



## David S. Socha

September 27, 1938 - February 10, 2025

David “Dave” Stanley Socha, 86, a lifelong resident of Ludlow, passed away peacefully at home on Monday, February 10, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. Born in Springfield, he was the son of the late Stanley and Melania (Frankowski) Socha. David was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, and friend, whose legacy will live on in the hearts of all who knew him. A graduate of Technical High School , Class of 1956, David led a remarkable life of service, dedication, and passion. He proudly served in the US Navy Submarine Service stationed aboard the USS Croaker. As a frogman and sonar technician, he was trained in specialized operations that, by today’s standards, are equivalent to that of a Navy SEAL. Upon his release he served in the US Navy Reserves. His bravery, discipline, and commitment to his country marked the beginning of a life defined by honor. After his time in the Navy, David returned to the family business (Frank’s Tavern), and soon met his loving wife, Betty, sharing sixty-three years of wonderful marriage. Together they raised four children and led a life of dedication to family, church and faith. David’s unwavering work ethic, passion, loyalty and dedication made him a respected member of his community. Yet, his achievements were not confined to the business world alone. David, a former Portsmouth, England, soccer player who found far greater success as the pre-eminent American referee of his era, worked NASL (North American Soccer League) matches from 1978-1984. He officiated at the highest levels of the game along with some of the world’s greatest ever to play the game. He became the first

American to officiate in World Cup matches in 1982, the 1986 World Cup, the Soccer Bowl in '82 and '84, 1984 Olympic Games, and the 1982 and 1986 FIFA World All Star Games. He earned the respect of players, coaches, and fellow referees worldwide. His keen sense of fairness, passion for the game, and commitment to integrity shaped his storied career in soccer, where he made an indelible mark. He was inducted into the New England and Connecticut Soccer Halls of Fame, and was also a member of the Ludlow VFW Post 3236, Palmer American Legion Post 130, Polish American Veterans Club of Wilbraham and the Minos Cretan Association. After retiring from the game he loved, David worked for seventeen years, retiring from the MA Turnpike Authority. Above all, David was a man of great character, a proud veteran and friend to many. He will be remembered for his strength, devotion, and loving commitment to his family and church, St. George Cathedral in Springfield, where he proudly served as past-president of the parish council. David is survived by his beloved, adoring wife of sixty-three years, Betty (Kaloroumakis) Socha; his loving children, Karen Surapine and husband Peter of Stafford Springs, CT, Jake Socha and wife Maureen of Ludlow, Melaina De Marco and husband Robert of Pound Ridge, NY, and Pamela Chaplin and husband Alex of Ludlow. David, "Dziadziu", will be missed dearly by his incredible grandchildren, Emilie (Eric) Pacheco, Michaela (Robert) Smith, Paige (Adrian) Perkins, Molly (George Capen) Socha, Oscar De Marco, and Elena Chaplin; and treasured great grandchildren, Jacob Socha, Braydon and Declan Smith. He also leaves behind his great aunt, Cynia Kudla, his brother Daniel Socha, sister Kristine Gregory and many nieces and nephews whom he loved. David's family would like to extend their heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to his kind and generous caregivers, Liz, Vida, Irene and Kim, who supported him with tireless love and care during his battle with Parkinsons Disease. Funeral services for David will be held on Wednesday, February 19th, with a Mass at 11:30AM in St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 22 St. George Rd., Springfield. Burial with Military Honors will follow in MA Veterans' Memorial Cemetery, Agawam. Calling

hours are at Kozikowski Funeral Home, 565 Front St., Chicopee, on Tuesday from 4-6PM, and in church on Wednesday from 10:30-11:30AM. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. George Greek Orthodox Sunday School Program, Tunnel to Towers Foundation, or The Michael J. Fox Foundation. [kozikowskifuneralhome.com](http://kozikowskifuneralhome.com)

# Previous Events

## Wake

FEB 18. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Kozikowski Funeral Home  
565 Front Street  
Chicopee, MA 01013  
(413) 592-9256  
kozikowskifh@gmail.com

## Wake

FEB 19. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
22 St. George Rd  
Springfield, MA

## Mass

FEB 19. 11:30 AM (ET)

St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
22 St. George Rd  
Springfield, MA

# Tribute Wall

TM

“ Sorry to hear of your dad’s passing!

Teri Myette - February 20, 2025 at 08:25 AM

LA

“ I was so sorry to read about the passing of Mr. Socha. His obituary was a great read and tribute to his full life. Let those memories he made with you make you all smile. I send my condolences out to Mrs. Socha and family.

Lianne Albright - February 17, 2025 at 09:30 PM

PK

“ David will always be known as “boyfriend” to us, our daughter gave him that nickname when she was two years old. No matter what “boyfriend” was doing he would always wave to her and have a kind word with her.

David was a great neighbor and was always working in his yard or cleaning his car, but that never stopped him from offering to help a neighbor.

He was quick to share a story or two, sometimes reminiscing about the good old days, we were always amazed with what he had to say.

David will be greatly missed.

We wish his family peace in their time of mourning.

Peter, Pam & Ava

PK - February 15, 2025 at 07:44 PM

CL

“ Dear Jake - What a beautiful tribute.

*While I didn't have the privilege of knowing your dad personally, I feel as though I did through you. The legacy he built lives on in you and in little Jake—reflected in the kindness, joy-filled, and gentlemanly nature you both embody. Your dad was an incredible man who clearly lived a meaningful life. His commitment and devotion to family, his deep sense of integrity, and the joy he brought to those around him are all qualities that continue to shine through you - what a legacy!*

*Losing a father is never easy, no matter our age. He was clearly a man who touched so many lives and I have no doubt that everyone who knew him was better for it. His spirit will always be with you, woven into the fabric of your life and the lives of those who loved him. So as you mourn this loss of continuing in the world without your dad... may you find comfort in the beautiful memories you shared and the lasting impact he made. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, your mum and the Socha family during this difficult time.*

*With heartfelt condolences,  
Tommy, Corey & TJ Lee xoxo*

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**Corey Lee** - February 14, 2025 at 11:10 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Kozikowski Funeral Home** - February 14, 2025 at 08:46 AM