



Gregory E. Nowak

May 22, 1948 - April 8, 2026

Gregory E. “Gregg” Nowak passed away, leaving behind a life marked by hard work, loyalty, and an unwavering devotion to his family.

Gregg was the beloved husband of the late Betty Nowak. Over 53 years of marriage, they built a life rooted in commitment, resilience, and a shared dedication to their family.

Rough around the edges but steady at his core, Gregg believed in showing up, putting in the work, and standing by those he loved. He was a proud father to his sons: Richard, Russell (Carrie) and Ronald (Carrie).

He was a devoted grandfather to Corinne, Ricky, Caitlynn, Ella, and Reid, who loved him deeply and brought him great pride.

Born on May 22, 1948, to Alice and Ed Nowak, Gregg was raised with strong values that stayed with him throughout his life. He was the oldest sibling of Edward Nowak (Cindy), Teresa Klimek-Downs, and the late Marian Pietruszka. He was also a dear brother-in-law to JoAnn Mazurek (the late Bob) and was preceded in death by his brothers-in-law Fred Czajkoski (Verna) and Tom Czajkoski. Gregg was a proud uncle to many nieces and nephews.

A gifted story teller, Gregg worked hard at many jobs, always willing to do what needed to be done. Beyond his work, he had a lifelong passion for polka music, playing in bands since his teenage years. Known for his concertina playing, Gregg made his mark in the Polka community and brought joy to many through his music.

In his own quiet way, Gregg also showed his appreciation for others through

simple but meaningful gestures. He was known for giving coins to those he cared about. A small token that carried a lot of meaning and reflected the love & generosity he didn't always put into words.

Gregg will be remembered as a man who was always real, someone who loved deeply in his own way and never wavered in his loyalty.

Visitation is Sunday, April 12, 2026 from 4 PM to 8 PM at Foran Funeral Home, 7300 W. Archer Ave.(55th street just west of Harlem). Visitation on Monday from 8:30 AM until time of Celebration of Life Service at 10 AM. We will go in procession from the funeral home to Resurrection Cemetery, Garden Mausoleum where Gregory will be entombed beside his wife.

Cemetery Details

Resurrection Cemetery Garden Mausoleum

7201 S. Archer Road
Justice, IL 60458

Previous Events

Visitation

APR **12**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Foran Funeral Home
7300 W Archer Ave
Summit, IL 60501
(708) 458-0208

Visitation

APR **13**. 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Foran Funeral Home
7300 W Archer Ave
Summit, IL 60501
(708) 458-0208

Celebration of Life Service

APR **13**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Foran Funeral Home - Summit
7300 West Archer Ave
Summit, IL 60501
(708) 458-0208
contactus@foranfuneralhome.com
<https://www.foranfuneralhome.com/>

Tribute Wall

TK

“ Our deepest Condolences to the Nowak family, we will miss Greg's talent and performance style on the Concertina which will never be forgotten. God Bless. Tom and Judi Krengiel

Tom Krengiel - April 13 at 09:31 PM

FB

“ Sorry for your loss, a great loss to the polka field ...

Frankie Berendt

Frank Berendt - April 12 at 06:23 PM

SF

“ Best thoughts and prayers to Gregg's family and loved ones. Gregg will be missed but not forgotten. Time continues to march on, and those good associations we had in our youthful life more and more become happy memories. Gregg will be best known for his extraordinary musical ability to perform on the Concertina. He was also very good performing on the drum set. He had a good sense of humor as well. I know that Gregg and his immediate and extended family lived in the Brighton Park area in the early 60's. The last time I saw Gregg was about 20 years ago when he played with Danny Mateja's Downtown Sound.

Steve Fornek

Steve Fornek - April 11 at 09:25 AM

DP

“ Played with the Casinos for 20 years also played trumpet and sang Don Ptak

Don Ptak - April 11 at 07:49 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Gregory E. Nowak.



April 10 at 05:17 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Gregory E. Nowak.

April 10 at 05:17 PM



“ Florida Golf Crew purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Gregory E. Nowak.



Florida Golf Crew - April 10 at 04:33 PM



“ Florida Golf Crew planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Gregory E. Nowak.

Florida Golf Crew - April 10 at 04:33 PM



“ My deepest sympathy to his family. Gregg was a great concertina player and had other musical talents. Always a joy to be around. God grant his family comfort and peace at this difficult time. He has joined the great polka band in the Heavens! RIP

Jackie Jedlowski Koziel - April 10 at 11:21 AM



“ *Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Gregory E. Nowak.*



April 10 at 11:05 AM



“ *This part of life is very difficult when you have to say goodbye to a very good friend. Greg was a talented musician who played with a number of bands over the years. He played with the Dynamics for over 6 years and I will always remember the good times and loads of laughs we had over those years.*

Rich, Russell and Ron, my heart is with you as you rekindle the fond memories of your dad. Greg may be gone, but the memories of him will live on. May God bless all of you. Rest in peace, Greg!

Ed Sterczek

Ed Sterczek - April 10 at 07:56 AM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Les Kapuscinski - April 09 at 11:24 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Gregory E. Nowak.



April 09 at 08:29 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Gregory E. Nowak.

April 09 at 08:29 PM



“ Back when I owned Bootlegger’s Saloon & Eatery, Sunday was Polka day and I had a band cancellation. Greg played with the Mid-West Sounds at the time so he was one of the first guys I called to put a pick up band together. Not only did Greg agree to play, but he played for four hours wearing a gorilla mask just to make people laugh and have a good time! He was a good friend, a great band member, a fine musician, with a great sense of humor and always will be remembered as a stand up guy! He will truly be missed. My condolences to the family. RIP Greg. Gerry Tarka

gerald tarka - April 09 at 08:23 PM



So sorry to hear this

RAYJAY - April 09 at 10:14 PM

AJ

“ Greg and I always loved the hot dog place called HENRY's in Cicero. We used to eat there a lot. The great guy and composer he was, he wrote a song about Henry's that only a few knew that his song was about something we loved. Henry's is the only hot dog place that always asked “WOULD YOU LIKE PICKLES AND PEPPERS WITH THAT?” Hence the song PICKLES AND PEPPERS POLKA. He also helped me out by filling in on my band Chi Town Express. Great guy. Rest in peace my friend and brother of the Note. Happy Travels.

Allan Jelinek - April 09 at 08:10 PM

SK

Interesting story.

There was also a Henry's hot dog stand on the southwest intersection of Archer and Cicero avenues in Chicago in the middle and late 1960s. I was just a kid then but recall my folks taking me and my sister there occasionally. There was a few other Henry's throughout the Chicago area although they didn't survive. Believe it or not, there was a Henry's in Benton Harbor, Michigan and the last time I was there was in June, 2019 to attend the World Concertina Congress festival. It was still in operation at that time. I have no idea if it's still there but wouldn't doubt if the pandemic closed it up.

Sorry for your loss. Unfortunately, I never met Greg in person but heard many of his recordings on the polka radio shows.

Stanley Kijek - April 09 at 08:30 PM

LK

I didn't know Gregg well but he was an outstanding musician and when I first met him, I thought he had this rugged, good lookin' face that could have easily played in any Western movie! Another taken too soon. Rest in Peace and may your music and memories last forever. Here is one photo I have of him. Please feel free to share anywhere you wish. I don't think I can post it here but will on my facebook page.

Les Kapuscinski - April 09 at 11:22 PM

LK

I managed to get the photo of Gregg on here. Thanks

Les Kapuscinski - April 09 at 11:26 PM

TL

Gregg was a dear cousin of mine and we gathered at my Uncles house for many parties and often jammed because there were so many musicians in the family. Much later on we actually played in a band together for about 6 years (The Dynamics). Although known for being a fantastic concertina player, Gregg showed off his musical talents and was our drummer, which he did an excellent job. He also was an excellent vocalist. We had great times together with that group and many fond memories. He will be missed. My sympathy goes out to his immediate family.

Tom Lizik - April 10 at 11:50 AM

FN

Although time and distance separates Family and Friends. Memories are just a quick thought away. Thanks for the Memories. May God Bless The Nowak Family and bring comfort to Them at this time. 🙏

Frank Nowak - April 10 at 04:42 PM