



Joshua Jay Spears

June 10, 1978 - April 24, 2026

Joshua Jay Spears, of Salem Township, passed away on April 24, 2026. He was walking the family dog while on the phone with his mother, making her laugh and doing a funny voice for his dog, when he was tragically struck by a truck.

Josh was a man who truly lived the dream. He was a loving husband, father, son, brother, and friend, known for his laughter, deep thoughts, and unwavering care for others. He was the rock his family and friends gathered around, someone who brought strength, humor, and perspective to every situation. If you spoke with Josh for more than a few minutes, he wanted to know what you were going through and how he could help you live your life more fully.

Josh grew up in East Jordan, where he attended East Jordan High School and played both football and basketball. He went on to attend Grand Valley State University, where he continued his football career.

After college, Josh worked in retail management for several years while pursuing motivational speaking on the side. Eventually, he made the decision to leave the corporate world to follow his passion full-time. He authored the book *Personal Revolution* and devoted his work to helping others grow and live with purpose.

He became a trusted voice in social and emotional learning, working closely

with schools and communities nationwide. Josh was passionate about helping students thrive not just academically, but emotionally, and was dedicated to equipping educators with the tools to support the whole child.

Josh lived with intention and purpose. He had a profound faith in Jesus Christ and was deeply influenced by Stoic philosophy, often reflecting on the words of Marcus Aurelius: “It is not death that a man should fear, but never beginning to live.” Josh truly lived his life in that spirit. He was deeply inspired by his cousins, Christie and Kellie, whose strength and grace in the face of cancer shaped the way he approached his own challenges.

Above all, Josh lived for his family. He was a devoted husband to Julie, whom he called “the best thing that ever happened to me,” and a proud and loving father to Charlie, Danny, and Benji. There was nothing he valued more than raising his boys and helping shape them into good men.

He coached their sports teams, showed up for every moment he could, and made sure they heard “I love you” every single day. He was their biggest fan and their steady guide, whether on the sidelines, in the backyard, or in the quiet, everyday moments that mattered most. He led by example, teaching them not just how to play, but how to live, with character, resilience, and heart, how to work hard, fix what’s broken, and stay committed to a goal.

He was deeply loved by his mother, Gloria, and stepfather, Chuck, who helped shape the man he became, as well as his father, Bob, who gave him his adventurous and spirited nature. He was a cherished brother and a constant source of guidance, encouragement, and friendship, always carrying the responsibilities of the oldest with quiet strength.

In his professional life, Josh served as a national leader in social and emotional learning at Imagine Learning, where he worked with educators,

school districts, and communities across the country to support student well-being and mental health.

Josh was a mentor, motivator, and friend to many. He had a gift for lifting others up, sharing ideas, and helping people see a better path forward. Even those who had just met him felt his genuine desire for them to succeed and thrive. He was deeply goal-oriented, always striving toward his next milestone, whether chasing a new fitness personal record or working toward a financial goal, and he inspired others to approach their own lives with that same sense of purpose.

Josh's life was a gift he never took for granted. He was a man on a mission to help a hurting world and to lift up the people around him. His strength, especially in the face of profound challenges, will remain an enduring example to all who knew him.

If you asked Josh how he was doing, his answer was almost always, "living the dream," and he truly meant it.

He will be deeply missed, forever loved, and will remain an inspiration to all who knew him, a lasting example of how to live with purpose, resilience, and heart.

Josh is survived by his wife, Julie; his sons, Charles, Daniel, and Benjamin Spears; his parents, Gloria (Chuck) Kraemer and Robert Spears; his siblings, Robin Spears and Richard "Jerry" (Amanda Viola-Spears) Spears; his brother-in-law, Joseph (Dawn) Cyrek; his parents-in-law, Joseph and Patricia Cyrek; his nephew Jack and nieces Allie, Addison, Ava and Marlowe.

Visitation will be held on Thursday, April 30, from 1:00 PM to 8:00 PM at

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, 46401 Ann Arbor Road West (between Sheldon and Beck) in Plymouth. A Rosary Service and time of sharing will take place at 7:00 PM.

He will lie in state on Friday, May 1, from 10:00 AM until the 11:00 AM Funeral Mass at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church, 47650 North Territorial Road (at Beck) in Plymouth.

Interment at 3:30 PM at United Memorial Gardens.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Our Lady of Good Counsel Tuition Fund, 1151 William St, Plymouth, MI 48170.

To share a memory, please use the share a memory tab on this webpage.

Cemetery Details

United Memorial Gardens

4800 Curtis Road
Plymouth, MI 48170

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 30. 1:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenfh.com

Rosary Service

APR 30. 7:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenfh.com

Lie in State

MAY 1. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church
47650 N Territorial Rd
Plymouth, MI 48170-2852
(734) 453-0326

Funeral Mass

MAY 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church
47650 N Territorial Rd
Plymouth, MI 48170-2852
(734) 453-0326

Tribute Wall



“ Wallis M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joshua Jay Spears.

Wallis M. - May 01 at 01:36 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



April 30 at 10:14 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



April 30 at 06:31 PM



“ Kenneth J. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joshua Jay Spears.

Kenneth J. - April 30 at 03:56 PM

CF

“ Chick-fil-A Northville Family purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



Chick-fil-A Northville Family - April 30 at 01:13 PM

CF

“ Chick-fil-A Northville Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joshua Jay Spears.

Chick-fil-A Northville Family - April 30 at 01:13 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



April 30 at 10:09 AM

LB

“ Love Scott & Candi (Grams) Burns purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



Love Scott & Candi (Grams) Burns - April 30 at 09:38 AM

SB

“ Shiva Brehm purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



Shiva Brehm - April 29 at 09:20 PM

SB

“ Shiva Brehm planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joshua Jay Spears.

Shiva Brehm - April 29 at 09:20 PM

EW

“ Epicenter of Worship purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



Epicenter of Worship - April 29 at 06:28 PM

JS

“ Jack, Sharon, Angela, & Jenny Snyder purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



Jack, Sharon, Angela, & Jenny Snyder - April 29 at 05:02 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.*



April 29 at 04:36 PM



“ *Albert, Stephanie, Nick, Viola and Melissa purchased the Pink Tribute Spray for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.*



Albert, Stephanie, Nick, Viola and Melissa - April 29 at 04:32 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.*



April 29 at 01:22 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.*



April 29 at 01:15 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joshua Jay Spears.

April 29 at 01:15 PM



“ The Sweaty Yeti Crew purchased the Tranquil Seas for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



The Sweaty Yeti Crew - April 29 at 01:05 PM



“ Summer's Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



April 29 at 11:05 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joshua Jay Spears.

April 29 at 11:05 AM

EI

“ Will miss this beautiful friend-but do know he is in heaven knew him and his beautiful family for years...You are loved Josh ❤️



Elinor M. Irish - April 28 at 07:12 PM

MR

“ Michele R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joshua Jay Spears.

Michele R. - April 28 at 03:05 PM

LD

“ Love Mark and Doreen purchased the Beautiful i n Blue for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



Love Mark and Doreen - April 28 at 02:20 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.



April 28 at 01:39 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joshua Jay Spears.

April 28 at 01:39 PM



“ JOSH WAS ONE OF THIS STRONGEST AND MOST GENUINE GUYS I EVER KNEW. ONE AND ONE TIME WAS ALWAYS A JOY. WE HAD MANY COMMON TRAITS AND CHALLENGES PERSONALLY. BUT JOSH ALWAYS OVERCAME WITH GRACE. FOR YEARS WE WOULD CALL EACH OTHER OR TEXT ON "OUR" BIRTHDAY. (WE SHARED THE 10TH OF JUNE) AFTER JOSH'S HEART SURGERY AND STROKE I WATCHED HIS VID WHEN WE WALKED OUT OF REHAB AND CRIED AT MY DESK AT WORK. EVERYONE THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY. JOSH AND I TEXTED DURING HIS RECOVERY. JOSH ALWAYS TOOK TIME TO RESPOND. I STRUGGLE KEEPING UP WITH RESPONDING ON MY PHONE WITHOUT THE CHALLENGES OF WHAT HE WAS DEALING WITH. JUST ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF HIS CHARACTER. I AM A BETTER PERSON FOR HAVE KNOWN HIM.

I'LL MISS YOU MY FRIEND. I HOPE YOUR GETTING TIME WITH YOUR GRANDPA / LOVED ONES.

LOVE YA. FORREST W. PLUMM

FORREST - April 27 at 04:12 PM



Josh was great young man a great athlete helped him through some hard times he was so wonderful and thankful to get to work with him and at that time his mom it is. Great loss to us but he was so proud of his wife and kids he will do his work for everyone with Jesus I will miss him love Ray Lavoie

Ray Lavoie - April 28 at 07:37 PM

JC

“ *Joey & Phoenix Creech purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Joshua Jay Spears.*



Joey & Phoenix Creech - April 27 at 03:03 PM