

Jon Thelen Obituary

Jon Michael Thelen, a longtime resident of Fowler and [St. Johns, Michigan](#), died on September 6, 2026, at the age of 80, after having been diagnosed with cancer in July. Jon was born on August 21, 1946, in [St. Johns, Michigan](#), one of four sons born to Edwin and Laurina (Geller) Thelen. He graduated from [Fowler High School](#) with the Class of 1965, where he was a standout athlete. He held school records in football and track and was honored as Prom King.

Following high school, Jon was drafted to serve his country in the United States [Army](#). He proudly served in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968 with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry, an experience that remained an important part of his life. He was a Life Member of the 50th Infantry Regimental Association. He cherished the friendships he made during his service and especially enjoyed gatherings with fellow Vietnam veterans with whom he had served.

Jon dedicated much of his professional life to serving and protecting others. He proudly served as a police officer with the Lansing Police Department, retiring in 1995. He then continued his career in public service as a bailiff with the Clinton County Sheriff's Department, retiring in 2008.

Jon had a love for sports and competition that remained with him throughout his life. He enjoyed bowling, golf, softball, and baseball, and he was an avid Detroit Tigers fan. For 17 years, he enjoyed escaping Michigan winters in [Zephyrhills, Florida](#), where he looked forward to attending Tigers spring training games. For several years, he was a member of the Gold Wing Motorcycle Club, where he enjoyed riding and spending time with fellow motorcycle enthusiasts.

He also treasured the simple routines and friendships that became part of his everyday life. His morning breakfasts at Big Boy were a favorite, and he enjoyed the camaraderie of the friends he made there. Jon also loved board games and a good game of euchre, enjoying the friendly competition, laughter, and time spent with family and friends. Jon knew everyone-and it seemed everyone knew Jon.

Jon was a man of strong convictions and an even stronger moral compass. He was a stickler for the rules and believed in doing things by the book, even when no one was watching. Strong in both mind and body, he was known for his strength and his unmistakable Popeye forearms. He golfed several times a week and was always active.

Jon could often be found wearing his familiar grumpy expression, but those who knew him best knew that behind that face was a very big heart. He was generous, dependable, and fiercely loyal to the people he cared about. Above all, Jon deeply loved his family and was incredibly proud of them. His children and grandchildren meant the world to him, and he was especially proud of his daughters and their careers and accomplishments.

One of Jon's favorite things was bringing his family together. He cherished family gatherings, the time spent around the table, the laughter, and simply having everyone together. He was so very proud of his kids and grandkids and treasured every opportunity to spend time with them. His love for his family was at the heart of who he was, and he will be dearly missed by all who were fortunate enough to know and love him.

Jon was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Sally (Malatinsky) Thelen, in 2003; his parents; and his bonus son, Michael Malatinsky.

He is survived by his daughters, Nikki (Ty) Maneval and Becky (Shawn) Fike; bonus daughter, Jennifer Malatinsky; grandchildren, Brianna (Kyler) Koschmider, Dakota (Kayla) Fike, Makaila (Austin) Brophy, Dustin Auten, Makenzie Fike, Wyatt Maneval, Dylan (Eloise) Auten, Colton Maneval, Emma Miller, Jazlynn Hettler, Parker Smith, and Kennedy Vasquez; brothers, Roger (Carolyn) Thelen, Roy (Connie) Thelen, and Neal (Pam Farnum) Thelen; along with many nieces, nephews, extended family members, and dear friends.

