



## Edward Opalko

July 8, 1940 - August 25, 2023

Edward Opalko, beloved husband, father, grandfather, son and brother, passed away on August 25, 2023 in Orlando, Florida. Born on July 8, 1940 in Strehlen, Germany, Ed leaves behind a loving family and a life filled with cherished memories.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Renate; his 2 daughters, Carolyn (husband Win) Beltran and Conny Opalko (husband Michael) DeGrood; his grandson Austin, and step-grandchildren Robert (wife Ariatna) and Ashley (husband Drew) and 4 step-grandsons; his brother-in-law Hermann Krueger (wife Margaret); his nephews Robert and Gerald (wife Michelle) Krueger and their respective families, as well as his siblings Gary (wife Pat) Opalko; Trudy Sim; Wally Opalko; Olga (husband Roger) Fennell; Henry (wife Sandy) Opalko; Dorie Giesbrecht and each of their respective families.

Ed was predeceased by his parents Peter and Helen Opalko; sisters Valentina & husband Karl Wenhold and Wanda Rupps; and brother Jerry Opalko.

In 2012, Ed retired from his career as an upholsterer and owner of Ed's Custom Upholstery, which he started in 1983. Many of his projects called for great detail and creativity, including reupholstering an entire boat in red and white. It was so unique and well done! He was sought after by several large car dealerships such as Honda, Nissan, Volkswagen and Dodge to provide

upholstery services due to his reputation of providing great work. Before venturing out on his own, Ed worked for International Bedding for 20 years starting soon after the family immigrated to US from Canada in 1962. Times were not always easy for young immigrant families, so Ed learned to be very handy. He did a lot of work himself with the help of friends and family, such as building on to the house and home repairs.

Ed had a zest for life and enjoyed connecting with people, swimming in his pool, grilling and indulging in his favorite foods, including steak, catfish, mashed potatoes, a crockpot of his favorite bean soup and cabbage rolls. His grandson Austin was born in 1997 and together they enjoyed swimming in the pool and their shared passion, vintage Volkswagens. Ed spent a good bit of time outdoors on his patio and found joy in listening to country music - especially Hank Williams, Waylon Jennings and Charlie Rich, to name a few - and talk radio compliments of his dear friend Alexa.

When Ed was 10 years old, his parents packed up their 10 children and immigrated to Canada from Germany. In his youth, Ed enjoyed caring for animals, especially wild birds: he had a hawk named Talon, an owl and a magpie endearingly named Magpie, among others. He even communicated with them with bird calls. He also enjoyed playing the harmonica, dancing, making family videos and vintage cars.

Ed was an avid fan of old western TV shows and movies, as well as, war movies, like Band of Brothers. He enjoyed films starring John Wayne and Clint Eastwood. Ed found relaxation in recreational activities, such as fishing, camping and traveling. On the weekends he would take his family to the beach or the springs to enjoy the water and grilling out on a small hibachi grill.

Ed's legacy as a generous, kind and loving man will live on in the hearts of those who love him. He will be dearly missed by his wife, family members, and friends.