



# Walter Andrew Bettcher

JUL 18, 1943 - OCT 3, 2025



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## Walter Andrew Bettcher

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**W**alter Andrew “Walt” Bettcher was born July 18, 1943, in Cleveland, Ohio, to Walter F. and Magdalene (née Miller) Bettcher. As an only child, he romped with friends and his dog, worked his Erector sets, and watched his beloved Cleveland Indians (who peaked far too early in his life). After graduating from Dyke College, he enrolled in Army Officer training and was posted to Vietnam. His calm and bravery during an ambush would later earn him an Army Commendation Medal with “V” Device and a 2018 induction into the Ohio Military Hall of Fame. Upon his return, Walt fell in love with Dolores Sonoski, a nurse from western Pennsylvania with eyes like the sky. Her warmth and steadfastness complemented his animated personality. They married on April 27, 1974, and built a life in Strongsville, Ohio, raising two daughters— Catherine and Susan—while he established his long career with the Internal Revenue Service. He remained a lifelong congregant of the Lakewood United Methodist Church.

One word best captures Walt’s energies: Volunteer. Even after he returned from service to his country, he stepped up many times a year to donate pint after pint of blood, for decades. He channeled his many hobbies into volunteerism as well. Not one to rest on his impressive home train collection, Walt volunteered to run model trains at the Strongsville Historical Society, delighting children with the whistle and smoke of elaborate set-ups. The proud owner of a 1926 Buick coupe, Walt served as treasurer for the Northeast Ohio Buick Club of America. Post-retirement, he volunteered in Florida with the Marine Discovery Center and the National Park Service: he led canoe trips in the Indian River Lagoon at Canaveral National Seashore and waded out to help students identify the creatures that wriggled in the brackish shallows. His generosity of spirit was ever-present for his community, in countless other ways.

Walt and Dolores enjoyed lifelong friendships with many who shared in their interests and in their life story. Though his physical excursions were limited— he kept mostly to central Florida and the wilds of Ontario— Walt traveled the world through vibrant conversations with friends,



## Obituary

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family, and strangers. He was ever curious about distant cultures, histories, and landscapes, as also seen in his unbroken collection of National Geographic magazines. To spend time with him was always entertaining: as he waved his hands around and spoke (never quietly), you quickly learned of his many likes and dislikes. The couple eventually resettled in Bay Village, Ohio, where his growing flock of grandchildren renamed him “Bub”.

Looking back, the Volunteer we remember the most was the one who stepped up for his grandchildren. Bub was a fixture at their sporting events, school plays, and music performances. He helped them build bonfires and taught them to run the Wally Bee through the marina out to Lake Erie. After a lifetime of summer catches on the Upper French River in Ontario (possibly his favorite place in the world), “fishing” for this proud angler now consisted of six grandchildren clamoring “Bub! Over here! Bub!” while he stumbled around the boat helping them to replace worm after worm, or to unhook yet another pilfering little rock bass . . . all while the big walleye that he should have caught drifted blissfully past. But hours later, a timeless evening memory: our Bub floats off the dock on his back, his belly (full of fried perch and blueberry pie) rising above the water, while Madie, Rajan, Ellie, Malini, Josie and Leo splash him and whack him over the head with a pool noodle. He pretends to protest. Laughing at the chaos are Cathy and Susie, his sons-in-law Praveen and Gabe, and a nearby loon. In the slanting sunlight sits his beloved Dolores on the dock; she looks on, still smitten, and takes a deep breath of piney air.

Walt died peacefully in Ann Arbor, Michigan on October 3, 2025. He was 82. His memory will be cherished by his wife of 51 years, Dolores Bettcher; their daughter, Catherine Bettcher and her husband, Praveen Dayalu; their daughter, Susan Galang and her husband, Gabriel Galang; and their six grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Walt's memory to [Friends of Canaveral](#) or [Wounded Warrior Project](#).

Visitation is Monday, October 13, 2025, from 10 AM – 12 PM at Sunset Memorial Chapel, 6245 Columbia Road, North Olmsted, OH 44070, where the funeral service will follow at 12 PM.




# Events


**Walter Andrew Bettcher**

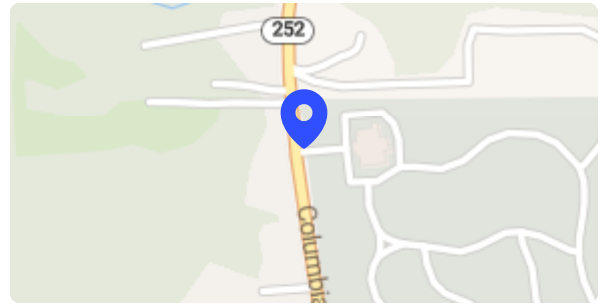
JUL 18, 1943 - OCT 3, 2025

## Visitation


 **Monday**, October 13, 2025


 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM ET


 **Sunset Funeral & Cremation Services**  
6245 Columbia Road, North Olmsted OH 44070

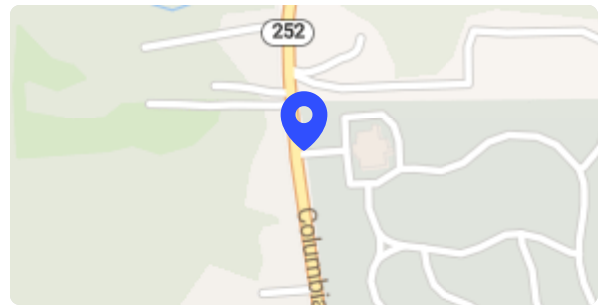


## Funeral Service


 **Monday**, October 13, 2025


 12:00 PM ET

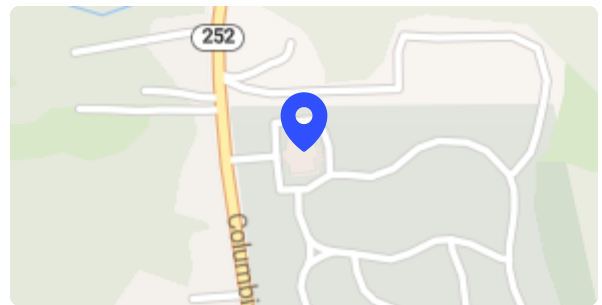
 **Sunset Funeral & Cremation Services**  
6245 Columbia Road, North Olmsted OH 44070



## Cemetery Details

 **Sunset Cemetery**  
6265 Columbia Road, North Olmsted OH 44070

 **(440) 249-6256**





# Tribute Wall

**Walter Andrew Bettcher**

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**Linda Stajdel** lit a candle in honor of Walter.

Delores, Pat and I wish you our condolences. We so enjoyed our friendship over the years and was always looking forward to seeing you both.. I know Walt is in the present of Jesus and he is holding him close..Linda and Patrick Stajdel305-328867



October 31 at 10:48 AM



**Lori Redd** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Dear Dolores, Cathy, Susan and family, Please accept my very deepest sympathies on the loss of your dear husband and father. I remember "Uncle Wally & Auntie Dolores" as such loving and faithful friends to my Dad & Mom. I so enjoyed getting to visit New Smyrna Beach and I remember how excited Walt was to show us the closet that contained everything for a day at the beach! We have such wonderful family memories that were made at their beautiful Florida home. All my love to everyone. I have been thinking of you all so much since hearing of Walt's passing. I will never forget Walt and I will always remember him so fondly. Love, Lori Redd Gordon & Elizabeth's daughter. I attached a photograph of Dolores and Walter from my Dad's 70th birthday party. It was so wonderful that they were able to attend and I can still remember them talking to me with so much love and pride about what mattered most to them- their children and grandchildren.



October 10 at 1:13 PM



## Tribute Wall

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ND

**Nimmy Dayalu** posted:

Along with Cathy joining our family, after being married to our son Praveen, both Walt and Dolores also became very close to us. Walt always enjoyed the food I cooked as long as it did not have cumin & cilantro. He used to help himself to seconds and sometimes even thirds, appreciating every dish I made. The last meal he had at my place was about a month ago when Praveen and Cathy told me they would be coming over for dinner with the kids, minus Walt & Dolores. So I made a good spread of dishes, using quite a bit of cumin and cilantro. And to my surprise, the whole gang walked in including the two senior citizens. Praveen then tells me "mom don't worry we've got them sandwiches" I said OK that's good because I put a lot of cumin and cilantro, which he will not enjoy, though there is enough food for all. I set the table with five plates for the five of us. Then Walt says "where's my plate" I had no choice, but to give him a plate, and served him small portions of everything I had made. He ate it all and asked for seconds. Cathy myself and Praveen looked at each other with a smile. Guess the cumin and cilantro tasted good after all the hospital meals he had the past few months! I then went to him and gave him a hug saying "Bub, I'm happy that you enjoyed today's meal" not realizing that this would be his last meal at my place. He said "I always like your cooking" He'll be dearly missed by all of us. May his soul rest in peace. Love you Walt. 😞

October 9 at 4:31 PM

SP

**Suzan Plautz** posted:

Nearly 40 years of friendship, and almost as many years of picnics in the Metroparks with our YMCA Indian Princess Erie Tribe and their families, Walt & Dolores were among the faithful organizers the last couple of years. Our tribe went beyond the "school year" schedule to hike & picnic several times each summer and it became a tradition for the entire families lasting long after the girls outgrew the program. The fathers tended the grill while the moms set the tables and put out the side dishes and desserts. It nearly always ended up with the men at one table and the women at another, but we needed at least 4 or 5 tables when all the families were present. Even during the school year, we parents would get together occasionally for dinner out and much to his chagrin, celebrated Walt's birthday every time. He protested every time (except in July) but was disappointed when we finally didn't tell the waitress it was his birthday and sing to him. Lots of great memories of Walt and our Erie Tribe Family. We will miss Walt. Suzan & Allen Plautz

October 9 at 11:01 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Rajani Aatre** posted:

Sad to hear about the passing of Walter Bettcher. Though we met rarely we were always touched by friendly nature of both Walter and Delores. May his soul rest in peace. Deep heartfelt condolences to Delores Cathy, Susan and rest of the family. Cathy is very dear to us Aatres. Thank you Cathy for being the strong person that you are.. The dinner we had with your parents during our visit in August will always be remembered With prayers to you all Vasu and Kanthi Aatre

October 9 at 8:00 AM



**Heather Banhidy** posted:

My sincere sympathies to Dee, Cathy & Susie and their spouses, and the grandchildren. My family has known Walt since 1981 when we joined the Buick Club, and he has always been an avid and involved member in the club. We participated in many outings, shows and events with the Bettcher family (Sr. & Jr.) over the years, and have many fond memories of Walt. I, myself, have had the pleasure of serving on the NEOBCA Board in various positions alongside Walt as he served our group as Treasurer. His presence will be greatly missed, but never forgotten. May he "cruise" peacefully thru Heaven in a 1926 Buick along with our other members of the "heavenly NEOBCA" chapter, knowing that we're thinking of and missing him! Heather (McCullough) Banhidy

October 8 at 7:47 PM



Lori Redd shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

October 10 at 1:13 PM





## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Walter by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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