

Joseph W. Shafer

October 23, 1940 - February 19, 2026

Joseph W. Shafer, 85, of Gilead, Indiana passed early Thursday, February 19, 2026 at his home, with his beloved wife of 63 years by his side.

Joe was born at home on October 23, 1940, the third of six children, to the late Chester and Evelyn (Neterer) Shafer. He was a 1958 graduate of Gilead High School, where he was vice-president of a class of nine. He served his country in the U.S. Navy for four years, spending time on the USS Bryce Canyon and the USS Frontier. He met Sadie Whitaker when his cousin Carolyn Nixon introduced them, and they married a few years later on September 1, 1962, under a flowered arch in the yard at her parents' home near Sidney.

He retired from R. R. Donnelly in Warsaw and he and Sadie settled into their lives on the farm, where the Shafer family have lived for over 100 years. He attended the Akron Church of God and was baptized there with his granddaughter Casey on January 28, 2024, in the presence of family, saying afterward that he should have done it long before. Joe was quiet, sometimes grumpy, often dryly funny, always generous, and a loving and proud dad and papa. He had both a gentle side and an artistic one, evident in the furniture and cabinetry and porch swings he built. He was a brother all of his life and by all accounts, he was excellent at that, too, and he spread those skills among an army of nieces and nephews.

He is survived by his wife Sadie, along with their children, Kevin (Robyn) Shafer of The Villages, Florida; Kelly (Ellen) Shafer of New Haven; Kathy (Chris) Hammond of Gilead; Kory (Amy) Shafer of Mexico; 19 grandchildren Sara (Tony) Biggs, Brian (Ginny) Nider, Casey (Sheldon) Keefer, Aric (Blake) Shafer, Kelsey (Brian) Neely, Madyson (Josh) Stewart, Lily Shafer, Lucy Shafer, Avery Fines, Isaac Shafer, Sam Shafer, Wade Fines, and Kaylea Shafer; nine great-grandchildren, Alexandra, Kennedy, Brooklynn, Jackson, Mason, Peyton, Sadie, Sheena, and Saylor; and sister Liz (Duane) Flaherty of Deedsville.

Joe was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Danny Shafer and Thomas Shafer, and sisters Christine Shafer and Nancy Jean Dotson.

The funeral service will take place at 12:00 noon, Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at Akron Church of God 301 South West Street Akron, Indiana with Pastor Mandy Nellans and Pastor Kathy Nelson officiating. Visitation will also be held one hour prior to the service. The funeral service is available at: <https://youtu.be/GBKfdk1BgA8>

The interment will take place following the service in the Gilead Cemetery, Gilead, Indiana.

Visitation hours will be held from 4 pm to 6 pm, Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at Akron Church of God, Akron, Indiana.

The arrangements have been entrusted to Hartzler Funeral Home 305 West Rochester Street Akron, Indiana.

Memorial contributions can be made in his memory to Akron Church of God.

Cemetery Details

Gilead Cemetery

State Road 19
Gilead, IN

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 24. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Akron Church of God
301 S. West Street, P.O. Box 66
Akron, IN 46910
<http://www.akronchurchofgod.org/>

Funeral Service

FEB 25. 12:00 PM (ET)

Akron Church of God
301 S. West Street, P.O. Box 66
Akron, IN 46910
<http://www.akronchurchofgod.org/>

Tribute Wall



“ Hartzler Funeral Services created a Webcast in memory of Joseph W. Shafer



Hartzler Funeral Services - February 25 at 03:44 PM



“ Hartzler Funeral Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Joseph W. Shafer



Hartzler Funeral Services - February 23 at 11:29 AM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Joseph W. Shafer.



February 24 at 01:44 PM



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

February 24 at 01:44 PM



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

February 24 at 10:21 AM



“ Love's Journey was purchased for the family of Joseph W. Shafer.



February 24 at 08:55 AM



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

February 24 at 08:55 AM



“ Nancee and Dale Ward purchased the Days of Sunshine Bouquet for the family of Joseph W. Shafer.



Nancee and Dale Ward - February 24 at 07:29 AM

NW

“ Nancee and Dale Ward planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph W. Shafer.

Nancee and Dale Ward - February 24 at 07:29 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Joseph W. Shafer.



February 23 at 05:04 PM



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

February 23 at 05:04 PM

CF

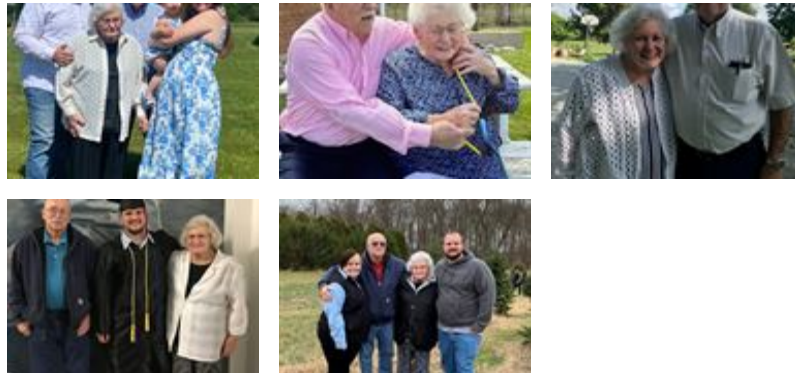
“ Chris and Tahne Flaherty purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Joseph W. Shafer.



Chris and Tahne Flaherty - February 23 at 12:19 PM



“ 192 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



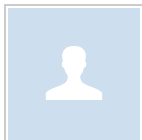
Hartzler Funeral Services - February 23 at 11:26 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Joseph W. Shafer.



February 22 at 04:43 PM



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

February 22 at 04:43 PM



“ Tom & Tammy Cheviron purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Joseph W. Shafer.



Tom & Tammy Cheviron - February 22 at 09:42 AM

SF

“ Shaun Geise, Jaime Cheviron & family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Joseph W. Shafer.



Shaun Geise, Jaime Cheviron & family - February 21 at 05:03 PM



“ Truly Beloved Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joseph W. Shafer.



February 21 at 07:13 AM



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

February 21 at 07:13 AM

MO

“ Work with Joe for many yrs. at RRD. Great guy , easy to work with .
Mike Orr

Mike Orr - February 20 at 09:05 PM

SH

My Uncle Joe could be grumpy, but he had a laugh that know one will forget. A short chuckle.

Joe brought us grass skirts from Hawaii! He got my Thumballina doll when I had my appendix removed! The day he married Sadie gave me a new aunt!

So many memories of all my uncles and Larry Norman and Dick Procter.

FAMILY.

MEMORIES.

BLESSED.

Sharon - February 22 at 04:29 PM