



## Mr. Samuel Louis Russo, Jr.

January 2, 1950 - March 17, 2026

UTICA – Mr. Samuel Louis Russo, Jr., age 76, left this earthly life to be with his Heavenly Father on March 17, 2026, after a long illness, at Wynn Hospital.

Sam was born on January 2, 1950, in Utica, to Samuel L. and Eleanor (Russo) Russo. He studied in both parochial and public schools in Utica, but especially valued his time at Our Lady of Lourdes School, where, as a young child, he dressed as St. Patrick for a school function. Sam went on to attend Notre Dame High School, graduating in 1968, and then Utica College, which was at that time part of Syracuse University, graduating in 1972 with a degree in Political Science. Later in life, Sam left the work force and enrolled at St. John's University in Jamaica, Queens, New York, graduating in 1981 with a Master of Arts in Government and Politics.

It was at Utica College that Sam met the love of his life, Janice Furtek. They were married in August of 1971 at St. Stanislaus Church, a union that would last 54 years, during which they were inseparable.

Sam began his career while still in college, working as a carrier for the United States Postal Service. After graduating, he went on to serve numerous charitable organizations, as well as local and regional government agencies. A consummate grant writer, Sam raised funds in each of his roles, beginning with the City of Utica under Mayor Mike Caruso.

He later became Executive Director of the National Foundation March of Dimes and went on to work for Utica Mayor Ed Hanna, first as Senior Planner and then as Planning Director. Sam also held positions with the American Lung Association, ARC of Oneida County, and the Southern Tier Regional Planning Commission in Corning, New York.

Upon returning to the Mohawk Valley after earning his master's degree, Sam was appointed by Utica Mayor Stephen J. Pawlinga as Community Development Specialist, where he once again managed the City of Utica's multi-million-dollar grant programs. He also served the Utica Common Council as Chief Legislative Research Analyst.

Because of his deep appreciation for the academic environment, the latter half of Sam's career was spent in higher education. He served at Herkimer County Community College and, later, at Mohawk Valley Community College, from which he retired in 2012 as Grants Director. At the time of his retirement, he also served as President of the Administrators Union.

Sam maintained memberships in many civic and professional organizations, including the American Academy of Political Science, the International Platform Association, and, at one time, served as Secretary of the Kiwanis Club of Utica.

Sam was indeed the life of the party in college with his Alpha Phi Delta Fraternity brothers. He cherished regular family gatherings, especially on Sundays when his mom would cook the standard Italian fare. He was a generous soul, especially at Christmas. He loved his brother's family and his in-laws with his whole heart and took great joy in treating everyone to dinner, always insisting that appetizers be ordered for the table. Sam and Janice later devoted themselves to caring for his parents and mother-in-law in their later

years, even taking them on vacations to the Finger Lakes, New York City, and New Hampshire. There was also a special place in his heart for his sister-in-law, Jackie, who was like a daughter to Sam and Janice from a young age.

When Sam's health failed, he was most happy when watching the New York Yankees and St. John's University basketball games, as well as studying the stock market, world politics and economics. He always had a stock pick to give you.

However, above everything else, Sam loved the Lord. He could tell you about the lives of numerous Saints and always enjoyed conversations about the Catholic Faith with his priest friends, especially the late Monsignor John Flanagan, Father John Mikalajunas, Father Joseph Moskal, and Father Amedeo Guida. He was a Fourth-Degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

Sam leaves behind his grieving widow, Janice; his brother, Steven S. Russo and wife Christine, as well their two very special sons, Joshua, and Nicholas. He also leaves his sister-in-law, Jacqueline Swift and her husband, Jim, and their son Derek; his brother-in-law, Fred Furtek, Jr. and his wife Mary Ann, and their children Joel, Jeremy (Kari), and Amber (Jamey) Gray and their families. He is additionally survived by his maternal aunts, Linda Russo (Linda's partner Frank Fuccillo), Marie Russo, and Elizabeth Scarafilo; and a special cousin, Angela Biggs and her husband Richard; in addition to many other cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, Eleanor and Sam; and his in-laws, Frances and Fred Furtek, Sr.

Janice would like to thank the following friends for the kindness they showed to Sam and to her: Celia and Mark Domser, Carmelita White, Mark Chirico, Louis Raya, Paul and Barbara Mickler, Steve Zielinski, and the many neighbors at the Academy at Southgate who baked, cooked, and provided

any assistance Janice needed in caring for Sam. The spiritual support offered by Father Mark Kaminski and Deacon George Spohr was also invaluable in keeping the family centered. Sam also leaves behind his mentor, Professor Frank P. LeVeness of St. John's University, with whom he remained in contact throughout the years.

The family would like to thank the staff of Wynn Hospital, especially the outstanding Rapid Response Team and the Pastoral Care Department, for their compassionate care of Sam during his final days.

In honoring Sam's wishes, funeral services are private and under the direction of the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. In your kindness, and in leu of floral offerings, please send a donation to Holy Trinity Church, 1206 Lincoln Ave, Utica, New York 13502, or have a mass said for him at a Catholic Church of your choice. Interment will take place in Calvary Cemetery at the convenience of the family.

This obituary was lovingly written by Samuel's family.

# Cemetery Details

## **Calvary Cemetery**

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

# Tribute Wall

DD

“ I knew Sam in college ... our frat houses were next to each other on Plant Street on Oneida Square. We had many good times there and on campus. I'd run into Sam later in the city when I was at the O-D and when Sam worked for the city. We always greeted each other with a smile and a kind word. He was a good man and proud Utican.

---

**Dave Dudajek** - March 27 at 07:23 AM

FB

“ Dear Janice and family,  
My condolences on Sam's passing. We were classmates at Notre Dame.

Sam was a great guy, friendly, funny, and popular. The last time I saw Sam was about forty years ago, when he worked for Mayor Hanna. At that time, he gave me a tour of city hall and introduced me to the mayor.

In reading his obituary, I was very impressed with all his accomplishments in life. It was clear to see, he loved his faith, family, friends, and community. May he rest in peace, and may you find comfort in the Lord. God bless.

Frank Barletto

Class of '68

Notre Dame HS

---

**Frank Barletto** - March 25 at 10:44 PM

LR

“ Sam and I were classmates at Notre Dame . He was a remarkable person who exuded fun and laughter . Our memories will last until we meet again.

On behalf of the ND Class of 68 we want to extend our deepest and sincere condolences to Janice , Steve and Christine and boys.

Sam is now in eternal paradise with his parents and we are so grateful to have had you in our lives.

Lou Raya  
Class of 68  
And APD Brother

---

**lou raya** - March 25 at 12:38 PM

TP

“ Janice, sorry to hear about Sam’s passing. We were friends before kindergarten. And my parents were friends with Eleanor & Sam. You take care. Tom Presite (MetLife).

---

**Tom Presite** - March 25 at 11:19 AM

TZ

“ Terry Zangrilli lit a candle in memory of Mr. Samuel Louis Russo, Jr.



---

**Terry Zangrilli** - March 25 at 08:40 AM

KB

“ Sam was always so kind to me when I was with MVCC. My condolences to his loved ones.

Kristen Bowers - March 24 at 09:16 AM

PA

“ Janice our sincere condolences for the passing of you loving husband Sam, may he rest in peace. Paul & Maria Devins

Paul - March 22 at 12:17 PM

PA

“ Nicholas & Joshua we are so sorry to here of your uncle Sams passing,we know how very close you guys were to him.may God rest his soul.Love Paul & Maria Devins.

Paul - March 22 at 12:15 PM

PD

“ Steve & Christine we are so sorry to here of your Brother,Sams Passing,May perpetual light shine upon his soul, Love you guys.Paul & Maria Devins

Paul& Maria Devins - March 22 at 12:11 PM

EQ

“ Janice so sorry for the loss of Sam, he will be missed. Gene and Mary Theresa Quadraro

eugene F quadraro - March 21 at 05:13 PM

PA

“ *Dear Russo family  
Sincerely sorry for your loss.  
Best prayers and wishes  
Frank and Margaret Papale*

---

**Papale** - March 19 at 09:54 PM

MA

“ *MaryRose Abdoo lit a candle in memory of  
Mr. Samuel Louis Russo, Jr.*



**MaryRose Abdoo** - March 19 at 02:54 PM

PB

“ *My sincere condolences for Janice and family of my old friend and  
fraternity brother.  
Phil Buttiglieri*

---

**Phil Buttiglieri** - March 19 at 11:45 AM

NR

“ *Nick R lit a candle in memory of Mr. Samuel  
Louis Russo, Jr.*



**Nick R** - March 18 at 09:29 PM

TF

“ Peace & prayers to you all.



Tim & Colleen Moylan Family - March 18 at 07:22 PM

GE

I remember Sam as a boy under the age of 10...my deepest sympathies to all...Bradford Ave.

Gary Eskow - March 18 at 09:00 PM

MB

“ Madeline LaPolla Barlow lit a candle in memory of Mr. Samuel Louis Russo, Jr.



Madeline LaPolla Barlow - March 18 at 06:21 PM

MB

Our sincere condolences. Prayers to you all  
Matt & Madeline (LaPolla) Barlow

Madeline LaPolla Barlow - March 18 at 06:22 PM

MS

“ Mike And Marian Sturr lit a candle in memory of Mr. Samuel Louis Russo, Jr.



Mike and Marian Sturr - March 18 at 05:07 PM

MS

“ *Janice, Steve and family,  
Our sincere condolences on the passing of Sam. You are in our  
thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.  
Love,  
Mike and Marian*

---

**Mike and Marian Sturr** - March 18 at 05:06 PM

AC

*Sincere condolences 🙏 to z  
Janice, Steve and family on the passing of Sammy.*

---

**Anthony LaPolla oldest of all cousins** - March 18 at 11:21 PM

JY

*Sam was a good friend at Notre dame. Rest in Peace Sam.*

---

**Joe Yourno** - March 19 at 05:02 AM

DS

*Sam was a passionate and Loyal person who was very deep in thought  
and Faith. I know he is in a better place. Our Condolences to you and  
your family Janice.*

*David and Christina Scharf*

---

**David and Christina Scharf** - March 19 at 02:02 PM

SE

*We are so sorry to hear about Sam's passing. Keeping you in our  
prayers. Sue and Stu Evans*

---

**Sue Evans** - March 24 at 07:11 PM

AP

*Dear Janice, so sorry for your loss. May God grant you peace and  
comfort. Sam was a wonderful person. Anne Popeo*

---

**Anne Popeo** - April 01 at 04:42 PM