



Mr. Joseph F. Gaeta

September 28, 1929 - February 8, 2021

UTICA - Mr. Joseph Frank Gaeta, age 91, passed peacefully on Monday, February 8, 2021 at the Masonic Care Community with the love and support of his family.

Born in Utica on September 28, 1929, Joseph was the son of the late Joseph and Agnes (Chambrone) Gaeta. His mother passed when he was 11 years old and his second mom, Mary Gaeta raised him as her own. He began his elementary schooling in the Utica City School District in 1936, and completed his secondary education as a graduate of T.R. Proctor High School, Class of 1949. He continued his education at Clarkson University from 1949-1950 and then at Utica College of Syracuse University where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Physics in 1959. A proud veteran, Joe served his country with honor from 1951-1955 as a member of the United States Air Force stationed stateside. On April 8, 1961 he married Evelyn Arrigo with whom he shared 46 years in an incredible union of love and devotion. From this beautiful marriage, they had two wonderful children, Gail and Joseph. Evelyn passed away on September 11, 2007. But now, they are one, for eternity.

Joe entered the workforce at the Rome Air Development Center (RADC) at Griffiss Air Force Base where he developed Radar systems used in the protection of our great nation. Joe's passion for technology was evident in his projects that were years in the making. His travels were vast and his position was integral in the defense and protection of our freedom. In 1985, after rendering 25 years of service to the RADC, he retired.

A man of devout faith, Joe lived a Christ-centered life, channeling the word of God each day. Joe attended weekly Mass at St. Anthony & St. Agnes Church and participated in the annual parish festival as well as the yearly feast honoring Sts. Cosmas and Damian. For friends and family, the Gaeta household was the gathering place for any occasion whether for after church coffee or holiday parties, especially Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. He and Evelyn always welcomed loved ones to their home that was filled with laughter, tradition, hospitality, and most notably, food.

For a hobby, Joe took up photography and cinematography and featured his latest work on Saturday nights. When he wasn't behind the camera, Joe exercised his other interests. He remodeled their home, tinkered with cars, planted an annual vegetable garden, enjoyed boating at Delta Lake, fishing on the Black River, played poker on Friday nights with his brothers-in-law and nephews, dined out and played cards with friends during "couples time", and golfed during retirement, a sport that he loved. In addition to golf, Joe loved watching Yankee baseball but enjoyed watching his grandson Joe play even more. As snowbirds, Joe and Evelyn traveled to Palm Bay, Florida every winter where they loved the sunshine. They grew more adventurous in their new oasis, blessed with old and new friends, alike.

As a father and patriarch, he provided insightful guidance, loving fun, and plenty of jellybeans to those around him. He was a kind man, non-judgmental and supportive. Spending time with his grandchildren and sharing his love with them was second nature. He shared a lifetime of wisdom and stories and never failed to make them smile with songs or jokes! His grandchildren adored him.

Joe was a former member of the Knights of St. John's Commandery #385. As a true patriot, he always saluted the American flag. Looking back, we can celebrate Joe's life, when it began as a boy who grew up during the Great Depression, resilient and dedicated as he became an honorable man, rooted in loving God, his family, and his country.

Joe is survived by his daughter, Gail A. Diesfeld; his son and daughter-in-law,

Joseph and Susan Gaeta; grandchildren, Erica Diesfeld, Evan Gaeta Diesfeld, Elise Diesfeld and their father, Paul; Ariana Gaeta and her loving spouse Angela, and Joseph Salem Gaeta; his sister and brother-in-law, Regina and David Lewis. He also leaves many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins; brother-in-law, Vito "Parky" LoParco; and lifetime friends, Joseph and Margaret Montanaro, as well as many other friends who were loyal and close to his heart. He was predeceased by his sisters and brothers-in-law, Carmella and Louis "Red" Chirillo, Agnes and Vaughn "Bud" Combs, and Rosaline LoParco; brother, Frank Gaeta; and in-laws, Frank and Theresa Arrigo, Marino and Antoinette Arrigo, and James and Angie Arrigo. Every conversation with Joe concluded with a simple sentiment, "Ti amo con tutto il cuore E mi manche tu".

The family is grateful to Dr. Kevin McCormick and the Masonic Care Community of CNY, especially the staff of the Brooklyn Household, for the love and care they provided to Joe these past few years; as well as Jay and staff from the Activities Department who provided weekly FaceTime meetings for Joe and his family to connect during these difficult times.

The family will honor and commemorate Joseph's life at a private time. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend Joseph's funeral service and Celebration of Life which will commence on Friday, February 12, 2021 at 12:00 noon at St. Anthony & St. Agnes Church where his Mass of Christian Burial will be offered with Military Honors conferred by the United States Air Force. Face masks are required and social distancing and contact tracing will be implemented. Those wishing to express an act of kindness in Joe's memory may make a contribution to either St. Anthony & St. Agnes Church, by mail to 422 Tilden Ave., Utica, NY 13501 or the Alzheimer's Association, Central New York Chapter online at <https://www.alz.org/centralnewyork> or by mail to 441 W. Kirkpatrick St., Syracuse, NY 13204; envelopes will also be available at the service. Interment will follow graveside in St. Agnes Cemetery where he will be laid to rest beside his wife.

During this time of social distancing that we are all experiencing, please take a moment to connect with Joe's family through the "Memories" section of his obituary. Our prayers go out to all as a sign of our continued support.

Tribute Wall



“ *Jeremy Hayes lit a candle in memory of Mr. Joseph F. Gaeta* ”



Jeremy Hayes - March 23, 2021 at 09:53 AM



“ Joe (Dad): I just started to get to know you , when my father unexpectedly passed away , you expressed yourself to me how much he meant and you were there to fill in the times when I needed a Dad! Thank you. You have always been there for me through good times as well as sad ones, the person I could go to you for anything and you'd listen and give advice or reassurance.

Things weren't easy but the strength and support you've given me was immeasurable. That my friend is called character, I understand it now being older and a father of my own . The importance of that quality. You were never an affectionate guy but in your subtle yes subtle ways , you expressed it.

Our memories in Utica and Florida together will always be ours. The golfing hell what can I say , you're the only guy that golfed 4 times a week and still shoot 108 , Joe I never wanted to learn that bad habit , or the time you're telling Evelyn how to hold the club and hit the ball and she says “ joe I'm doing it my way” , that next hole she got a hole in one

I'll miss you , but a part of you will still be here. I'm going to strive to make you proud to be the kind of dad you want me to be.
Give Evelyn and my dad a hug .

Love you Paul Diesfeld

Paul Diesfeld - February 12, 2021 at 08:01 AM

JG

Paul, Dad loved you and always wanted thr best for you. Thank you for your beautiful message. As for the golf game; I think I inherited that gene! Always family! Love, Joe

Joseph Gaeta - February 12, 2021 at 08:40 AM

KA

“ So many memories.....Where to start? A great man who seeked out the good in people, always available to listen and give advice , a true family man whom many looked up too . RIP Uncle Joe , rejoice with our heavenly family 🙏 The Arrigo's..... Karen, Frank Jr. Renee

Karen arrigo - February 11, 2021 at 10:46 PM

JG

Thank you for your kind words Karen. God Bless you, love, Joey

Joseph Gaeta - February 12, 2021 at 04:47 AM

JM

“ To Our Blessed Other Family,

Joe's passing is so very difficult for (me) us to accept or comprehend. He lived directly across the street from me and we were inseparable...walked to school together, hung out at Vic's garage, worked the Canastota onion farm...awesome, fun loving memories. Later, during our retirement, we talked your mom and dad into settling on the East rather than the West Florida coast...what a busy social life we endured, thank God. Over fifty people from Utica settled here. We golfed, went to dances, attended concerts, picnics, parties, played cards, and games etc. So loved them and will miss them dearly. All our love, prayers and blessings always.

The Montanaros

Joseph Montanaro - February 11, 2021 at 08:30 PM

JG

Thank you Joe for your vivid memories you shared with my dad. You were his best friend and Joe always talked about those great times you had together, including his singing in the Canastota onion field! Lol. Joe's golf game was never as good as yours but he so enjoyed hitting the ball frequently with you observing that beautiful swing. Wishing you and all the Montanaros peace and joy. God bless you and your lovely family. Love, Joe

Joseph Gaeta - February 12, 2021 at 04:54 AM

RL

“ We are very sorry for the passing of your Dad. Our prayers and thoughts are with you at this difficult time Rick and Linda LaClair

Rick LaClair and Linda LaClair - February 11, 2021 at 05:17 PM

JG

Thank you Rick and Linda! God Bless, Joe

Joseph Gaeta - February 11, 2021 at 06:24 PM

MP

“ Gail and Joey, I was so saddened to hear of Joe's passing!! My favorite memory was lugging my geometry book across the street for his always generous help!! My first thought was how happy your Mom must have been to meet him and take him to see the rest of the family!! Love and prayers, Maria Piacenti Pilla

maria P pilla - February 11, 2021 at 04:55 PM

SH

*“ Joe, Ari, Angela and family,
Very sorry to hear of your loss. Our condolences to all the family. We remember meeting Mr Gaeta many years ago at a Farley gathering. We are thinking of you all today.
Bob & Sue Hacker (cousin to the Farley clan)*

Sue Hacker - February 11, 2021 at 08:11 AM

JG

Thank you Sue and Bob! God Bless, Joe

Joseph Gaeta - February 11, 2021 at 03:36 PM

JM

“ *I'm so sorry to hear about Joe's passing. I worked with Joe at the base and we had great time together. He was always happy and upbeat and I enjoyed every activity including skiing. Joe will be on my prayers.*

Jack Mineo - February 10, 2021 at 08:38 PM

JG

Thank you Jack! He spoke highly of you and the team at RADC. He was a pretty good skier back in the day too! Warm Regards, Joe Gaeta

Joseph Gaeta - February 11, 2021 at 03:38 PM



“ *Uncle Joe was the best. Always a warm smile on his face and a comforting hug when he saw you. Sweetest Uncle ever, and a loving family man. I always looked forward to holidays, going over to visit Aunt Evie and Uncle Joe, for yummy goodies and chit chatting for hours. It brings me joy to think that they are back together again. Sending lots of love.*



Maria Arrigo-sequin - February 10, 2021 at 11:36 AM

JG

Thank You Maria for sharing your fond memories of Joe and Evelyn. Love, Joey

Joseph Gaeta - February 10, 2021 at 07:29 PM

KA

The memories are plentiful. A great family man , a man who seeked out good in everyone and was always willing to share some advice (from the heart) RIP Uncle Joe , enjoy reuniting with our Heavenly family 🙏❤️

Karen Arrigo - February 11, 2021 at 09:11 AM

ME

“ *Joe & family, Ari & Angela our sincere condolences on your loss. I remember Mr Gaeta and always enjoyed his company at family events.*

George & MaryAnn Eggleston

Mary Ann Eggleston - February 10, 2021 at 11:16 AM

JG

Thank you George & MaryAnn. God Bless, Joe

Joseph Gaeta - February 10, 2021 at 07:27 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mr. Joseph F. Gaeta.*



February 10, 2021 at 12:05 AM

CS

“ *So sorry to hear about Uncle Joe,. I could remember all the good times that we had on Bacon Street and Nod Road. They were both wonderful and always there for you to talk to. Uncle Joe will be sadly miss, but now is with the rest of the family. Love Sandy and George Salem*

cousin Sandy Salem - February 09, 2021 at 08:34 PM

JG

Thank you Sandy and George. Love, Joey

Joseph Gaeta - February 10, 2021 at 06:34 AM

JO

“ *Mr & Mrs Gaeta were absolutely wonderful people. They made everyone around them smile 😊*

john - February 09, 2021 at 06:53 PM

JG

Thank You John! God Bless, Joe Gaeta

Joseph Gaeta - February 10, 2021 at 06:35 AM

MA

“ *I have so many great memories of Uncle Joe throughout the years. My most favorite would have to be movie nights when he would break out his projector and show us all the old home movies. Aunt Evie would always serve up a delicious treat and we would laugh and reminisce. Everyone was always welcome at their house and they always made you feel special. I take comfort knowing he is with Aunt Evie now in heaven watching over Gail and Joey and their wonderful families. My deepest sympathy to Gail, Joey, Sue and all the grandchildren. You were all truly the light of his life.*

Maryellen - February 09, 2021 at 03:48 PM

JG

Thank You Maryellen, He loved you so much. Great memories! Love, cousin Joe

Joseph Gaeta - February 10, 2021 at 06:37 AM

SC

Gail and Joey, I always enjoyed seeing your father. I will always remember his smile and warm welcome. He and your mother were a great pair. Many sweet memories of both of them.

Sandra Cotrupe

sandra cotrupe - February 12, 2021 at 06:46 PM

PC

One of the nicest people I have met in my career-joe was such a humble man. Always kind and always with a smile . He will truly be missed but never forgotten. My condolences to your family. Patty-joe's nurse at the MCC.

patricia M conkling - February 13, 2021 at 09:06 PM