



## Eugene Joseph Volk

March 3, 1945 - January 28, 2025

Eugene Joseph Volk (Gene, or Geno) died in his home in Mentor, Ohio, on January 28, 2025, at the age of 79. An avid fan of supernatural stories, we are certain he's excited to finally be discovering those secrets now.

Gene is survived by his wife, Elizabeth; his children: Lara Pickard (George), Lisa Robey (Stephen), Sara Volk de Garcia (Tzintzuni Garcia), Kim Ebbesen, Eugene Joseph Volk, Jr, and Janine Twigg (Joseph); by his 14 grandchildren: Karliah, Arianna, Tristan, and Nolan Pickard, Charlotte and Elizabeth Robey, Lorenzo Garcia, Sofia, Eva, and Amalia Ebbesen, Mackenzie and Bailey Volk, and Addison and Aidan Twigg; and his brother, Frank Volk. He is predeceased by his parents, Frank and Regina Volk, and his sister, Marie Volk.

Born March 3, 1945, in Cleveland, Ohio, Eugene Joseph Volk (Gene, or Geno) was the youngest of 3 siblings. He graduated from St Ignatius High School in 1963, after which he purchased and ran a Mobil gas station with his brother for two years. He then enlisted in the Army.

Gene entered the Army as a Private and did Basic Training at Fort Hood, Texas. He joined the 1st Battalion 41st Infantry Regiment 2nd Armored Division as an Infantry Ops & Intelligence Specialist, and earned the Army Marksmanship Qualification Badge for Rifle. However, an accident at the range left him with hearing loss, and he served the remainder of his five years

of service in the Ohio National Guard. He was honorably discharged as a Specialist Four E-4, HHC 112th Engineer Battalion.

A major arc of Gene's life is his service with the police. Upon leaving the Army, he entered Basic Police Training, from which he graduated 2nd in his class in 1967. He joined the Cleveland Police Department, starting as a Basic Patrol Officer in 1967, promoted to Detective in 1970, and finally joining the Homicide Unit as Detective in 1972. He would "protect and serve" the people of Cleveland by solving their murders for the next 21 years, retiring from the CPD in 1993. There are stories; here is not the place to tell them.

Except to say that it is unfortunately common that patients in a city ER become victims in a homicide investigation, and that it was because of this pattern that he encountered a strong, funny MetroHealth ER nurse named Liza, who became his wife in 1977. For 47 years, they faced the world as partners in life (and partners in cards). Sometimes it was side by side, eyes looking towards a common goal; sometimes it was back to back, fighting off challenges and having each other's backs. In all cases - there was love. Gene believed in continuing education; while working the force, he earned his Associate Arts in Criminal Justice from Notre Dame College (1975). Gene then earned his Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Lake Erie College (1980). While at CPD, he sought out opportunities for additional training and seminars. Even after retiring from CPD, he took Police Advanced Training at the University of Akron (1997), and scored 2nd in the class on the state exam.

Long before hustle culture was a thing on anyone's radar – Gene stretched beyond his full-time police work with assorted side hustles to help support his growing family (those kids of his needed their jelly shoes, trendy bracelets, and Malibu Musk from Drug Mart!). Many of these were evening or overnight security jobs, including one at a bread factory and a long-term position at the

Blue Cross/Blue Shield building downtown. He also was hired by Hooper Insurance to take pictures for claims verification. After retiring from CPD, his side hustle was teaching at Lakeland Community College, where he developed and taught courses in Community Policing, Criminal Investigation, Criminalistics, and Forensic Photography.

Although he had retired from big-city policing, the desire to use his training and skills to protect communities remained. Gene initially joined the staff of the Mentor Public Library as a Security Technician, with mixed success. On the one hand – there were very few security incidents in the 3 years he worked there, so he must have been massively successful at preventing criminal mischief. (There was even some minor heroism related to an incident with a squirrel in the book drop.) On the other hand – the 40% hearing loss that he incurred while serving in the Army meant that people needed to talk pretty loudly for him to hear them, which is a bit of a mismatch for a library environment.

Finding suburban library security somewhat unfulfilling, Gene looked for opportunities to continue to use his well-honed police training without having to take Dead Man's Curve. He initially worked at the Waite Hill Police Department, but this was not a comfortable fit for him.

He found a more compatible home in the neighboring Kirtland Police Department, where he worked as a part-time officer from 1998 until his final retirement in 2010. He liked the people of Kirtland and his colleagues in the department, and he enjoyed the night shift, driving around the dark Kirtland roads, naming the deer and generally keeping the peace. Some highlights include chasing a peacock that was causing traffic issues, and investigating two separate reports of a lion in the woods. But surely, the stories untold to us are the many unassuming ways Gene helped people, like helping people

whose car broke down, reassuring parents of a briefly-missing child or comforting shaken victims of a crime.

Although a core part of Gene's identity was that he was a police officer, it certainly was not the only identity Gene had. Some others include:

- Proud Bohemian: He was fiercely proud of his Bohemian ancestry, and tried to rustle up support for a Bohemian Day Parade to rival the Irish and St Patrick's Day. Sadly, this was unsuccessful.
- Treasure Hunter: Perhaps related to his detective skills, Gene enjoyed treasure hunt stories, and looking for treasure himself through metal detecting and careful examination of all the coins that passed through his hand. Although he never found a "Big One," he leaves behind a collection of Wheat pennies and other interesting coins.
- Committed Luddite: In a world of rapid technological advancement, Gene was proud to be doing things old-school. He used a typewriter for all his police reports and anything he didn't hand-write. He had to be the last person in Ohio using a pager in the early 2010s. An exception is his smartphone – although dragged into smartphone ownership kicking and screaming, he was surprisingly adept with it, and even created his own GIFs!

But perhaps the most important identity to him was Proud Dad; he loved all of his children, near and far, and celebrated their accomplishments and mourned their losses with his whole self. Gene was confident their success would be his legacy. (Well... their success, and the contents of The Basement.)

Gene certainly had his quirks, however, he was extremely loyal to brands, stores, and service providers. Thanks to a strong combination of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," and "Better the devil you know than the devil you don't," we expect condolences for our loss from Nationwide, Giant Eagle, Joe's Auto

Center, Spectrum, Chewy, John Dewar and Sons, and numerous other of Gene's favorites. (We have already heard from Drug Mart, his favorite of all the favorites.)

Gene was a loyal customer - but woe to the product that betrays him. After once cutting his lip on the pop-top opening on his beer can, Gene spent the next decades drinking from the bottom of the can, opened with a churchkey.

Along with all of this, Gene will be remembered for his small everyday acts of kindness and love - putting gas in EVERYONE's cars, doing the shopping, getting someone their favorite snack or a special treat. He seemed to know and be loved by everyone. We all feel the loss of his enthusiastic greeting, "Hey, you!" with an excited hand wave.

The family will receive friends from 5-7 p.m. Friday, April 11, 2025 at the Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral Home & Cremation Center, 8466 Mentor Ave., Mentor, OH 44060.

A funeral mass in Gene's memory will be held 12 noon Saturday, April 12, 2025 at St. Mary of the Assumption Church, 8560 Mentor Ave., Mentor, OH 44060 (Please meet at the church.)

Private family inurnment will be held in Mentor Cemetery at a later date.

Please offer condolences or remembrances at [www.brunners.com](http://www.brunners.com).

If you'd like to view an album of photos of Gene, or you have some to contribute, you can check out the album here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/Uo1S2MdwrXGZyNGL8>

# Cemetery Details

## Mentor Cemetery

6881 Hopkins Rd.  
Mentor, OH 44060  
(440) 974-5733

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR 11. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral Home & Cremation Center  
8466 Mentor Avenue  
Mentor, OH 44060  
(440) 255-3401  
[ajs@brunners.com](mailto:ajs@brunners.com)  
<https://www.brunners.com/>

## Funeral Mass

APR 12. 12:00 PM (ET)

St Mary of the Assumption Church  
8560 Mentor Ave  
Mentor, OH 44060  
(440) 255-3404

# Tribute Wall

TF

“ *The Brian and Bernadine Ross Family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Eugene Joseph Volk.*



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**The Brian and Bernadine Ross Family** - April 10, 2025 at 08:19 PM

MK

“ *Michael Kelly purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Eugene Joseph Volk.*



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**Michael Kelly** - April 10, 2025 at 02:03 PM

CP

“ *I still have this photo for Gene on my contact list. Gene will be missed dearly*



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**Cassia Phillips** - April 08, 2025 at 07:22 PM

LG

“ *Liza and family,  
I am so very sorry for your loss. Liza, you and Gene were a great couple.  
Prayers for comfort.  
Laura Gaertner  
(Metro ED)*

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**Laura Gaertner** - April 07, 2025 at 02:59 PM

CT

“ *It was a pleasure to work with you Gene. The stories you used to tell in the KPD garage...*

*You and your family will be in my prayers.*

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**Chuck Tercek** - April 07, 2025 at 12:08 PM

JB

“ *Gene was a gem to all that met him! His laugh would light up the room! Such good memories; Gene singing and stomping with the beat of the music on Mike and Elmo nights; pouring out our hearts and sharing our blessings at your kitchen table and discussing our political views with respect for one another. Gene, we will love and miss you forever!*

*Lynn and Jan Bleckert*

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**Janice Bleckert** - April 07, 2025 at 10:48 AM

SS

“ *You were one of the best and will be missed*

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**Stephen Sutch** - April 06, 2025 at 11:16 AM

JR

“ Uncle Gene - having you as my uncle was one of life's true gifts. You will remain one of the finest people I've ever known. I'll hold tight to the many memories I have of our conversations and card games, moments that meant so much more than you could ever know. You'll be deeply missed, but never forgotten. Rest in peace.

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**Jarrold Ruez** - April 04, 2025 at 09:53 AM

MK

“ Tears lead to laughs as I remember how lucky I was to get to work with one of the funniest human beings I have ever met in this world. Gene was rarely without comments, nicknames, laughs, and funny sayings. Pimp-noses, F-bubbles, Punk Mofos are some of the "Gene-isms" I remember best. Gene could be hilarious even when he didn't intend to be. The rare times I saw Gene lose his cool with people turned loathsome situations into me clenching my jaw and lips to prevent bursting out into giggles. I would joke about who would give him a position of influence over young minds, then he would refer to his teaching duties as "ruining minds". I will treasure the thousands of laughs and miss the 6AM crossword battles after we fought to get the paper first.

Thank you for the thousands of laughs, the friendship, and for treating me like family. I have no doubts Gene lived a great life.

"Hey!"  
M. Kelly

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**Mike Kelly** - April 03, 2025 at 03:31 PM

VC

“ Liza and family, my sincere condolences to you

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**Vicki Phillips Curtis** - April 02, 2025 at 09:15 AM

MS

“ *M. J. Mendlik & Michael A. Sommers purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Eugene Joseph Volk.*



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**M. J. Mendlik & Michael A. Sommers** - April 01, 2025 at 11:19 AM

MS

“ To Liza & the entire Village of Gene's family & friends: We shall always carry the "torch" of Gene's Love with Us as we proceed in the daily adventures of our lives. I have met thousands of people in my life to date, & of all those, Gene ranks among the Greatest. He served as a Shining Lighthouse to my girlfriend(Mary Jane F. Mendlik, one of his Cousins) and myself (Michael A. Sommers, her constant, loving companion) as we traverse across the "stormy" seas of this life. I shall forever remember Gene's heartfelt gratitude as he welcomed us into his home to share in numerous holiday and family get -togethers. M. J. & I both continue to hold those treasured memories of those times spent together in celebration with Gene, in our hearts. Each time we were able to answer one of Gene's constant invitations to such events, two things would always happen: 1) Gene would always profess his sincere happiness that we were able to help fill his dining room with the multitude of celebrants for the occasion, & 2) he would always make it known that our standing invitation to join his family & friends for the next event was forever present. Finally, and believe me, I could relate to you thousands of tales of so many wonderful, loving memories we have of Gene, he truly was a shining example of the Best Loving Husband, Best Father, Best Grandfather, Best Police Detective, & Best "any other of multiple roles" Gene filled during his lifetime. Rest assured, as two of Gene's beloved acquaintances, we will always hold that special place in our hearts, forged lovingly by all of Gene's interactions with us. GOD BLESS ALL OF US as we travel through the rest of our lives with the void of Gene's absence forever being felt, especially those who loved him & knew him best!!

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Michael A. Sommers - April 01, 2025 at 10:28 AM