

Lerash, Frank X.

Frank X. Lerash, 85, of Bad Axe, passed away on Wednesday, November 8, 2006, at Huron Medical Center after a short illness. He was born April 24, 1921 in Kinde, son of the late Frank and Hattie (Miller) Lerash. Frank started in business at the age of 16 when he purchased a flatbed truck and started hauling logs. Frank's career was on hold while he joined the Army in November 1942. After serving in the European Theater including Normandy, France, Ardennes, and the Rhineland, he was discharged in November 1945. Returning from the war, he married his childhood sweetheart, Helen Smith, on January 2, 1946. Working for Hugh Smith Lumberyard and as a truck driver he soon started his own business, Lerash Market, in 1959. In 1969, Frank purchased the Franklin Inn from the then owner, Frank Kladzyk, and continued to grow it into a major restaurant and motel. On January 4, 1999, the Franklin caught fire and burned to the ground. Frank refused to take this lying down and immediately began drawing his own blueprint to rebuild. Without the help of an architect, Frank drew his own prints and had the Franklin rebuilt bigger and better than ever. Over his career, he owned businesses in Pigeon, Elkton, Caseville, and Bad Axe. He served over 25 years on the city council and a short time as mayor. Frank enjoyed fishing, hunting, playing cards, always looking for easy targets for a euchre game. Frank is survived by his wife of 60 years, Helen; son, Pat (Holly) Lerash, of Bad Axe; son, Paul (Cathy) Lerash, of Bad Axe; daughter, Lora (Dick) Humbarger, of St. Clair; daughter, Susan (Bruce) Smith, of Kalamazoo; several grandchildren, Frank, Amy, Tricia, Cheryl, Amber, Morgan, Al; and three great-grandchildren; three sisters, Margaret Byarski and her husband, Karl, of Kinde, Rose Meagher, of Port Austin, Alice Gottschalk, of Kinde; and one brother, Edward Lerash, of Bad Axe. A Funeral Mass of Christian Burial will be conducted at 11 a.m. on Friday, November 10, 2006, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Bad Axe. Burial will be at Sacred Heart Cemetery. Visitation will be from noon to 9 p.m. on Thursday and from 10 to 10:30 a.m. on Friday at MacAlpine Funeral Home in Bad Axe. A wake scripture will be offered at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday at the funeral home. Memorials may be donated to area Toys for Tots, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, or Thumb Animal Shelter.