



Mr. Charles A. Gaetano

July 18, 1923 - September 22, 2022

UTICA - Mr. Charles A. Gaetano, a prominent, lifelong Utican and local philanthropist, passed peacefully into the arms of the Lord on Thursday, September 22, 2022, after a remarkable and renowned life, at the age of 99. It was fitting that he passed in his home surrounded by his loving family.

Born on July 18, 1923, Charles was the son of the late Antonio and Congetta (Rizzo) Gaetano. He was a graduate of T.R. Proctor High School/Class of 1943. Immediately following graduation, he enlisted in the United States Navy serving as a Seabee during World War II. He was Honorably discharged in 1946 and then recalled to duty in 1952 serving stateside during the Korean Conflict.

On May 25, 1946 Charles married Cornelia "Connie" Nelson ~ the 'love of his life' and the amazing mother of his children. They were a marvelous duo, stunning and steadfastly in love. They shared 65 years "as one heart" until Connie's passing on January 23, 2012. Although his life was so active, Charles longed to be reunited in spirit with his adored Connie.

As a beloved patriarch, he was respected and admired as a father. He spent time imparting his wisdom with passion and love, raising his family, and remaining in their lives during all the seasons and generations. They embraced and carried on his customs which made for a fantastic family life. He always said his family was his greatest asset and joy.

A man of humble beginnings, by the mid 1950's, Charles had become a successful and highly regarded masonry contractor. In 1970, Chuck and

Connie established the Charles A. Gaetano Construction Corporation that evolved now to a second-generation, full-service General Contracting, Construction Management, and Design Build construction firm.

A skilled craftsman and self-made businessman, Charles forged a reputation as a leader in his community - a man committed to bettering his community through tireless determination, and a vision for positive change.

Some of his proudest professional achievements included the purchase and development of several of the city's most prominent landmarks: the former St. Luke's Hospital on Whitesboro Street known as the CAG Building, 258 Genesee Street where Gaetano Construction presently resides, the Paul Building on Elizabeth Street which was restored into modern office space; the former Boston Store in downtown Utica, the transformation of the former UNIVAC building into the Charlestown Factory Outlet Mall with a secondary outlet in Ogdensburg, the conversion of the Utica Catholic Academy into condominiums known as Academy at Southgate, and the restoration of the Chamanade Retreat Center in Marcy.

With a deep devotion for the visually impaired, Charles successfully negotiated with the General Electric Company to donate the Kent St. building to C.A.B.V.I. (Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired). He continued his involvement with C.A.B.V.I. for more than 40 years, serving 5 of those years as President, and was a Director Emeritus.

A vital member of the Utica business community for more than 50 years, his philanthropic contributions were vast. Utica University is one of many beneficiaries of his extraordinary commitment and generosity. In 2002, with Connie, Charles transformed not only their athletic program, but the entire vibrancy of the campus, with his generous support and leadership of The Charles A. Gaetano Stadium. In 2012 the Stadium Plaza was erected and dedicated in Connie's memory. In 2004, he was awarded the honorary degree, Doctor of Laws, in recognition of his remarkable professional accomplishments, philanthropy, and service to the institution. In 2007, the Alumni Council named him an honorary alumnus, and in 2015, he was

inducted into the Pioneer Athletics Hall of Fame.

With his love of country, he dedicated himself to the needs of veterans. He purchased the former YMCA building and donated it to the Veteran's Outreach Coalition.

He served as Chairman of the St. Elizabeth Medical Center Elizabethan Society for 10 years. He served on the Executive Council of the Upper Mohawk Valley Council of the Boy Scouts of America and gave of his time to the American Heart Association, and Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare. He was Chairman of the Syracuse Diocesan Hope Appeal and served over 35 years as Trustee of St. Agnes Church. He and Connie were both members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. He also served on the Knights of Columbus Council #189 and was a member of the Alambra.

Charles was a faithful communicant of St. Anthony & St. Agnes Church for many, many years, and his heart and soul belonged to the traditions of that parish.

He was awarded the Mohawk Valley Builder's Exchange Construction Man of the Year and named "Industrial Man of the Year" in 1979 by the Utica Chapter of the International Council Management.

In his private time, he found peace and solace fishing. He was a well-documented fisherman whose accomplishments include landing a 5-pound-plus smallmouth bass at Saratoga Lake, chronicled as one of his most memorable catches, and a nearly 20-pound lake trout from White Lake at his summer home. An ardent outdoorsman, he enjoyed hunting and winter sports. He had a great respect for wildlife. If you knew him, you would always find him with a dog or 2 by his side.

Whether you called him Dad, Grandpa G., Papa G., or Mr. G., Charles filled the hearts of all he held close and mentored. He was a dynamic, meticulous storyteller with a genuine, great smile that anyone who met him would never forget.

Charles is survived by his children, William C. and Cecelia Gaetano, Brian A.

and Sandra Gaetano, Charles N. and Vita Gaetano, Mary Jude Gaetano, Colleen A. Gaetano, and Greg “Tucker” and Michelle Gaetano; his adored grandchildren who made his life complete, Anthony and Meagan Gaetano, Dr. William and Krystal Gaetano and Mary Rose Gaetano; Erica Gaetano and Chris LoRusso, and Brittany Gaetano and Marissa Velez; Heather Gaetano and Jason Krzemien, Charles A. Gaetano II, Matthew and Jamie Gaetano, and Elizabeth and Ron Winn; and several great-grandchildren with whom he was blessed to have shared his heart and love. He was also beloved by his 2 nieces, Brenda A. Baker, and Donna Jones-Ilsley; and his cherished cousin, Flora (Rizzo) Scialdo.

He was preceded by his siblings and their spouses, Julia Gaetano, Rose and “Mo” Jones, and Frank and Angela Gaetano; his mother-in-law, Cornelia (Gaffney) Nelson; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Walter Nelson, Neal Nelson, Rosemary and Robert J. Baker, and Mary Agnes Finn; and his nephew, Robert J. Baker.

Mr. Gaetano’s relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend his Mass of Christian Burial and Celebration of Life which will commence on Saturday morning, October 1, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. at Mary, Mother of Our Savior Parish, Lourdes Campus, 2222 Genesee St., Utica with Military Honors conferred by the U.S. Navy. There will be an opportunity to pay respects to the family at the conclusion of Mass.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Charles’ honor may be directed to the Charles and Connie Gaetano Scholarship at Utica University online at <http://www.utica.edu/advance/donate.cfm> or the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired online at <https://www.cabvi.org/#donate>; envelopes will be available at the service.

Entombment will take place at the convenience of the family in their private Mausoleum at St. Agnes Cemetery where Charles will be laid to rest beside his beloved Connie. Upon their Mausoleum appears the following, in Italian, “Non c’è male per il figlio di un giardiniere!” which translates to “Not so bad for the son of gardenier”.

<https://youtu.be/qQzdAsjWGPg>

Cemetery Details

St. Agnes Cemetery

601 Arthur Street
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 732-8588

Previous Events

Funeral Service

OCT 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Mary, Mother of Our Savior Parish, Lourdes Campus
2222 Genesee St.
Utica, NY 13502
<https://www.motherofoursavior.org/CatholicChurch.php>

Tribute Wall



“ *I am so sorry, what a wonderful person he was.*

Victoria Celia - October 13, 2022 at 04:06 PM



“ *I was so sorry to here Mr G passed away my deepest condolences to everyone.*

Phil Aiello - October 01, 2022 at 06:01 PM

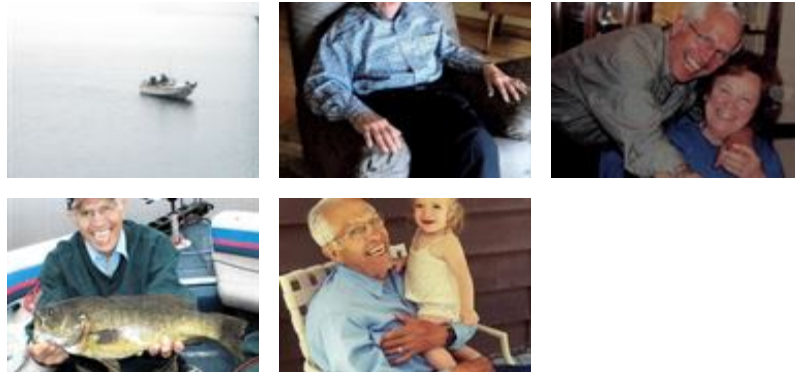


“ *Sending you all lots of love, hold on to the beautiful memories.
Pam LaPolla (Sacco)*

Pamela LaPolla - September 29, 2022 at 08:04 PM



“ *19 files added to the album LifeTributes*



Eannace Funeral Home, Inc. - September 29, 2022 at 12:18 PM



“ 16 files added to the album Life Tributes



Eannace Funeral Home, Inc. - September 29, 2022 at 11:07 AM

PA

So sorry to hear Mr. G passed our prayers are with you guys

Phil Aiello - October 01, 2022 at 04:57 PM



“ He was as wonderful man. All of the staff at Emily's Cleaning sends sincere condolences and prayers. All that staff that met him, truly adored him.



Amy DeVries - September 28, 2022 at 07:38 PM

JP

“ Please accept our condolences during this time!
Emil and Janet Paparella

Janet Paparella - September 28, 2022 at 05:04 PM

“ Chuck and I studied real estate from all the same teachers and we had similar mindsets. I am fortunate to have visited him on August 22nd and met his grandson Chuck at the house. We in part discussed his 100th year celebration and I told him I wouldn't miss it for anything.

When I visited him about 6 years ago, I got to meet more of his offspring and we had a terrific time together as we reminisced on old times and all the things we learned about business. He was 93 at the time and wanted to pick me up at the airport- I said Chuck, WTF your 93 ,I'll rent a car. He would not hear of it. The SOB drove better than me and he had 30 years on me.

My only request was that he had the sausage and oil as he always brought to the seminars we attended. Truthfully, that was my first attraction to him. I ate my weight in sausgae and got the recipe- and maybe I'm the only one outside the immediate family that has it. When I came home, I wrote the following on a piece of paper and to this day it is taped on my credenza in my office; at home

Chuck Gaetano;

Humility- He always thanked God.

Moved on- (Forgiveness Italian style) He forgot the names of all the people that screwed him.

Respect Family Name- He paid back \$2.5M to protect his dad's name when he had hard times.

Productive-Keeps working, uses his brain as it gives him purpose.

Charitable- The bling association, College.

Pay it Forward- Helped others get involved in business...all of his kids.

Generous- Gave us the sausage recipe.

Humorous- Laughed his ass off at all my jokes.

I loved Chuck, and this is taped to remind me how I want to live my life and be like my friend. I swear like him to.

We had great times growing together and learning the ins and outs of real estate and we shared info in the early days all the time. I am so sorry to miss the service as we prepare for a hurricane in Tampa Florida.

To his family- You are so fortunate to have had a fearless leader with desire and motivation that doesn't come around so much these days. I am grateful to have known him and so thankful to his grandson Chuck who notified me of his passing as I boarded a plane from Portugal to fly home last week. I looked at the clouds, put my hand on my heart and talked to myself about him for hours on that flight.

He is and always will be one of the greatest inspirations in my life. He had a phenomenal run. God Bless Chuck and his family as we move forward in life, I will never forget what he meant to me and so many others as I do my best to live the "Chuck Gaetano" life.

Rob and Kathy Palano, Tampa Florida



robert j palano - September 28, 2022 at 09:05 AM

CM

“ Dear Gaetano family,
So very sorry for the loss of your dad. I will be in Italy in October 1,
and will pray for your dad and beautiful mother at my cousin's
church in Ausonia. St. Michael
Cheryl Mondì

Cheryl Mondì - September 28, 2022 at 08:59 AM

BW

“ Bill,Brian,Chuck,and family,the fastest fast walker was a fantastic
man! In my prayers,Butch waszkiewicz

butch waszkiewicz - September 27, 2022 at 05:13 PM

JS

“ Sandra, to you and all of your family, please accept my sincere
condolences.




John Scala - September 27, 2022 at 08:57 AM

CP

“ Our deepest condolence to the Gaetano family. Charles was one of
the "greats" in the history of Utica. Most of all, he was a great guy!
Chris and Rodger Potocki

Chris and Rodger Potocki - September 27, 2022 at 08:14 AM

MM

“ Dear Tucker, Michelle and all of the Gaetano family, My deepest
sympathy is with all of you. Your Dad was a true gentleman...I will
always remember his beautiful smile and his great sense of humor,
he will be sadly missed but never forgotten. May you rest easy Mr G
your now with your beautiful Connie...May God bless you both
Amen   

Maria Marino - September 26, 2022 at 07:37 PM

DR

“ Dear Chuck, Vita, and family,
My sincerest condolences. I didn't know Mr. Gaetano, however, he must have been so very proud of the beautiful people you are. He must have been a great man.
Sincerely,
Debbie Rivera and family

Deborah Rivera - September 26, 2022 at 03:18 PM

DJ

“ My heartfelt condolences to this wonderful family; A look from Mr.G was straight into your soul, with a genuine smile that brought you into his welcome. A firm hand shake followed with the warmest sincere love from mr.G , that I remember. Gone for now but only for a few moments until we see that smile again.
David Jones

David Jones - September 26, 2022 at 12:52 PM

KK

“ Condolences to all the family. Difficult to lose someone so close but many memories and a wonderful legacy of family and community involvement live on.

Kevin Kelly - September 26, 2022 at 11:40 AM

MS

“ My sincere condolences to the Gaetano family. So many wonderful memories of Redfield Street. I am proud to call him my Godfather. Rest In Peace Uncle Chuck.

Mark Salamida - September 26, 2022 at 09:50 AM

SG

“ *A genuinely fine man who will truly be missed.*

Steve Gannon - September 26, 2022 at 09:45 AM

VL

“ *The Brotherhood of Holy Trinity Monastery and Seminary ,
Jordanville
wish to express to all in the Gaetano Family our sincere
condolences !
May Our Lord bless and comfort you during this great loss, and may
He remember the servant of God, Charles in His Kingdom !
Bishop Luke , Abbot*

victor lochmatow - September 25, 2022 at 08:13 AM

JC

*My heartfelt sympathy to the entire Gaetano family for the loss of their wonderful Dad. He was a true legend and a remarkable human being. I hope you find comfort knowing that he's back by your beautiful Mom's side. I pray that you all find comfort knowing this man truly touched the hearts of so many people on his journey through life with his kindness and generosity. May he Rest In Peace.
Love and Prayers,
Jeanne Castronovo*

Jeanne Castronovo - September 25, 2022 at 07:57 PM

BB

“ *Mary, Brian and family- so sorry for your loss. Your Dad was so successful in life, but even more importantly, he loved his family so much. May the Lord be with you all in this time of grief.- in the name of Jesus, Bill and Nannette Britt*

bill britt - September 25, 2022 at 07:36 AM

JB

“ I join a community of thousands in the Mohawk Valley who mourn the loss of your Dad. It goes without saying that he was larger than life..but to me, like your Mom,they were always wonderful to kids. He did so much for the community he loved, the causes he believed in, and the loyalty he shared with his friends. “Never forget where you came from”...and.henever forgot...my deepest sympathies, May his memory be eternal. We shall all miss him, and his wonderful laugh and smile.

john brown - September 24, 2022 at 08:18 PM

DB

He will be truly missed wjen3 mayors told my aunt Mattie Brown we had to get the block we wanted to build the Head start center for the under served preschool children of color and living below the poverty line a beginning of their education he was there for our community and walked us through all of the red tape so thank you so much Mr G RR eat easy in the arm of our lord and savior

Denise Brown - September 26, 2022 at 12:02 AM

AD

To Billy Boy, Brian, Chuck & all the Gaetano kids I first met Mr, Gaetano when I was 5 years old and we lived next to him on 749 Rutger st. I used to watch him load up his carpenter truck in the morning and unload it at 6 or 7 pm at night. Then Mr G would get on his 3 wheel bicycle and sell BILLY BOY ICE CREAM at night and weekends in the neighborhood and at the parkway. Many times as I got older he would talk to me about his business of carpentry and his Navy days. I was fascinated by his stories being that my dad died when I was 5 and he was like a father image to me. Everything he said to me must have took hold because I went to UFA AND DID CARPENTRY AND MASONRY FOR 4 YEARS. Then I worked a year building houses for Russ Cerminaro and then joined the Navy. Went to Vietnam and came home safe,,,all along I always kept in touch with him. When I became an insurance agent Mr G purchased ins. from me. When I bought and sold apartment buildings Mr Gaetano bought my first and second mortgages, he was to me a perfect gentleman who adored Connie and his children. Many times I would run into him and he would greet me with that beautiful smile and say Anthony how:s my old neighbor doing, He made me and everyone feel very important. His qualities as a person were just fantastic,, and always had that wide smile. He was also a very religious man who was so very honest and sincere. May you rest in peace and adore your beautiful Connie once again. It was truly an honor in life to have known Mr Gaetano.

*Tony Domanico
Tucson Az*

anthony ralph domanico - September 26, 2022 at 09:43 PM

CN

Mary Judith and all the Gaetano Family, so sorry for your loss. I was so fortunate to spend time with your mom and dad along with Be Denemark. The three of them would tell me all about their travels together to NYC and Europe. What wonderful memories I have, hearing them laughing, and all three talking at the same time...Connie, Chuck and Be, they were all such great story tellers. How lucky were they for their deep love and friendship through the years. As Tom Brokaw said many times "they were the greatest generation" and that is the truth. We will never see the likes of them again. How lucky were we to have had them in our lives .Your mom and dad were very special people .God bless them and all of you during this time. Cathy Newell

Cathy Newell - September 29, 2022 at 08:35 PM

LW

Dear Brian , Tucker and family, I have been away, and learned of your dad's passing just a few day ago from Dave. Please know that you are all on my heart and in my prayers. I had the pleasure of being one of Michael T's "dinner at the bar family", of which Mr G was a regular prior to the pandemic... He will be missed by us here, but our faith lets us know that his great smile was a welcome sight for many .. God bless us all, Linda Washburn

Linda Washburn - October 02, 2022 at 11:59 AM

KS

He was a wonderful person & well respected in our community. Our deepest sympathy to his family. Larry & Kathy Scharf

Kathleen Scharf - October 12, 2022 at 11:13 PM