



Jere R. Duke

September 19, 1935 - December 24, 2022

Jere R. Duke died on December 24, 2022. He is survived by Evelyn Seifert Duke, his wife of 65 years. Jere was born on September 19, 1935, in Lancaster to the late Franklin and Mary Leora Duke. His brother Henry Ernest Duke passed away in 2014. Jere will be remembered by his daughter Tamara Duke Jacobs, wife of Daniel; and his son Jeffrey Duke, husband of Beth Keffer Duke. Also surviving are four grandchildren, Joshua Duke, Brittany (Duke) Boldt, Sean Jacobs, and Robert Jacobs, and four great grandchildren.

Jere graduated from J.P. McCaskey High School and Franklin and Marshall College. He retired in 2009 from Lancaster Malleable Castings Co. where he was Vice President and Corporate Secretary. He was very active in Trinity Lutheran Church, where he sang in the choir for over 30 years, narrated cantatas, served as a lector, and led the Building Committee during the church's expansion. Jere was a member of the Donegal School Board and also served as president.

Jere loved travel and went on many river cruises in Europe. His favorite vacation was a safari and Nile river cruise in Africa. He and Evelyn would often travel with friends and enjoyed playing golf in new and familiar locations. Jere loved to play bridge, pinochle, golf, and free cell.

A memorial service honoring Jere's life will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church, 47 West Main Street, Mount Joy, PA 17552 on Saturday, January 14, 2023, at 11 AM. Family and friends will be received at the church before the service from 10 AM to 11 AM. Interment will be private. In lieu of flowers, memorial

contributions may be made to Trinity Lutheran Church (address above).

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 14. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Trinity Lutheran Church
47 W Main St
Mount Joy, PA 17552
<https://trinitymountjoy.org/>

Memorial Service

JAN 14. 11:00 AM (ET)

Trinity Lutheran Church
47 W Main St
Mount Joy, PA 17552
<https://trinitymountjoy.org/>

Tribute Wall

WS

“ My affiliation with Jere began when he was seated on the Board of School Directors for Donegal. I was the district's Business Manager at the time and was struggling with the process and procedures associated with implementing a new computer system. Jere came to the rescue. He voluntarily and personally helped guide the process to its completion (something board members rarely do). I knew him to be dedicated to service, compassionate and supportive and always with a genuine smile. When I transferred my membership to Trinity, there he was again, a devoted member of the congregation SMILING.

Woody Sites

Woody Sites - January 16, 2023 at 09:31 AM

JD

“ Working in communications, I have written a lot of speeches over the years, but this was probably the hardest thing I’ve had to write yet. My Grandpa Duke was a great man by all definitions of the word, and his passing has left a hole in my heart that will never be filled. I am lucky, however, that I have so many memories of Grandpa to reflect back on.

Childhood memories are more like impressions than anything these days. I remember grandpa always being kind, with a scratchy mustache, and his deep voice. I remember him sitting in his chair or at the kitchen table, sometimes reading the paper. He would play games or watch TV, chat with my parents while we played, things like that. I remember picnics at the park, and celebrations during all the holidays, especially Christmas.

As I got older, the memories became more concrete. I remember them coming to my high school and college graduations. I remember meeting them in Myrtle Beach or them coming to band concerts. One of the most special memories I have is when I walked from their house down the street to Koser Jeweler’s and bought an engagement ring for Rachel. They were the first members of my family to know that I was going to propose, and I remember how happy grandpa especially was for us. He would tell us stories about dating grandma, their early life together, and he just took on this brightness with radiating joy as he regaled us. I remember Rachel and I going to Country Table with them and showing Rachel some of the Pennsylvania favorites, and how much fun we had chatting in a way a child-version of me could never imagine.

Reflecting on his life, the thing about grandpa that really resonates with me is how kind and loving he was. As an adult now, I know how easy it is to become bitter, pessimistic, jaded, and filled with hate, but grandpa always remained so sincere, so genuine, so kind. That is such an underappreciated attribute these days. It is easy to be mean. It is much harder to love and care, and he loved and cared for so many.

Grandpa also taught me about what’s most important in life, which is family. He loved all of us so very much, and I know how excited and delighted he was to meet his great-grandchildren. In fact for a

while, the thing that made me saddest of all was knowing that he would never get to meet my son. The day before he passed away, I called him. He wasn't doing well at the time, but I got to tell him that his great-grandson had a strong heart, just like my grandpa, and I know that he heard me, and I hope that that brought him some peace. My son might not ever get to meet Grandpa Duke in person, but he will know him through the legacy of kindness that he passed down to his children, and his children's children, and now his children's children's children. I love you, Grandpa. Rest in peace.

Joshua Duke - January 15, 2023 at 11:54 PM

“My Grandpa Duke was a kind man. That’s a phrase that will surely be repeated by so many when they think of him. But I can think of few other things that a person should be. He was kind. He was funny. He loved his family so much. He reveled in the accomplishments of his children and grandchildren. He was one of the greatest champions of education that I can think of. It was never a question that he would be at every single graduation each of us had. I had three just by myself, and he was there at every single one—in three different states—to cheer me on with an “Attagirl, Britt!”

His deep, booming voice is another thing everyone will absolutely remember about him—whether it was singing in this very church or the way his laugh would almost seem to creep up out of him, rumbling louder and louder as he told a funny story. I could always pick out his voice above so many others, and I’ll miss hearing it so much.

So many of my memories of my grandpa are also memories of my grandparents. I learned Yahtzee and Rummikub at their kitchen table. I celebrated Christmas Eve in their basement, taking candle pictures in their living room. I first saw General Hospital on their TV as they sat nearby in their big, comfy chairs.

Grandpa loved seeing his grandkids grow up and find their own life partners. I still remember his delighted chuckle when I told him my now-husband, Brad, was a Lambda Chi also. “A lamb chop!” Perhaps my most precious recent memory with Grandpa is introducing him to my oldest son. I remember spending time with my great-grandma Duke in the same living room where I watched my baby run around and give hugs and kisses to his great-grandma and -grandpa. It was such a perfect full circle moment. I’ll treasure it always.

Grandpa clearly relished adding the “great” to the grandpa title he already wore so proudly. I’m heartbroken he won’t get to meet all of

his great-grandchildren, but I know he loved them all so fiercely.

He was a steadfast and strong presence in and for my entire life, and it still doesn't feel real that he's not here anymore. But when I look at my babies and my cousins' babies and very soon my nephew, I know I'll see him. Maybe someone will get his booming laugh. Hopefully they all get his non-graying head of hair. I know they'll value education and hard work. They will all love their families with big-hearted joy. But above all, I hope they are kind, like Grandpa Duke.

As I struggled to think of something to say today, I kept returning to poetry to convey what I didn't know how to. One poem instantly resonated, so I'd like to share it with everyone today:

"To My Father" by Georgia Harkness

*A giant pine, magnificent and old, Stood staunch against the sky
and all around. Shed beauty, grace and power. Within its fold
birds safely reared their young. The velvet ground beneath was
gentle, and the cooling shade gave cheer to passers-by. Its
towering arms a landmark stood, erect and unafraid. As if to say,
"Fear nought from life's alarms". It fell one day. Where it had
dauntless stood was loneliness and void. But men who passed
paid tribute – and said, "To know this life was good, It left its
mark on me. Its work stands fast". And so it lives. Such life no
bonds can hold – This giant pine, magnificent and old.*

I love you, Grandpa. Thank you.

Brittany Boldt - January 14, 2023 at 05:27 PM



“Dad was always my hero. He was a role model for my own life in so many ways. His love for his family, calm patient demeanor, dedication to work, servant leadership, kindness to others inspired me and helped shape my own personality. He was an incredibly supportive father always involved in my activities. From coaching little league baseball, boosting peewee football to cheering loud enough with his deep baritone voice to be heard on the field from the stands at high school baseball and football games, his loving support was always felt! Even as I grew into adulthood, marriage and parenthood, his guidance was never directive, but always positioned to think of the pros and cons and evaluate the longer term effects or consequences. His passion for the importance of education was a constant that I passed onto Joshua and Brittany. From his years of service to the Donegal School District, to his attendance at his children’s and grandchildren’s graduations from high school, college and graduate school, he continually demonstrated his commitment to education. He was immensely pleased about the educational successes of his extended family and was so happy to get updates on everyone’s accomplishments. He loved his grandchildren and was overjoyed with the births of his four great grandchildren. He was so happy to hear of Joshua and Rachel’s coming birth of baby boy Duke and the continuation of the Duke family name. Beth and I are blessed to have been able to visit him only a few weeks before his death and so thankful we were able to speak with him only days before he passed. I will miss him every day but we are taking comfort in knowing he died peacefully on Christmas Eve day.

I love you dad. Rest in peace. You will be missed but always celebrated with exceptional memories and joy.

Jeffry Duke - January 06, 2023 at 12:55 PM

LK

“ *Jere was the epitome of kindness. His face was usually lit with an infectious smile that was accompanied by the twinkling of his eyes. Roy and I are happy to have been part of his circle, and we will miss him.*

Roy and Linda Keffer

Linda Keffer - January 01, 2023 at 02:08 PM