



Mr. Joseph D. "Joe" DiCesare

September 8, 1936 - April 3, 2026

UTICA - Mr. Joseph D. "Joe" DiCesare, age 89, went home to the Lord on Good Friday, April 3, 2026, with his loving family at his side. He is now reunited with his wife, Shirley and their baby son, Joseph, Jr.

Born in Utica on September 8, 1936, Joseph was the youngest of five siblings born to the late Giuseppe "Joseph" and Antonia "Antoinette" (Salamida) DiCesare. Raised and educated locally, he was a graduate of T.R. Proctor High School/Class of 1955. On May 17, 1958, he wed the former Shirley J. Wheelock with whom he shared 55 years prior to her passing on August 13, 2013. Their marriage was a match made in heaven. Joe and Shirley not only loved each other, ...they were in love with each other.

Joe worked for more than 50 years for the Laborers' International Union of North America Local #35 representing various local companies, with special mention of HR Beebe Construction Services and Buck Construction Corporation, Inc. He fought for better wages, benefits, and safer job sites because he believed that construction laborers are the "backbone of America's workforce." He retired as Business Manager of Local #35, and in more recent years was still active with Trustees of the Pension Fund. Joe's heart and values mirrored those of St. Joseph, the patron saint of workers, a protector of the church, and a humble model for all fathers.

A dedicated patriarch, Joe was selfless and hard-working in providing for his family. He was blessed with a sense of humor and could deliver and appreciate a joke. Helpful and unassuming, Joe dedicated his time and energy to his fraternal organizations including the Knights of Columbus where he received the 4th degree with a goal to foster the spirit of patriotism and encourage active Catholic citizenship. He was a faithful Navage, and former Color Guard Corps Commander. He was also a loyal member of the Knights of St. John International Commandery #385, and the Utica Social Athletic Club. He currently practiced his Catholic creed as a parishioner of St. Anthony & St. Agnes Church. He received his Sacraments including Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony, and had the honor of being an altar server at his home parish, St. Anthony of Padua Church.

In looking back on his life, Joe was proud of his professional accomplishments as the union Business Manager, entrusted with the wellbeing and safety of his fellow union members.

But above all else, Joe and Shirley were active and involved parents in the lives of their children, Carla and Marty, and equally as grandparents, it was a great source of true joy to be a part of Stefan's life. When Nyomi Grace came into their lives, Joe was in complete awe of her.

Joseph is survived by his beloved daughter and "son", Carla and Marty Nemecek; his cherished grandson, Stefan Nemecek; and his treasured great-granddaughter, Nyomi Grace. He carried in his heart the memory and love of his son, Joseph D. DiCesare, Jr., who passed away in infancy on March 30, 1959. He also leaves many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins, with mention of the Melchiorre and Convertino families. He was predeceased by his brothers and sisters-in-law, Carl J. and Concetta "Connie" DeCesare, Sebastian J. "Buster" and Mary DiCesare, Peter J. DiCesare, Pasquale DiCesare; sister, Lorenza DiCesare, who passed away in infancy;

nephews, Michael DeCesare, and Anthony DiCesare; sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Angeline and James Fitzgerald, Geraldine and Arthur Carpenter, Iona Venettozzi, Melvin "Joseph" Wheelock, and Steward Wheelock.

Joe was a patient of Dr. Samuel Gooldy, they shared in a trusting relationship. While still in his own home, the companions of Daughters for Hire became part of the family, particularly Jackie McCoy who Joe loved and with whom he shared mutual admiration. Gratitude is also extended to the Sitrin Health Care Center Aspen Cottage for the care and compassion rendered by Taylor and Ida to Joe during his time there... Carla was comfortable when she needed to depart knowing her Dad was in their safe and capable care.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend Joseph's Mass of Christian Burial and Celebration of Life which will commence on Saturday, April 11, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. at St. Anthony & St. Agnes Church, 422 Tilden Ave. There will be an opportunity to greet the family at the conclusion of Mass. For those wishing to do so, please consider memorial donations in Joe's honor to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital online at www.stjude.org/donate; envelopes will be available at the service. Entombment will take place in Christ Our Savior Mausoleum at Calvary Cemetery, beside his beloved Shirley at the convenience of the family.

Cemetery Details

Christ Our Savior Mausoleum at Calvary Cemetery

2407 Oneida Street
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 735-2727

Previous Events

MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

APR 11. 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Anthony & St. Agnes Church
422 Tilden Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 732-1177
<https://www.stanthonystagnes.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mr. Joseph D. "Joe" DiCesare.*



April 10 at 04:27 PM



“ *Please accept our sincere condolences during this difficult time*

Emil & Janet Paparella - April 09 at 01:30 PM



“ *Carla and family....So very sorry for your loss. We have known your Dad for many years. My mother and her family grew up next door to your Dad on Kathleen St .(Capotorto's) I've always known your Dad as JUNIOR...God Bless..John and Isabelle Kostera*

Isabelle Kostera - April 08 at 02:18 PM



“ *Carla, Marty and Family,
We are so sorry for your loss and know how much you will miss your dad. Joe was so much a part of the Knights of Columbus and those of us who knew and served with him will miss him too. He truly left a mark on and exemplified the Color Corps!
Don Lazzaro*

Don Lazzaro - April 07 at 01:56 PM

DA

A real truly genuine friend and gentleman and boss really will be missed a great union man the best thing I think I can say that he was a true friend i miss me and him going to breakfast and talk the real good time on the job sites

danielwellington - April 22 at 09:29 PM