



# Michael Henry Klinker

MAR 7, 1938 - NOV 1, 2025



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**B**aptized at birth at St. Elizabeth's Hospital by a nun because he was not thought to survive, he led a life of 87 years guided by his Catholic faith. Michael Henry Klinker of Belleair, Florida, and longtime resident of Manhattan, Kansas passed away on All Saints Day, November 1, 2025. He was born March 7, 1938, to Aloysius and Mary Altepeter Klinker in Lafayette, Indiana.

Growing up in Lafayette, Michael attended St. Mary Elementary School, Jefferson High School, and was a proud graduate of Purdue University. In his youth, he was an altar server at St. Mary Cathedral and a paperboy for the Lafayette Journal and Courier. Throughout adulthood, he would regularly be sporting Boilermaker attire.

He married Carolyn Ann Schelle in West Lafayette in June 1967. The Christmas season was always of significance to him as he and Carolyn were engaged on Christmas Eve and celebrated at Midnight Mass in Chicago in 1966. Through the years, they attended Midnight Mass as a family and shared their story with their kids. Michael and Carolyn were blessed with two children, Suzanne (Nathan Freeby) of Belleair, Florida, and Michael John (Kelly) of Kalispell, Montana.

Michael's Federal service began with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in West Lafayette engaging in corn research, and in 1972, he and others from the team relocated their families to Manhattan to conduct wheat research. Flour, small loaves of bread, and sponge cakes from the U.S. Grain Marketing Research Center were favorites around the family kitchen table. He became a fan of Kansas State University and supported the Wildcats except for when they played the Boilermakers. Into retirement, he continued owning and renting apartment homes across Manhattan where many college students and young professionals got their start. He worked hard, and played hard, and shared his talents and time. While his kids were in school, he was a leader of the Strong 4-H Club and served as President of the Parent Teacher Organization at the Manhattan Catholic Schools. At Seven Dolores Catholic Church, Michael served on the parish council, was a Eucharistic minister, and greeter. Retirement from the USDA provided him with new and renewed opportunities to make impact in the community. He expanded his voluntarism to include the Seven Dolores budget shop and food pantry and teamed with Carolyn to support the



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Science Club and Science Olympiad while she continued teaching middle school science. He was so proud to have helped a family friend from Cambodia achieve U.S. citizenship.

Michael and Carolyn enjoyed travelling. Vacations were often to Indiana, and after retirement, they started seeing more of the United States having bought a camper and explored throughout the Midwest and Western states. The Indianapolis 500 and Brickyard 400 were annual family trips where he experienced the enthusiasm for automotive racing and engineering with his son. He and Carolyn saw Pope Benedict at Yankee Stadium in New York and toured Italy and Vatican City with their daughter. Michael and Carolyn relocated to Belleair, Florida, in 2015 so his health could be supported by family. He was a member of the St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Clearwater. He enjoyed daily drives with Carolyn around the Gulf and intercoastal with a stop at McDonald's for a Diet Coke.

Michael was predeceased by his beloved brother and sister-in-law, William and Helen Klinker; his nephew, John Klinker; his parents; and parents-in-law, Robert and Kathryn Schelle. In addition to his wife, children, and their spouses, he is loved by his grandchildren, Paige Klinker and Adeline Klinker of Kalispell, and Michael Thomas Freeby of Belleair. He is also survived by beloved brothers- and sisters-in-law, Kay and Leo Klemme and Robert Fred and Dorotha Schelle of West Lafayette, and nieces and nephews.

He will be interred at Calvary Catholic Cemetery in Clearwater.



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Michael by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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