



Mr. Ronald G. Ritzel

July 4, 1938 - March 21, 2026

FRANKFORT – Mr. Ronald G. Ritzel, age 87, passed away unexpectedly at his home on Saturday, March 21, 2026, with his loved ones by his side.

Born in Utica on July 4, 1938, Ronald was the son of the late Charles and Mary (Branigan) Ritzel, and was proud to be the second oldest of twelve siblings. He spent his childhood in the area and attended Utica Free Academy. He enlisted in the United States Army, where he served with dignity. For the rest of his life, he remained a proud veteran.

On August 13, 1960, he married Vita L. (Valenzano) Ritzel, and they shared a beautiful life together until her passing on April 30, 2001. On June 14, 2002, he married Judith A. Valenzano, and the two shared many wonderful years.

He owned and operated R. G. Ritzel and Sons Excavating and Gradall Rentals for over 40 years, providing the area with top-notch excavating services and rental equipment. He had a passion for his work and was widely recognized as a skilled Gradall operator.

Ronald was an outstanding provider who took his role as patriarch very seriously, serving his family with the utmost devotion. His family was unquestionably the most important part of his life, and he took great pride in all of them. He especially enjoyed gathering together, particularly during the

holidays. Strong-willed and determined, he was also a man with a kind and generous heart. He had a wonderful sense of humor and would often say that his favorite grandchild was the one that was with him at the time.

In his younger years, some of his fondest memories were made on family camping trips and while traveling in his RV on various adventures. He loved hunting with his sons and visits with his daughter on Sundays. He was also known to visit a casino from time to time. He was a member of Operating Engineers Local 158 (District 545) Union, the Fraternal Order of Eagles, the Moose Lodge—where he enjoyed Friday dinners—and the Knights of Columbus. He especially enjoyed playing shuffleboard for the Knights of Columbus, where he participated in leagues and excelled.

Ronald is survived by his wife, Judith; his daughter and son-in-law, Vita M. and Gregg Grates; his three sons, Ronald A. Ritzel Sr. and his partner Jackie Stachnik, Russell C. Ritzel, Richard P. Ritzel and daughter-in-law Susan Ritzel. He is also survived by his beloved grandchildren who affectionately called him Poppy, Alyssa and Chad Dubiel, Ashley Grates, Aubree Grates, Richard Ritzel, Kayla and Mitch O'Connor, Ronald A. Ritzel, Jr., Rusty and Heather Ritzel, Shelby and Matt Adams, MacKenzie Ritzel, Molly Gerhardt, and Tyler Ritzel, whose high school graduation he was looking forward to attending in May; great-grandchildren, Carter, Corinne, Chase, Callum, Mckenzie, Braedon, Wilder, Harlow, Willa, Jameson, Liam; and he was proud to know he would be expecting another great-grandchild in April.

He also leaves to cherish his memory his wife Judith's children, Jackie Valenzano, Franci Valenzano, and Donata and T.J. MacArthur; Judith's grandchildren, Nicole and Ryan Monaghan, Matthew Larkin, Jordan and Laicey Tine, and Anthony Tine; Judith's great-grandchildren, Ryan Jr., and Kylie; his cherished siblings and their spouses, Judith (Schloop) and Lou Scire, Jackie Ritzel, Patricia and Dave Ameduri, Pamela and Jerry Calabrese,

Phyllis and Bob Evans, Charles Ritzel, Michael and Diana Ritzel, and James and Jeanne Ritzel. He also treasured the memories of his siblings who preceded him, Maureen, who passed away as a young girl, Marcia Beaton, Robert Ritzel, and Edward Ritzel. He is additionally survived by his brother-in-law, Vito Valenzano; and many other special friends. He was further predeceased by his in-laws, Edgar Schloop, Joseph Beaton, Barbara Ritzel, Joan Ritzel, Marie Valenzano, Donna Valenzano, and Rose and Henry Simard, Sr.; and Judith's daughter, Desirae Valenzano.

Visitation will be held on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend Ronald's Mass of Christian Burial and Celebration of Life which will commence on Wednesday, April 1, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. from the funeral home and at 10:30 a.m. at Mary, Mother of Our Savior Parish, Lourdes Campus, 2222 Genesee St. Military Honors will be conferred by the U.S. Army. Interment will take place in his private mausoleum at Calvary Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

2407 Oneida Street
Utica, NY

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 31. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com
<https://www.eannacefuneralhome.com>

Funeral Service

APR 1. 10:30 AM (ET)

Mary, Mother of Our Savior Parish, Lourdes Campus
2222 Genesee St.
Utica, NY 13502
<https://www.motherofoursavior.org/CatholicChurch.php>

Tribute Wall

CM

“*Mrs.Ritzel, this is Ron's friend Carol McBride. Ron's came to my husband's service in Weedsport February 6th. They worked together many years ago. I just now heard of his passing and am so sorry. He was a good man. Had I known, I would have come to his services...Ron traveled in terrible weather to show his support for Bill's family. Again, my sincere condolences.*

Carol McBride - May 07 at 07:39 PM

SL

“*Sending Prayers & Love- Cheryl & Lance purchased the Express Sympathy and Condolences "I Have You in My Heart" with Butterfly Wind Chime for the family of Mr. Ronald G. Ritzel.*



Sending Prayers & Love- Cheryl & Lance - March 29 at 09:45 AM

LB

“*Judy and family, So sorry to hear of Ron's passing. Sending prayers for strength and comfort during this difficult time.*
Lisa Mattison-Bates

Lisa Bates - March 28 at 09:13 PM

LL

“*Love the Schmitt's, Nalley's & LeGrand's purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mr. Ronald G. Ritzel.*



Love the Schmitt's, Nalley's & LeGrand's - March 28 at 12:56 PM

VV

“ So sorry to hear of Ron's passing

Vito J Valenzano - March 27 at 08:30 AM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Mr. Ronald G. Ritzel.



March 26 at 08:08 PM

JH

“ Rest in peace, dear cousin. I hold so many dear memories of the Ritzel family from my younger years; their annual visits to Sylvan Beach or my visits to Utica to stay overnight. I treasure those memories. I loved that house on Seymore Ave. With 8 & 9 years age difference with my own 2 siblings (boys) it was a treat to stay with the Ritzel kids. I first learned to ride a bicycle in Utica. Deepest condolences to you all.

Jacky Hummel - March 26 at 03:49 PM

WT

“ With deepest sympathy, Your 120/80 Team purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mr. Ronald G. Ritzel.



With deepest sympathy, Your 120/80 Team - March 26 at 12:11 PM



“ I am truly sorry for this great loss to all our families. What a gift to our society we had. 🙏💕

Mary Beth Balio Sbaraglia - March 26 at 11:46 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mr. Ronald G. Ritzel.



March 26 at 11:40 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mr. Ronald G. Ritzel.

March 26 at 11:40 AM