moffit - April 25 at 06:30 PM

CM

“ Rex is a wonderful person always got hugs from him when I worked with him while he was volunteering at Cadillac Hospital loved his aftershave smelled good!!! Hugs and prayers to all family and friends he has left behind

Carla Doan Moffit - April 25 at 08:24 AM

CB

“ Mr Smith was one of the nicest people I met during my years attending Cadillac High School. I never attended his classes, but saw him often in the weight room. Always easy to talk with and always willing to share his wisdom. My condolences to his family and friends.

Christopher Bodary - April 24 at 12:39 PM

BM

“ What a great guy. I had him in HS and he was always willing to listen and help. Later in life when he delivered meals, he always checked in on my mother, and she loved the visits. . He was definitely a man of compassion and integrity. Rest In Peace my friend.

Brad Marine - April 24 at 08:51 AM

MS

“ I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Mr. Smith! He was a gym teacher when I attended Cadillac High School and was always very nice to me. He knew my parents and grandparents very well as he played softball for my grandfather's business the Cadillac Party Bar and the Maury Men! I always enjoyed watching him and others play as a child! Mr. Smith was always very kind and always remembered me and always was so very complementary of my athletic abilities! He was a very positive and secure person! I am so glad that I was able to meet him! He has done a lot of great things with his life as I read in his obituary! He was a very humble man! May he rest now and enjoy his life with his wife and family that went before him! My heartfelt condolences and prayers to you all! Thank you Mr. Smith for being you!

Michele Snider - April 23 at 09:29 PM



Rex, Cuz Smith was an inspiration for my life. He was my coach for football and had gotten me a full ride scholarship to northern Michigan. He will be greatly missed by many! RIP coach!

Tony Maddox - April 24 at 09:49 AM

TW

Tony Williams, my favorite teacher & friend. RIP sexy rexy

Tony Williams - April 24 at 07:15 PM