



Milford A. Decker

November 3, 1936 - April 14, 2012

Mr. Milford A. Decker, age 75, of Utica, and formerly of St. Johnsville, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, April 14, 2012 at the Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare Center with the love and support of his family by his side.

Born in St. Johnsville, NY, on November 3, 1936, Milford was the son of the late

Herman and Betty (Thompson) Decker. An only child, he was raised and educated in

his home town. He then attended Hope College in Michigan receiving a BA and

continued his studies in Theology at the New Brunswick Seminary in New Jersey.

Milford shared his life with his beloved partner, Jeffrey K. Sterling.

Milford served as Minister at the Reformed Church of America in New York and

Pennsylvania and also as the Montgomery County Historian and Archivist. Deeply

spiritual and loving, Milford was not afraid to speak his mind. He personified Christ's teachings by feeding everyone through the love and goodness of His word. He was a Deacon at the Plymouth Bethesda United Church of Christ, a denomination that is accepting of gays and was proud to bake Parkerhouse rolls

for their Easter dinners from a recipe originating at Beardslee Castle where

Deacon Milford was a pastry chef. A member of the LGBT community, he supported the "Gay" community by organizing Pot Luck dinners for decades, and was a marriage ambassador for the Empire State Pride Agenda organization for equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. He was a charter member of the Palentine Settlement Society of Montgomery County. Milford enjoyed gardening, cooking, entertaining, reading, and researching genealogy through which he identified his ancestors as far back as King Charlamaine and the Pilgrims, and relatives who fought in the American Revolution and later US President Andrew Jackson. He was very prominent in promoting the preservation of Nellis Tavern in St. Johnsville and the Frisbee House in Salisbury Center and donated historical items to these landmarks. Milford is survived by his life partner, Jeffrey; his 5 children, many grandchildren, friends, daughter-in-law Lela (Kushma) Decker of St. Johnsville, and special cousin Betsy Emery of Syracuse. His family wishes to thank Milford's caregivers for the love and concern rendered to him.

Milford's funeral service and celebration of life will be held on Saturday, April 21, 2012 at 1:00 at Plymouth Bethesda Church, 500 Plant St. Utica. The family will receive visitors at the conclusion of the services. All are invited to attend a Pot Luck Dinner at the church following services. Those wishing to express an act of kindness in lieu of flowers may make a donation to the Plymouth Bethesda Church, 500 Plant St., Utica, NY 13502, Nellis Tavern, Route 5 Vedder Road, St. Johnsville, NY 13452, Frisbee House, 109 State Rte.

29A, Salisbury Center, NY 13454 or Empire State Pride Agenda, Albany, NY;

envelopes will be available at the service.

Arrangements have been entrusted to the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc. 932

South

St., corner of Hammond Ave.

Previous Events

Service

APR 21. 1:00 PM (ET)

Plymouth Bethesda United Church of Christ
Utica, NY

Tribute Wall



“ Eannace Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Milford A. Decker



Eannace Funeral Home, Inc. - April 14, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DF

“ We miss him at Plymouth Bethesda church. He was such a nice man. Also, he was a great cook. I often remember his dinners and talking with him at church, One day we had chemo together.. He was so brave and upbeat even through his illness.



Diane Fetterolf - September 04, 2019 at 06:46 AM

BB

“ Brenda Pendrak Barrett lit a candle in memory of Milford A. Decker



Brenda Pendrak Barrett - April 22, 2012 at 05:41 PM

VV

“ *Vincent Vendetta lit a candle in memory of Milford A. Decker*



Vincent Vendetta - April 21, 2012 at 08:47 PM

VV

“ *Dear Jeff,
I loved the dinners that I attended at Milford's...I wish that I knew both of you long before the few I attended. It seems I knew both of you much longer...what great guys!
Thanks for your wonderful hospitality. Even though I wasn't at the service physically, I was there with you and all our friends spiritually.
Love,
Vinny V.*

Vincent Vendetta - April 21, 2012 at 08:45 PM

FC

“ *he was a great guy who made amazing swedish meatballs. he had a kind heart. he was quick to laugh and he supported my family. good people is all i have to say. sadly i cant attend his funeral tommorow but he will really be sorely missed he was an awesome guy!
~felix the cat*

felix the cat - April 20, 2012 at 09:22 PM

BE

“ *Betsy J. Emery sent a virtual gift in memory of Milford A. Decker*



Betsy J. Emery - April 20, 2012 at 09:07 PM

BE

“ *Betsy J. Emery lit a candle in memory of Milford A. Decker*



Betsy J. Emery - April 20, 2012 at 09:03 PM

BE

Jeff.... You were the best friend that Milford ever had!!!! Thank you for never leaving his side during his cancer. You are very special!!!!!!

Betsy J. Emery - April 20, 2012 at 09:12 PM

TJ

“ *Jeff,
I am sorry for the loss of your beloved. My prayers and thought are with you during this dark time.
God Bless you,
Teresa Joseph*

Teresa Joseph - April 20, 2012 at 11:30 AM

KS

“ Kevin Sweetser lit a candle in memory of Milford A. Decker



Kevin Sweetser - April 20, 2012 at 07:06 AM

SL

“ Jeff,
On behalf of the Board of the Palatine Settlement Society, I would like to express our condolences for the loss of Milford. We appreciate his initiating and life membership in our organization and in the restoration of the Nellis Tavern.
Palatine settlement Society

Sandy Nellis Lane - April 19, 2012 at 09:56 PM

DM

“ Dana & Peg Muzzy lit a candle in memory of Milford A. Decker



Dana & Peg Muzzy - April 19, 2012 at 08:14 PM

MT

“ Marsha Thomas-Delia lit a candle in memory of Milford A. Decker



Marsha Thomas-Delia - April 19, 2012 at 01:21 PM

CD

“ *Milford was a Wonderful person, He always Welcomed people into his home with his wonderful potluck Dinners. He cared about everyone in his life.!! Sincerely, Chris and Barbara Demlin*



Chris Demlin - April 19, 2012 at 12:37 AM

MH

“ *Mary Hosey lit a candle in memory of Milford A. Decker*



Mary Hosey - April 18, 2012 at 08:39 PM

LB

“ *JEFF,
WE ARE ALL SO SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS
LEWIS COUNTY GENERAL PHARMACY DEPT*

LISA BERRUS - April 18, 2012 at 01:50 PM

RS

“ *PRAYERS AND THOUGHTS GO OUT 2
JEFF (MILFORD'S PARTNER) AND THE
REST OF THE FAMILY.....MAY HE
REST IN PEACE*



ROBBIE SEYMOUR - April 18, 2012 at 09:19 AM

JS

“ Dear Jeff--I am so sorry for your loss. Milford was a very special man, as you know, and it was a pleasure and an honor to know him. fondly, Joan Teuchert Shkane



Joan Teuchert Shkane - April 18, 2012 at 07:12 AM

LS

“ We are really sorry to hear of Milford's passing. We will always remember him fondly of his warm hospitality at family events.

Lutz and Darlene Scherneck - April 17, 2012 at 06:13 PM

LS

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Lutz and Darlene Scherneck - April 17, 2012 at 06:09 PM

TF

“ Jeff, Milford and you are in our family prayers.



Tim & Colleen Moylan Family - April 17, 2012 at 05:41 PM

TI

“ *The Rev. Lucy Ijams lit a candle in memory of Milford A. Decker*



the Rev. Lucy Ijams - April 17, 2012 at 01:56 PM

TI

To Jeffrey and all Mil's family, my heartfelt sympathy for your sudden loss. It was not long after I moved to Utica in summer 2010 that I met Mil and Jeff. I was SO happy to march in the July 4th parade with Pride Along the Mohawk last summer, soon after marriage equality was passed in NY. Mil kept up with the parade as long as he could, taking a rest in the shade of the Memorial Parkway median, and eventually completing the route at the Utica Rec center. I will never forget his beautiful smile, and am grateful for the life he lived, out loud and proud. I regret that a church obligation prevents me from attending the memorial service on Saturday. May all who love you be a source of strength during this difficult time.

the Rev. Lucy Ijams - April 17, 2012 at 02:07 PM

JS

Lucy, Thanks for that memory. He is missed. Jeff

Jeffrey K. Sterling - April 18, 2012 at 10:45 PM

TF

“ *Jeff, Milton and you are in our family prayers.*



Tim & Colleen Moylan Family - April 17, 2012 at 11:40 AM

JO

“ Our thoughts are with you, Jeff.



Jim & Tauni O'Toole - April 17, 2012 at 11:28 AM

CR

“ I am heartbroken to hear this news. My love and prayers to Milford's partner (my cousin) Jeff, and the rest of his family and friends. My he be happy in God's arms, and may those close to him find comfort. Much love.



Chris Reinhardt - April 16, 2012 at 05:27 PM

TD

“ Milford was the eternal activist and his driving force will atruly be missed.

Tim Dittfield - April 16, 2012 at 10:39 AM

JS

Tim, Thanks! Coming from you, it is even more meaningful!
Jeff

Jeffrey K. Sterling - April 18, 2012 at 10:47 PM

RB

“ Milford was the penultimate activist who never gave up on his community, his relationship or ceased in his demands for freedom and equality. He gave more to the community than many more would have. He will be missed by all who knew him. His trained and booming voice will be surely missed!

Ron & Bobby - April 16, 2012 at 12:29 AM

JS

*How sweet! Thanks for the kind words and memories.
Jeff*

Jeffrey K. Sterling - April 18, 2012 at 10:48 PM

YO

“ *Our thoughts are with Jeff and everyone in Central New York who loved this wonderful person. His touch of class, bringing together a diverse community in Utica tirelessly, was a gift. I'm stunned at the news and hope that time will heal this terrible loss.*

yonkers99 - April 15, 2012 at 11:53 PM

YO

This message was from Fred & Dave in Schenectady.

yonkers99 - April 15, 2012 at 11:54 PM

JS

How sweet are your words. He is missed. Jeff

Jeffrey K. Sterling - April 18, 2012 at 10:49 PM

MD

“ *Rest in peace Mil and thank you so much for all the Blessed dinners you cooked and shared with so many of your friends and family. You had such a humble heart and give so much to many people. God Bless your soul!!!!.. Marte and Debbe*

Marte and Debbe - April 15, 2012 at 07:50 AM

MC

*Milford is truly an example of Christianity as we were taught; fellowship and unconditional love for all of God's children. A man with progressive beliefs who had the same compassion for those who loved him as he did for those who would oppose his beliefs, Wilford will be mightily missed by everyone who knew him.
Sarah and Melissa*

Melissa Clark - April 16, 2012 at 05:16 AM



Melissa & Sarah! You're the best! Thanks for the kind & thoughtful words. Jeff

Jeffrey K. Sterling - April 18, 2012 at 10:51 PM