

Irion Family



The Irion name was brought to Frankenmuth in October of 1953 when Howard Irion moved here and accepted the position of general manager of Frankenmuth Recreation, the local bowling alley, a position offered to him by Charles Zeilinger, his mother's brother.

Howard Henry Irion was born May 22, 1925 to Harold and Emma Katherine nee Zeilinger in Sebewaing, Michigan. His great-grandfather, Andreas, was one of the early settlers of Sebewaing, a town in the thumb of Michigan, which was called "Auchville" back in 1854. Andreas came to the United States in 1846 from Sulz, Germany, a small town on the Nekar River in the Black Forest Southwest of Stuttgart. Howard's grandfather, John Henry, born November 1, 1860, was responsible for draining much of the swampy land in the Sebewaing area and turning it into good farmland.

After graduating from Sebewaing High School in 1943, Howard enlisted in the Army. He served from September 28, 1944, to July 9, 1946. After being honorably discharged, he helped on the farm. On January 7, 1950, he married Lillian Stark (June 21, 1929), daughter of Carl and Mary nee Reher Stark. Because of an asthma condition, Howard was not able to continue on the farm. They moved to Warren, Michigan in 1950. Howard worked for Georgia Pacific on a freight loading dock and Lillian worked for a grocery chain. After moving to Frankenmuth in 1953, Howard managed the bowling alley until 1955, when he joined Baker Builders. This was the beginning of his 35 year career in the construction business. Howard worked as a mason on many Frankenmuth buildings, including the additions to Zehnders and the Bavarian Inn Restaurants.

Howard and Lillian's first son, Michael Howard (May 16, 1953) was born in Warren, Michigan, followed by their second son, David Gene (December 30, 1955). Two more sons were born to the couple, Steven Scott (January 19, 1957) and James Mark (March 19, 1961). After living in rented houses for several years, Howard bought a lot on Gera Road and built a home. He did all the masonry and rough carpentry.

At age 16, Howard and Lillian's son Steven developed cancer of the spine. He waged a courageous battle against it for two years before he passed away on May 19, 1995.

On August 1, 1981, Michael married Kathryn Ellen Duschene (August 30, 1953), daughter of Claude and Mary Ellen Olson Duschene of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They have a daughter, Kara Kathryn (October 17, 1983), and a son, Shane Michael (December 5, 1987). On December 16, 1983, James married Tina Marie Kolhagen (May 20, 1962), daughter of Theodore and Carol Morden Kolhagen of Bridgeport, Michigan. They have two daughters, Jennifer Marie (May 31, 1984), and Heather Marie (April 28, 1986). David is single. All sons and families reside in Frankenmuth.

In 1988, Howard suffered a breathing problem and was diagnosed with lung cancer. He died on March 9, 1990 with Lillian at his side, and is buried in St. John's Lutheran Cemetery.

On August 15, 1990, with materials donated from local businesses, and labor donated by many people in the Frankenmuth area construction businesses, two baseball dugouts were built at Frankenmuth Memorial Park and dedicated in memory of Howard Irion.



Researched & Compiled by Bavarian Inn Lodge
For copies of Family Histories go to www.bavarianinn.com/familyhistory