



Thomas Walker

December 23, 1940 - September 1, 2025

Tom Walker, age 84, late of Lake Orion and Rochester Hills, Michigan passed away peacefully and surrounded by loved ones on September 1, 2025 at Mount Carmel St Ann's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio.

Born in Flint, Michigan on December 23, 1940 to Raymond and Olga Walker, Tom was educated graduated from Flint Central High School and Michigan Technological University and went on to a career in the automobile industry, eventually rising to be president of Allied-Signal Automotive Catalyst Co. and ITT Automotive and vice president of ITT Corporation and as a board member of two companies, most recently of American Axle & Manufacturing Company, where he was the independent lead director.

Tom was known for his strong Catholic faith. In 1964, he married Nancy, and together they had three children.

Tom is survived by Nancy Walker, children Chet (Kathy) Walker, Stephanie Speed, Sara Walker (Peter Felten), grandchildren Thomas Walker, Matt Walker, Lauren Speed (Dustin Harris), Katie Bahler (Mike), Anderson Speed, Kerry Speed (Kristen), great-grandson Casey Speed, Katie Felten (Ben Walters), Dahlia Felten, sister, Carolyn Snow, sister-in-law, Patricia Owens (Dan) and many nieces and nephews. Tom was preceded in death by his parents, and his sisters-in-law, Eileen Rau and Christine Azbell.

In lieu of flowers, please direct donations to the Alzheimer's Association and Michigan Technological University College of Engineering or the charity of your choosing.

Beyond those details, how to describe Tom?

Tom Walker was a family man.

For him, these were aspirational words. All he wanted was to have a family and be able to provide for them. In his 20s, he decided to study engineering because in the early 1960s that was the most secure path for financial stability.

He was an athlete, a delivery boy, a dog walker, a babysitter, an umpire, a referee, and an Eagle Scout. And then he entered high school. He was a musician, a dancer, a friend, a student, a leader, and took any job available. And then he entered college. He was a fraternity brother, a professional musician, a bartender, an assistant at a funeral home, a supervisor on the line, a soldier, a husband, an in-law, a father and a working engineer. And then he graduated from college.

He lived a lifetime before he hit 30.

Most importantly, he met Nancy and the adventure really began. She trusted him in everything and that was what caused his star to rise. Her absolute belief in him drove him to continue up the management ranks in the auto industry. Ultimately, he became president of two companies and on the board of two. His career took him around the world, with Nancy as his frequent travel partner and stops in Germany, England, France, Italy, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Canada, Japan, and Korea. He was open to new experiences and

cultures, which deepened his love of people. After retirement he served as business development consultant for Quebec Province, Canada. He also started his own tax business. His favorite part of work was being a mentor and was particularly thrilled when asked to be a guest lecturer of Michigan Technological University's College of Engineering, Duke University's The Fuqua School of Business, and the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business.

Tom knew that hard work drove his fortune, but he also knew that he was lucky and felt that he had an obligation to give back to his community. He served on his kids' school board, as a boy scout leader, a coach, a leader on non-profit boards in every community he lived in, and there were a lot. He loved his time as a board member of local Boy Scouts, United Way, Chamber of Commerce and especially loved serving as an advisory board member of his alma mater, Michigan Technological University, where he was inducted in the charter class of the Department of Mechanical Engineering-Engineering Mechanics Academy in 1995.

He and Nancy were married in Flint, Michigan, honeymooned in Niagara Falls, NY and then moved.

That could serve as a complete sentence. They lived in Houghton, Dearborn, Flint, Swartz Creek, Kansas City, Waterford, Greensburg, Birmingham, Fort Worth, Tulsa, Rochester Hills, Lake Orion, and Columbus. Those were in Michigan, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Texas, Oklahoma, and Ohio. The record was living in three different states in 1979.

And the first thing Tom did at every house was install a basketball court. He meticulously measured the appropriate distance for the free throw line and spray-painted it on the driveway. For Tom, play was a key part of his life. He

played with his kids, their friends, his nephews and nieces, his friends and anyone who showed up. And he was competitive. You always wanted to be on his team because you knew he would win.

The second thing he did was set up the ping-pong table. He made the table himself in junior high and it traveled to every house. To help his kids have a fighting chance at winning, he would play left-handed and spot them 17 or 19 points out of 21. And he would still win. But man, did we have fun.

In his late-thirties, he became a runner and ran everywhere around the world, with his favorite route being the Imperial Palace Gardens in Tokyo. He ran 5ks, 10ks, and for years he ran The Crim 10 mile race in Flint, Michigan with his favorite running partner, his sister-in-law, Chris Azbell.

As a lifelong athlete and Michigander, he loved Detroit Tiger baseball and kept up with the team until the end of his life. His absolute joy when the Tigers won the AL Pennant or World Series was profound. Tom and Nancy attended a home game during the 2012 World Series and he said it was his greatest fan experience. Despite his Alzheimer's progression, he was able to communicate specifics for the most recent game and especially loved the progress this year.

Throughout his life, he loved music and played many instruments, including piano, trombone, bugle, ukelele, and banjo ukelele. Music was a constant throughline in Tom's life. He sang beautifully and often. And he danced. He danced as only a musician can. When you danced with him, it felt like you were a part of the music as an additional instrument.

An additional constant in Tom's life was love of clothes. He loved being on the cutting edge of trends, which led to the legendary head shot in a denim leisure suit in the 1970s. In the 1980s and 1990s, he loved Italian suits, ties, and shoes. He was always proud of the looks he put together, a trait that he

passed down to his fashion-loving grand-children.

He loved to play with his family and friends, especially card games. Again, he was competitive. You always wanted to be his partner. Several nieces and nephews were traumatized by his ability to win in Hearts, Spades, Euchre, and Spoons, among others.

Tom was the go-to guy in times of need and in times of joy. If something needed doing, he wrote it on one of his iconic daily to-do lists and it would happen. He embraced his role as family patriarch. Every relative, including his wife, his sister, his children, his grandchildren, his nieces and nephews, his sisters-in-law, his wife's cousins and her aunts and uncles, knew that Tom could be counted on to do what he committed to when he promised. There was no doubt.

Most importantly, Tom could be counted on to do the right thing. His grandson Andy gave him a Superman t-shirt which symbolized Tom's and Superman's shared trait of an unyielding commitment to truth, justice, and compassion, rooted in a belief in the inherent goodness of people. He served as a beacon of integrity to all who knew him.

Friends may call on Sunday September 7, 2025 from 2:00pm to 3:00pm at the Rutherford Funeral Home in Powell, 450 West Olentangy Street, Powell, where a funeral service will be held at 3:00 PM. The family suggests contributions to the Michigan Technological University, <https://give.mtu.edu/project/38157>, or the Central Ohio Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, 1379 Dublin Rd, Columbus, OH 43215-1089 <https://www.alz.org/centralohio> or the Charity your choice in Tom's memory.

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 7. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Rutherford Funeral Home at Powell
450 West Olentangy Street
Powell, OH 43065
(614) 792-1471
info@rutherfordfuneralhome.com
<https://www.rutherfordfuneralhomes.com/>

Funeral Service

SEP 7. 3:00 PM (ET)

Rutherford Funeral Home at Powell
450 West Olentangy Street
Powell, OH 43065
(614) 792-1471
info@rutherfordfuneralhome.com
<https://www.rutherfordfuneralhomes.com/>

Tribute Wall

GH

“ Tom Walker and I grew up together as close as brothers, although we were not related. Tom's Mom and Dad were almost family to my parents and me and my sisters, thus it was a natural joining of us together when Tom was born, as I was one year older than he. We had a great time together and I will never forget him. Rest in peace-- Always, Gordon r Hauglie

GORDON R HAUGLIE - September 14, 2025 at 08:49 PM

LS

“ Lynn,Genia&Anthony Schooley purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Thomas Walker.



Lynn,Genia&Anthony Schooley - September 06, 2025 at 02:55 PM

AM

“ Allie,Jackson and Mason planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Thomas Walker.

Allie,Jackson and Mason - September 06, 2025 at 12:31 PM

AM

“ Allie,Jackson and Mason purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Thomas Walker.



Allie,Jackson and Mason - September 06, 2025 at 12:31 PM



“ *Fiery Lily and Rose was purchased for the family of Thomas Walker.*



September 06, 2025 at 09:38 AM



“ *James K. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Thomas Walker.*

James K. - September 05, 2025 at 11:49 AM



“ *Eric and Greystone Financial Group purchased the Forever Our Angel Bouquet for the family of Thomas Walker.*



Eric and Greystone Financial Group - September 04, 2025 at 03:51 PM



“ *Felten and Dorn families planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Thomas Walker.*

Felten and Dorn families - September 04, 2025 at 01:19 PM

FF

“ Felten and Dorn families purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Thomas Walker.



Felten and Dorn families - September 04, 2025 at 01:19 PM

MB

“ Marilyn and Daniel Bahler planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Thomas Walker.

Marilyn and Daniel Bahler - September 04, 2025 at 12:33 PM

MB

“ Marilyn and Daniel Bahler purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Thomas Walker.



Marilyn and Daniel Bahler - September 04, 2025 at 12:33 PM



“ Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Thomas Walker.



September 04, 2025 at 09:06 AM

TF

“ *The WES friends purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Thomas Walker.*



The WES friends - September 04, 2025 at 09:04 AM



“ *Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Thomas Walker.*



September 04, 2025 at 08:58 AM



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

September 03, 2025 at 04:58 PM



“ *Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Thomas Walker.*



September 03, 2025 at 04:58 PM