



Mr. Donato M. "Danny" Nappi, Sr.

April 23, 1942 - March 13, 2026

UTICA – Mr. Donato M. “Danny” Nappi, Sr., age 83, passed away peacefully on March 13, 2026, during the golden years of his life.

Born in Utica on April 23, 1942, Donato was the son of the late Generoso “Jerry” and Amalia “Molly” (Sellitti) Nappi. Danny attended Utica City Schools. He went on to proudly serve his country in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Private First Class, stationed in Okinawa- one of his proudest accomplishments.

At one time, Danny was associated with the family business, Nappi Upholstering. He later worked as a truck driver for N.D. Peters Concrete Company before “leaving for college”.

Danny had a deep and unconditional love for his family, especially his son, with whom he shared a strong and unbreakable bond from the day he was born until his final moments.

Danny loved the freedom of the open road and was a true automobile aficionado, especially fond of his Cadillacs and Toyota pickup trucks. His license plates proudly read “DAN55.” He often made the drive along Route 12 to 28 on his way to Old Forge, enjoying the beauty of the North Country, stopping to fish at any lake along the way. These moments allowed him to reflect, relax, and bask in the beauty of the Adirondacks, with a special stop at

the White Lake Inn.

Through his friend Kevin Craska, Danny was introduced to St. Bartholomew's Church in Old Forge, led by Reverend Thomas E. Kornmeyer, whose message of forgiveness, hope, and redemption made the church a place for genuine friendships and meaningful fellowship in his life. He was grateful for the opportunity of a lifetime to meet Bishop La Valli of the Diocese of Ogdensburg. It was at this church that Danny also found a companion with whom he could share his heart for a time.

Danny was a true 'foodie,' who loved exploring new restaurants near and far and enjoyed the art of cooking, often discovering new recipes online. He loved music of all kinds, from the Count Basie Orchestra and Italian American tunes to blues and southern rock. The Allman Brothers Band, The Susan Tedeschi Band, Beth Hart, and The Marshall Tucker Band were among his favorites, and he was especially moved by the lyrics of "Desert Skies," "I'm livin', I'm happy, and I'm free." Danny had a deeply curious mind and loved keeping up with the world by reading newspapers, journals, and current events. He loved his NY Yankees.

Danny was proud of his Italian American heritage and his roots in Little Italy. His great-uncle and namesake, Donato Nappi, established the historic Caffé Bella Napoli on 151 Mulberry Street in NYC in the 1920s, where the Italian American Museum now stands, highlighting cultural significance for generations to come. Danny was proud of that family legacy, just as he was proud to be from Utica and of the many friendships he built there over the years.

In 2020, Danny celebrated a milestone in his life by dining at Rao's in NYC with Ralph, Anthony, and several close friends to celebrate his release from parole, an event he considered truly special. He also obtained a passport and

dreamed of returning to Italy to visit his cousins there.

Above all, Danny was proud of his son, Donato M. “Danny” Nappi, Jr., whom he loved beyond measure. He often said his son had a beautiful heart and soul. The two shared many similarities, and Danny frequently reminded him, “Be a gentleman,” and “Lead with respect.” For the last three years of Danny’s life, his son served as his primary caregiver. Though the responsibility was demanding, it was embraced by both as an act of love.

For Isabella, his eldest granddaughter, Danny admired her determination and quiet strength, and she embraced his passion for cars. In Harper, his second granddaughter, he saw a strong personality and an old soul that reflected a bit of himself. He truly loved them both and delighted in the time shared with them as they grew up into beautiful young ladies.

Danny had a special bond with his niece and goddaughter, Jené Nappi, and he appreciated how much she advocated for him from a distance. Towards the end, through good days and bad, Jené could be counted on to check in on how he was doing and how Danny Jr. was holding up. Always offering words of wisdom, temperance, and support.

Danny is survived by his beloved son, Donato M. “Danny” Nappi, Jr., and his partner Rachael Espinoza Kim, who became a meaningful part of the last year of his life, treating him with dignity and care and growing to call him a dear friend. Danny is also survived by his cherished grandchildren, Isabella Nappi, Harper Nappi, and their mother, Leslie Nappi. He was predeceased by his treasured brother, Eugenio “Gene” Nappi and his wife Faith “Faye” Nappi; his eldest brother, Dr. Anthony Nappi; and his sister, Annamarie Parker. He also leaves his sister-in-law, Cynthia Nappi; nieces and nephews, Cherié Nappi-Gilbert and her husband Terry Gilbert, Jené Nappi and her husband Daniel

Rossi, Dr. Geno Nappi and his wife Theresa, and Dr. Anthony Nappi and his wife Meghan; great-nieces and great-nephews, Danielle Cozza-Whitely and her husband A.J.; Cinzia Nappi; Shiloh Simei Rossi; and Drew and Generoso Nappi; great-great-nephews and great-great-niece, Albert "AJ" Whiteley III, Eugenio "Geno", and Amalia Faith; and cousins, especially Antonetta, who resided in their Italian hometown of Liviri, Naples, Italy and recently passed away. He also leaves his childhood friend of 75 years, Mickey Rabice, "The Crash Brothers" Ralph and Anthony Giovinazzo, Russ Pelli, and Jake Minicone – they shared a brotherhood and pride in their Italian heritage. Danny would not want his son's two Boston Terriers, Olive and Luca, to be forgotten as they were "Grandpa's Girls."

The family would like to extend their deepest gratitude to Christopher Jude Pelli, Esq. Danny's trusted lawyer, confidant, and friend. Without Chris's dedication and perseverance, we would not have been blessed to have had Danny home these past ten years.

Danny Jr. also wishes to acknowledge Danny's Primary Care Physician, Dr. Samuel Gooldy, and his staff, and the outstanding care his father received from the compassionate and capable staff of Wynn Hospital. Their support provided a positive and comforting experience, and he sends sincere thanks and well-wishes to all who cared for his father.

A Memorial Gathering in Donato's honor will be held on March 31, 2026, from 4:00-5:00 p.m. at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. Donato's Memorial Service will commence at 5:00 p.m. at the funeral home.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

MAR 31. 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com
<https://www.eannacefuneralhome.com>

Memorial Service

MAR 31. 5:00 PM (ET)

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corner of Hammond Ave.
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Tribute Wall

AE

“ Anthony E. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Donato M. "Danny" Nappi, Sr..

Anthony E. - March 31 at 03:39 PM

CG

“ Danny was a unique man God bless him and God bless his soul one famous saying was give my regards condolences to Danny and all the family

cousin gus - March 29 at 04:00 PM

JF

“ Joe Steet and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Donato M. "Danny" Nappi, Sr..

Joe Steet and family - March 26 at 07:20 PM

JF

“ Joe Steet and family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mr. Donato M. "Danny" Nappi, Sr..



Joe Steet and family - March 26 at 07:20 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mr. Donato M. "Danny" Nappi, Sr..



March 26 at 03:31 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mr. Donato M. "Danny" Nappi, Sr..



March 24 at 01:39 PM



“ G Velletto family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Mr. Donato M. "Danny" Nappi, Sr..



G Velletto family - March 23 at 08:48 AM



“ G Velletto family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Donato M. "Danny" Nappi, Sr..

G Velletto family - March 23 at 08:48 AM

JS

“ I was fortunate enough to get to know Danny later in life. I was working at Crashes. Danny was a fixture. Morning, coffees, midday lunches, and evening gatherings so many conversations. All of them meaningful. A special bond is through his relationship with his family in Naples monthly phone calls to his family members where I would translate. I got to know them through these conversations. Pasquale and Antonella... Wonderful people. Danny was a good guy with a lot of stories. There was a calm about him in those years. A quiet dignity that I understood and appreciated. Danny Nappi was a good man to me. And I am thankful to have called a friend. Godspeed my friend.

Jerry Stucchi - March 22 at 10:39 PM



“ Dan, My condolences to you and your family. I will cherish the memories of the Stanley Theatre lunches and getting to know your dad.

Linda Iannone - March 22 at 06:01 PM

LL

“ Danny, so sorry to hear about your Dad. Our thoughts are with you.
Linda LaDuc and family

Linda LaDuc - March 21 at 06:10 PM

RP



Russell Pelli - March 22 at 06:07 PM

LF

“ *Very sorry for your loss .My late husband John Fusaro and Danny were friends . Whenever they met in public they'd always share something that would bring laughter to both of them .Rest in Peace Danny 🙏*

linda fusaro - March 21 at 08:22 AM

CT

“ *Rest in peace my friend, I will miss listening to your stories and experiences. You taught me show much and helped me through difficult times in my life*

Chet Talarico - March 21 at 07:29 AM

RK

“ *Rest in peace. My deepest condolences to his son, and to all who knew and loved him. Semper Fi.*



Rachael Espinoza Kim - March 20 at 08:31 PM