

Zakrajsek Martin Eulogy

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Survivor... <i>pause</i> | |
| Gentle... | A son... <i>pause</i> |
| Kind | A Brother... |
| Generous | A Husband |
| Faithful | A Father |
| Friend | A Father in law |
| Thoughtful | A Grand Father |
| Musician | A Great Grand Father |
| Humble | |
| Hero | |
| Love | |

Martin Zakrajsek was the rock and foundation of strength. He was the patriarch of the Zakrajsek family.

Heaven gained a true angel.

Good morning. My name is Frank Zakrajsek, and I am Martin's son. I am speaking on behalf of the entire family, and we all thank you for coming. Your presence speaks volumes. Our family appreciates your heartfelt messages and support.

Martin Zakrajsek was born on March 1, 1925, in the small Slovenian town of Mali Lipovec. Living through the Great Depression and World War II, he embodied the resilience of "The Greatest Generation." Raised with strong faith and traditional values, Martin's life was a testament to strength and determination. His experiences shaped him into the man that he became. At birth as a twin, he barely survived... he was born resilient! Growing up through the depression and WWII, he endured many hardships and dealt with many challenges... Can you imagine, as a seventeen year old, looking back at your mom on her front porch, waving good bye and knowing that it would be the last time he saw her... He faced adversity head on, during the war as a Domobranec (Home Guard) he fought for the identity of the Slovenian homeland. During the war, he spent two weeks hiding under his family barn while partisans took over their property. It was a terrifying and difficult time, with constant fear and limited food.

At the end of the war, he fled with the thousands of Slovenians into Austria.

Over the next three years he stayed in Austria as a displaced person in camp Lienz. He and his brother worked on a farm at the Kolbnitz church in Austria. Along with his brothers Viktor and Joe they seized the opportunity to immigrate to Canada and work on a one-year contract with the Canadian Pacific railroad. My dad would tell us stories about life on the railroad, and how difficult it was living out of a railcar during the hot summers and harsh winters.

They were called the Extra Gang... replacing the rail tracks along the Smith's Falls to Shawinigan Quebec ... What an honor it was to be with Dad when he gave us a tour of the Smith's Falls railway station now a museum... seeing all the employees who worked at the museum gather around him listen to every word when they found out he worked this rail line back in 1948.... It was a live history lesson. My dad said it was hard work, but they were all together and grateful at the chance at a new life in Canada.

Ata was known for his integrity, wisdom, and generosity.

He came from nothing but with a grateful heart always paid it forward. After working on the railroad, he moved to Noranda, Quebec, and spent a year working in a smelter. The job was hazardous, with toxic chemicals turning his white undergarments green... This motivated him to choose a different profession. Upon arriving in Toronto, he attended Central Tech Collegiate, where he learned basic English to pass the plumber's test.

He worked as a master plumber until his retirement at 68. Throughout the years, he helped many fellow Slovenians become plumbers and follow in his footsteps. Martin's actions revealed his true character. His selflessness and dedication to others taught us the true meaning of compassion and service.

We celebrated life's big milestones together: birthdays, graduations, holidays, and weddings. Ata was a true family man, always placing family first and making every occasion special. He made sure that these moments were filled with love, laughter, and togetherness. He loved and focused on his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who clearly adored him. It was evident in every smile and hug. His love created a special bond, making each of them feel seen and cherished.

His passion for music was evident in his skillful playing of the harmonica, pedal steel guitar, and bass. At the age of seven, he saw a gentleman in his town playing the harmonica, and from that moment, his musical journey began. He played the harmonica for 93 years. Over the years, my dad played in many bands and sang in the church choir as well as with the Fantje Na Vasi men's choir. He loved music deeply. A few local musicians have mentioned that he was their inspiration to get into music and play an instrument. They called him their hero and idol, especially when they saw him playing his bass at banquets. His passion for music and his talent left a lasting impression on those who had the privilege to see him perform.

At family gatherings, we would bring out the instruments and play music late into the night. On birthdays, we eagerly awaited his call, where he would play "Happy Birthday" on the harmonica. Remarkably, he even did this on his own 99th birthday.

After all his experiences during and after the war, he could have easily become bitter. But he chose a different path, teaching us about compassion and forgiveness. Despite the hardships he faced fleeing to Austria, he always said, "We must forgive, but never forget." He believed it was essential to understand why things happened and to ensure they never happen again.

Ata was our biggest cheerleader and supporter. No matter what our passion was—whether speed skating, soccer, dance, music, or hockey—He encouraged us to do our best. He was always there, guiding and supporting us along the way. His belief in us fueled our determination and inspired us to pursue our dreams.

He was a great listener... Never the loudest in the room. But when he spoke, we all listened, knowing it would be another valuable lesson from his life experiences. One of his favorite sayings was, "Pay now or pay later." He believed in putting in the time and hard work upfront to reap the rewards later.

Ata's impact on our family was profound. This is from his grandson Dave: "Ata had a way of connecting with all of us. He guided us with his love, kindness, and experience."

We have lost a true angel whose presence was a blessing. Ata was one-of-a-kind and irreplaceable. He was more than a father; he was our best friend, confidant, and guide. The memories, laughter, lessons, and love we shared will live on in our hearts forever.

Ata, your legacy of love, kindness, and strength will always inspire us. We love and miss you deeply.

And now Ata can say....

V Nebesih Sem Doma.....

Please join us for a celebration lunch after mass in the church hall. The interment will follow at Holy Cross Cemetery.

I would like to thank you for coming to day to celebrate Martin.

Family and friends - Thank you for all the warm heartfelt messages of support -

- For all the the cooks and family/friends who provided pastries....
- Father Batic – Alter Boys, caretaker and the bartender.
- For all musicians and singers just amazing
- All those offered flowers Gave donations.
- To the wonderful staff at Dom Lipa
- Ridley Funeral Home
- Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Thanks for coming, enjoy the lunch. Interment will be held after the meal at Holy Cross Cemetery