



Richard James 'Smitty' Smith

November 6, 1954 - May 3, 2026

Richard James “Smitty” Smith, 71, of Lake Villa, Illinois, passed away peacefully on Sunday, May 3, 2026.

Rick was born on November 6, 1954, in Chicago to the late Betty Lou and James Smith. In 1969, he moved to the Round Lake area, where he later graduated from Round Lake High School. Shortly thereafter, Rick began a long and dedicated career with Commonwealth Edison, working at their Waukegan coal plant. He retired after 35 years of service, known for his strong work ethic and commitment.

Rick had a deep love for sports, especially cheering on the Chicago Bears and Cubs. He cherished time spent practicing various sports with his children and enjoyed the thrill of the hunt through metal detecting and garage sales. He was an avid coin collector with a keen interest in World War II history and always delighted in uncovering hidden treasures—both historical and personal.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 42 years, Debra Smith; his children, Ryan Scheck, Kimmy (Brian) Witt, and Derek Smith; and his granddaughter, Madison Witt. Rick will be remembered as a devoted husband, proud father and grandfather, and a loyal friend.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 1:00pm on Sunday, May 31st, 2026 at RJ's Eatery, 1913 E. Grand Avenue, Lindenhurst, IL 60046.

Upcoming Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 31. 1:00 PM (CT)

RJ's Eatery
1913 E. Grand Avenue
Lindenhurst, IL 60046

Tribute Wall



“ So sorry for your loss, it's so hard losing a parent. Hugs and prayers are sent.

Rosa Wisler - May 08 at 03:50 PM

“The holidays growing up never felt complete without Uncle Rick and his family. He wasn’t an uncle by blood, but by something stronger—love, loyalty, and years of shared meals, laughter, and memories that stitched our families together like they had always belonged. Every gathering seemed to revolve around good food and even better company, and somehow Uncle Rick always made everyone feel welcome, seen, and important.

He taught me a lot growing up, though one lesson has probably followed me more faithfully than any others the importance of a good nap. After every big family meal, while everyone else buzzed around cleaning dishes or watching football, Uncle Rick would settle into a cozy position for what he called a “little snooze.” At the time, it seemed funny, but as the years passed, I realized he had life figured out better than most. Later, when I was pregnant with my oldest daughter, he gave me another piece of advice I still carry with me: “When she naps, you nap. She sleeps, you sleep.” And honestly, it was some of the best parenting advice I had ever received.

My dad and Uncle Rick shared the kind of friendship people rarely find anymore. They were more like brothers than friends, and because of them, all of us kids grew up understanding that family isn’t always about blood. It’s about who shows up, who stays, and who loves your children like their own. That gift carried down through all my siblings as well. Our children now grow up surrounded by “Aunts” and “Uncles” who may not share our last name, but absolutely share our hearts. That kind of legacy says everything about the example they set.

Being the youngest and the only girl my memories with Uncle Rick were a little different from everyone else’s. He treated me like a princess from day one. While my brothers and the other boys roughhoused and wrestled, Uncle Rick made sure nobody messed with me too much. He was gentle and warm like a giant teddy bear, but if fairness was involved, especially where girls were concerned,

he never hesitated to put them boys in their place.

And then there was the famous arm wrestling challenge. All the older kids lined up to take their turn against Uncle Rick, and even though I usually wasn't included, I desperately wanted to be part of the fun. Without fail, Uncle Rick would make room for me at the table, grin like we shared a secret, and let me compete right alongside everyone else. The best part? Somehow, every single time... I won. At least in my little-girl heart, I was the undefeated champion, and Uncle Rick made sure I believed it.

Looking back now, I realize the greatest thing about Uncle Rick wasn't just the laughs, the traditions, or even the life lessons. It was the way he made people feel loved. Safe. Important. Like they belonged. And those are the kinds of people who leave fingerprints on your heart forever.

Love you always and forever!!

Kathleen Graves ❤️

Cassie Graves - May 08 at 03:18 PM

TU

“ *To a fellow ComEd employee, we worked hard for the Company and retired with a good life. May the Lord have a good ear to listen to all the good stories.*

May your family have tons of memories to keep their heart warm.

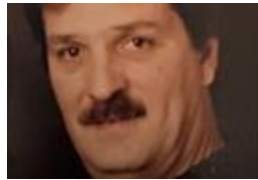
Sincerely,

Tina Uselding

Tina Uselding - May 07 at 09:43 AM



“ 1 file added to the album *Tribute Wall*



Kimmy - May 06 at 09:14 PM

RD

“ Uncle Rick was truly one of a kind, and there will never be another quite like him. Some of my favorite memories are the times spent with him during our annual Super Bowl poker games, where he made sure every rule was followed perfectly, especially if it meant protecting his hard-earned poker money. He always brought laughter, competition, and plenty of personality to the table.

You could also count on Uncle Rick stopping by with his latest garage sale treasures, proud to show off the unique items he had discovered over the weekend. And if you sat down with him for even a few minutes, chances are he had a coin in his hand, ready to share the history and story behind it. He had a way of turning ordinary things into fascinating conversations.

Of course, no visit was complete without him asking if you wanted to arm wrestle. That playful spirit and sense of humor stayed with him throughout his life. I also loved hearing his stories from his younger years, tales of mischief, adventures, and all the colorful personalities from Round Lake and Fox Lake. Uncle Rick could tell a story better than anyone, and you always walked away smiling after hearing one or two.

And one thing I will always remember is how much he enjoyed my homemade baked beans. Anytime I knew Uncle Rick was coming over for a gathering, I made sure to have them ready. He never missed a chance to compliment them, and it always made me smile knowing how much he looked forward to them.

One of my last conversations with him, just a couple of weeks ago, was especially meaningful. He shared updates about his family, and you could clearly see how proud he was of each and every one of them.

Smith family — Uncle Rick loved you very much.

He leaves behind so many memories filled with laughter, stories,

good food, and love. Uncle Rick will be deeply missed, but the stories, traditions, and moments we shared with him will always stay with us.

*Rest in Peace,
Ray Deatherage*

Ray Deatherage - May 06 at 05:30 PM

AH

I WORK WITH HIM AT STATION 16HE WAS ALWAYS A LOTS OF FUN

Arland HOOPER - May 07 at 08:29 AM