



## Grant VanHeukelum

December 5, 1938 - March 15, 2025

Grant passed away on March 15, 2025, in Gobles, MI, surrounded by his family. Grant was the son of Louis and Josie VanHeukelum, born on December 5, 1938, in Hudsonville, Michigan, on the kitchen table at his family farmhouse. At the age of 9 years old, Grant was diagnosed as being deaf, which prompted a family move to Kalamazoo, Michigan, where he was enrolled at the Harold Upjohn School for the Deaf. That is where Grant learned to communicate as a deaf person. Grant then attended South Jr. High, moved on to graduate from Kalamazoo Central High, and went on to Pine Lake Trade School. His first job was at Tarnhow Dairy, where he worked briefly. Soon, Grant was offered a job at Russ Binau Ford Garage, where his brother Gary worked and taught Grant the Auto Body Repair trade. In 1961, Grant met his beautiful bride, Rebecca (Becky) Gallagher. They married 2 years later and started their family of 3 girls on the family farm, where they raised asparagus, strawberries, hay, and quarter horses. He would also break and train horses for others. After moving to another farm and their son came along, Grant then went to work at his hometown dealership, Leversee's Chevrolet. He also had many hobbies when he was not working, such as hunting, fishing, bowling, and restoring old cars. At his own body shop, he loved to share his trade with anyone who came there. His children would come out and assist with sanding and repairing vehicles to spend time with him, along with other family members and friends. His son and one of his nephews also spent many years learning this trade from him through their

mutual love for antique cars. After Leverage's Chevrolet closed, Grant worked at several other Automotive Dealerships and eventually retired from Jim Gilmore Cadillac Pontiac.

He and Becky enjoyed raising, training, and breaking horses. This evolved later into a passion for training racehorses and harness racing for seventeen years. Grant's family continued to grow with 6 Grandchildren, an adopted daughter, Abbie (at 9 years old), and seven great-grandchildren. When he fully retired and no longer worked on cars, he would visit his nephew, whom he helped learn the trade, just to watch as he worked on his antique cars. Grant's biggest enjoyment was traveling with his family, especially trips out west and visiting family in North Carolina. His most memorable trips were to the Grand Canyon and Palo Duro Grand Canyon. He also loved his trips with his family to Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, as well as to Kentucky to see the Ark, Diamond Cave, and Mammoth Cave. He had many favorite pets over the years. His most recent favorite was his little lap dog, Pepei.

He is survived by his wife, Rebecca (Becky) VanHeukelum of Gobles, and four children, Heidi Howard of Gobles, Kammy VanHeukelum of Indiana, Kerri (Mark) Calkin of North Carolina, Marc (Michelle) VanHeukelum of Gobles, and Abbie (Nick) Jones-VanHeukelum of Kalamazoo; six Grandchildren, Curtis Barber, Danielle (Daniel) Hinson, Keili (Kyle) Scott, Justin (Taylor) Peters, Marc Jr. (Morgan) VanHeukelum, and Ashley (Jason) Boyer; seven great Grandchildren including Haleigh, Ellie, Gage, Grayson, Sawyer, Sullen and Weston and many nieces, nephews and friends.

Grant was preceded in death by his parents, Louis and Josie VanHeukelum, and his siblings Melvin (Margaret) VanHeukelum, Bea (Julius) Havermen, and Gary VanHeukelum.

Family and friends are invited for a time of fellowship and visitation on

Thursday, March 20, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Restoration Church, located at 7925 N. 6th St. Kalamazoo, 49009. The funeral service will immediately follow, with Pastor Gary Napp officiating. Interment will immediately follow the service at Robinson Cemetery. Arrangements are entrusted to the Bloomingdale Chapel of the D.L. Miller Funeral Home, [www.dlmillerfuneralhome.com](http://www.dlmillerfuneralhome.com).

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations be made to the American Hearing Research Foundation or St. Jude's Research Hospital.

# Cemetery Details

## Robinson Cemetery

34000 20th Avenue  
Gobles, MI

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 20. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Restoration Church  
7925 N 6th Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

## Funeral Service

MAR 20. 1:00 PM (ET)

Restoration Church  
7925 N 6th Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

# Tribute Wall



“ Pam Smith lit a candle in memory of Grant VanHeukelum



Pam Smith - March 19, 2025 at 07:25 PM



“ Pam Smith lit a candle in memory of Grant VanHeukelum



Pam Smith - March 19, 2025 at 07:24 PM



“ Mark B lit a candle in memory of Grant VanHeukelum



Mark B - March 19, 2025 at 05:06 PM



“ Love, Gina & Michelle planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Grant VanHeukelum.

Love, Gina & Michelle - March 19, 2025 at 02:54 PM

LM

“ Love, Gina & Michelle purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Grant VanHeukelum.



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**Love, Gina & Michelle** - March 19, 2025 at 02:54 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Grant VanHeukelum.

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March 19, 2025 at 09:38 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Grant VanHeukelum.



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March 19, 2025 at 09:38 AM

DS

“ Dwayne and Pam Simpson purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Grant VanHeukelum.



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**Dwayne and Pam Simpson** - March 17, 2025 at 04:49 PM

SS

“ Susan Page Smith lit a candle in memory of Grant VanHeukelum



Susan page Smith - March 17, 2025 at 03:08 PM

HF

“ Holbrook family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Grant VanHeukelum.

Holbrook family - March 17, 2025 at 11:11 AM

HF

“ Holbrook family purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Grant VanHeukelum.



Holbrook family - March 17, 2025 at 11:11 AM

JP

“ Jeremy & Beth Phillips purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Grant VanHeukelum.



Jeremy & Beth Phillips - March 17, 2025 at 11:08 AM