

Netawaka, KS



James Lester "Jim" Banaka, 78, of Netawaka, KS, passed away Sunday, March 10, 2024 at Plaza West Healthcare and Rehab in Topeka, KS. He was born April 17, 1945 in Holton, KS, the son of Elmer and Flora Helen (Boyer) Banaka.

Jim graduated from Netawaka High School in 1963 and attended Highland Community College for 1 ½ years. He proudly served in the United States Army from 1968 - 1969, during the Vietnam War, honorably discharged ranked as SSG E-6. He served with the Army National Guard and 69th Brigade.

Jim worked for Goodyear Tire Company from 1967 - 1997 and Sac and Fox Casino from 1997 -2006.

He was a member of the Netawaka United Methodist Church, U.S. Steel Worker Local 307 in Topeka, American Legion Post 58. Jim enjoyed poetry and painting, he was well- known locally for providing personal poems for his friends and family.

Jim married Janet Kay Sharp on April 30, 1966 in Holton. She preceded him in death on September 7, 2015, after 49 years of marriage. He was also preceded in death by his father, Elmer Banaka; mother, Flora Helen Banaka King; son, Bradley "Brad" Banaka; daughter, Jerri L. Denton; 2 grandchildren, Logan Denton and Wyatt Shook and a step-brother, Donald R. King.

Survivors include 2 daughters, Janelle D. Bell (Brad) of Texas and Julie A. Shook (Zane) of Carbondale, KS; brother, Steve A. Banaka (Marilyn) of Whiting, KS; 7 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

Funeral Service will be 10:30 a.m. Friday, March 15, 2024 at the Mercer Funeral Home in Holton. Burial with Military Honors will follow at the Netawaka Cemetery. Family will greet friends Thursday evening 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given to the Netawaka United Methodist Church c/o Mercer Funeral Home, P.O. Box 270, Holton, KS 66436. To leave a special message for the family, please visit

[www.mercerfuneralhomes.com](http://www.mercerfuneralhomes.com).