



Mr. Russell W. "Spider" DeVito

September 30, 1948 - May 12, 2024

SYRACUSE – Mr. Russell W. “Spider” DeVito, age 75, passed away on Sunday, May 12, 2024, after years of health complications. At the time of his death, he was in the hearts of those he loved most.

Born in Utica on September 30, 1948, Russell was the son of the late Roland A. and Rose (Diodato) DeVito. He attended Utica Free Academy and was a graduate of T.R. Proctor High School. At one point in time, he was wed to the former Christine Grimaldi and from that union came the blessing of their two daughters.

He began his career as an associate with the family’s iconic DeVito Bakery, which was known for its tomato pie. He lived the life of one who knew hard work and customer service. The business was truly a family affair and blended all their talents beautifully. He later became an accomplished chef and beloved bartender, who ventured as far as Las Vegas at a young age, where he worked at Caesar’s Palace. Russell then established himself in the Utica area at the original Grimaldi’s Ristorante. He was a jack of all trades, mainly referred to himself as a chef known as a “saucier” preparing the sauces and accompaniments for different dishes. He then moved to Syracuse and worked for decades sharing spirits at Rico’s Ristorante – he was the man many people came to see. He eventually brought his two daughters in to work alongside their dad and learn the food industry prior to the end of his career.

On his off days he ventured around Central New York, many days bringing his daughters, continuing his passion for photography as a real estate appraiser.

Russell was a real character! He was funny, charming, and a real “Chiacchierone” – these were the ingredients to his personality that made him so successful in his field. They also made him many strong friendships along the way. He was always welcomed to family gatherings and celebrations, bringing his Italian long hots, as well as his humor. The people around him were never bored, as Russell filled the room with countless stories that walked the line of fiction.

He was selfless when it came to his daughters; he catered to both their culinary and life’s desires and was always their chauffeur. He was an involved dad, always attending their activities and events. He had a playful side that they loved so much when they were children. The girls have fond memories of playing on their slip and slide and him baking in the sun listening to the Beach Boys. They loved fishing together in Chittenango Creek and playing at Sullivan Park– those trips turned into some of their favorite memories! Russell was an excellent shopper and loved fashion. In fact, he was known for his funky fashion sense and always had a matching coat and hat. He lived life to the fullest and was confident in himself – and he was the type to let you know it, too!

An Eagle Scout in his youth, he attended Camp Russell. He collected all types of knives and managed to be bestowed with a vast assortment, a collection he was immensely proud of. He was known to drive fast in his Corvettes, Datsuns, and 3 Volkswagen Beetles. Their exterior colors all matched their interior colors, each one of them as bright as Russell. Rock and roll from the 60s and 70s ignited his heart. He could have been a performer, and indeed he actually was! Russell lived each day on his own terms. He worked hard to live as long as he could to be a part of his girls’ lives, this was his legacy.

It was no coincidence that he was called home on Mother's Day, for his beloved mother had been waiting for him for over 70 years. His family takes solace that their hearts are now reunited.

Russell is survived by his adored and cherished daughters, Victoria Rose "Peanut" DeVito, and Diana Maria "Little One" DeVito. He fondly remembered his sister who preceded him, Diane DeVito Dawson. His loss is also felt by his sister and brother-in-law, Deborah "Debbie" and Daniel McGee; brother and sister-in-law, Dr. David and Dr. Regina DeVito; nieces and nephews, Deborah Dawson, Jennifer and Jeff Farley; Ross DeVito, Alex DeVito; Lindsey Herbert, and Kyle Herbert; several cousins; and aunt, Yolanda Rozyla. Russell had an extensive number of great friends he crossed paths with in life, they had many memorable times together and were so important to him.

The DeVito family wishes to thank the Residents of Christopher Community Senior Apartments on Tecumseh Rd. in Syracuse for their kindness and friendships. The way they treated Russell elongated his life, and he so enjoyed his time there. They enjoyed him too, nicknaming him "The Mayor," since he made things happen.

Visitation will be held on Monday, May 20, 2024, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. Russell's funeral service and Celebration of Life will commence at 6:00 p.m. at the funeral home. Interment will take place in Calvary Cemetery at the convenience of the family.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

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

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 20. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com

Funeral Service

MAY 20. 6:00 PM (ET)

Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.
932 South Street
corner of Hammond Ave.
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 724-6714
eannacefh@roadrunner.com

Tribute Wall

GD

“ 1 file added to the album Russell



Guy Danella - May 28, 2024 at 09:18 AM

GD

“ 1 file added to the album Russell



Guy Danella - May 27, 2024 at 04:50 PM

DF

“ Deborah Dawson, Jennifer & Jeff Farley purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Mr. Russell W. "Spider" DeVito.



Deborah Dawson, Jennifer & Jeff Farley - May 20, 2024 at 10:00 AM

JF

“ Johnny, David and the Aliasso Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mr. Russell W. "Spider" DeVito.



Johnny, David and the Aliasso Family - May 19, 2024 at 10:40 PM

DR

“ Russell and I became instant friends as we both shared the same professional work background, bartenders. It takes a special breed to be a bartender, you know everything, everyone tells you everything, and you have to have a great personality as well as many jokes! We would talk for hours at nite, at times I'd come up to visit while he had on Hallmatk movies or Abominable snowman finds! I always brought treats, he lived pretzels, chips and milk chocolate! Most of us knew if we left the peanut butter cups out he'd eat them all! Russell's personality was fun and he always smiled, he was so knowledgeable, & his outfits always matched from head to toe. He had a great laugh and he will be missed for a very long time. We love you Russell !❤️



Dawn T Randall - May 18, 2024 at 08:11 PM

CA

“ Carol Alberico purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mr. Russell W. "Spider" DeVito.



Carol Alberico - May 18, 2024 at 07:42 PM

CA

“ Carol Alberico planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Russell W. "Spider" DeVito.

Carol Alberico - May 18, 2024 at 07:42 PM

DD

“ 3 files added to the album Russell



Diana DeVito - May 17, 2024 at 03:17 PM

FR

“ Fredgrimaldi purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mr. Russell W. "Spider" DeVito.



Fredgrimaldi - May 17, 2024 at 09:58 AM

DS

“ So sorry to hear of the loss of our dear cousin Russell. Prayers and hugs to his family. Love, Doreen Diodato Schilling

Doreen Schilling - May 16, 2024 at 11:37 AM

RC

“ My true friend of 70 years since kindergarden went everywhere from Florida to Las Vegas and back a piece of me is gone you will be missed Lickman save a place for me say hello to Rocky we had alot of good times together we should have wrote a book Rest in Peace Jimmy

Rosario J Ciccone - May 16, 2024 at 07:26 AM

RG

My sincere condolences to Russell's family. Russell was a kind, gentle and caring person. Many good memories of him from The Diplomat, Grimaldi's, White Lake. You will be greatly missed. God Bless You and your family.

Richard Graniero - May 16, 2024 at 03:27 PM

CC

Prayers and condolences to Russell and his family. Grew up on Jay St, went to school with Diane at Brandegee. Many fond memories of the bakery, his Aunt and Grandmother when she would sit on the porch doing her needlework.

Christiana Conway - May 16, 2024 at 07:12 PM

DB

So sorry to hear about Russell . We grew up together on jay st ! Went to Brandegee School. Lived next door to the bakery .. many memories with his sister Diane also. My condolences to his family, Rest In Peace Russell 🙏

Diane S. Basile - May 16, 2024 at 08:15 PM

J(

Rest in peace Russ!!!! I'm happy you and Rocky are togetagain. Kiss him for me!

Joyce Asselta (Sassone) - May 19, 2024 at 08:59 PM

PC

After calling and texting the past month I found out today the sad and terrible news that my good buddy Russ had passed away. We worked together as teens and then were reunited in Las Vegas when I got assigned to the Nevada Test Site in the 80s. We kept in touch and spoke often over the so many years. Russ was one of the most talented and knowledgeable people in the Hospitality Industry that I have ever known, not just food and beverage but cost, sales and marketing, he was very multi talented and a personality that staff and patrons loved being around. So many great memories of my friend. Rest in Eternal Peace my friend. Paul Calogero, Henderson, Nevada

paul calogero - July 23, 2024 at 08:48 PM