



## Mr. Victor Leon DeStefano Jr.

March 9, 1935 - January 16, 2021

SAUQUOIT- Mr. Victor Leon DeStefano, Jr., age 85, went to heaven and was reunited with his mother, father, brothers, wife, and son when he passed away on Saturday, January 16, 2021 after living a great life.

Born in Utica on March 9, 1935, Victor was the son of the late Victor L., Sr. and Ella (Ioia) DeStefano. As a young boy, he learned the art of carpentry from his dad, who he lost at the tender age of 12. From these early beginnings, he developed his skills into a successful livelihood and was proud to have his brothers as good teachers in his life. With his attention to detail and his God-given talent, he was sure this was to be his chosen profession. He always had pride and integrity in his work.

On April 27, 1956 he married his one and only love, the former Margaret J. "Marge" Waters. They were passionate people in many ways and were enduring parents; they never gave up on their dreams. Victor was an extremely hard worker and made a commitment to his wife to build a home, and within 5 years of their union, he accomplished his goal of constructing a house built on a solid foundation to raise their family, a home he lived in until his last day.

One of his first jobs was at Endre's Bike Shop, a position where he was able to utilize his strong problem-solving skills and mechanical aptitude. He was also employed by the Food Store Refrigeration Company. Eventually, Victor returned to his natural calling and joined the Angelo Nole Construction Company, then Poncell Construction, and finally, the National Building and

Restoration Company; he was highly respected and sought after at each job site for his workmanship as a true craftsman. He was a 66-year member of the Carpenters Union/Local 277, one of the longest-standing members since its inception. A man of integrity, an independent and just man, determined and proud of his life accomplishments, he was unconditional in his sincerity and so frequently shared his emotions. He had an infectious laugh and a compassionate heart, and he was able to mix those two emotions so well. His heart was so abundantly kind and his generosity was evinced on so many levels. He was respectful, polite, and had an abundance of friendships. He saw the best in others and was complimentary to everyone. He was honored to teach carpentry skills to apprentices, always helpful and encouraging in the process. He was young at heart and could relate to people on a sympathetic and emotional level. During conversation, he was more interested in you as a person than he was of concentrating on his own interests. He was a simple man, never needing the extras in life. He was raised a Catholic, received his Holy Sacraments, and lived his faith daily. He made the most elaborate and perfect Palm Crosses during the Lenten season.

Victor enjoyed old movies and music that soothed his soul, especially the “Ratpack” and Al Jolson, and he could be heard singing a tune now and then. He was a model airplane pilot who remotely flew his intricately made planes, a hobby he began in his youth. He was a proud member of the Mohawk Valley Firebirds where he engaged in friendships that were so meaningful to him and brought him so much joy. In return, the club members affectionately called him “the Godfather”.

A proud patriarch, Victor cherished every moment with his family. He was amazed by the artistic talents his late son Victor applied to his auto sales business, particularly the body work he displayed. He shared in his dad’s ability to connect to people through conversation and his kindness. When his son Victor passed, he was profoundly saddened, but was blessed to maintain a close relationship with his grandsons, including Chad, who moved across the street from his grandfather and assisted in the outdoor maintenance of his

home. Blessed with Chad as his neighbor, Victor was able to interact with his great grandchildren and in more recent years they shared the art of woodworking, and ironically, grandson Chad “Chipper” lived up to his nickname! He was just as proud of grandson Joshua who took over his dad’s business. He has a great heart and is just as passionate as his Dad, a great feat for a young man to carry on his father’s lifetime work. Victor appreciated the constant support given by his daughter-in-law Sally to his son Victor and their sons. She was around since she was a teenager and he was proud to have watched her grow into a grandmother. Granddaughter Danielle was also strengthened by her grandfather’s love and influence, enjoying annual Christmas Eve visits. Victor was his daughter Julie’s first best friend, constant in her life, confidante, teacher of profound life lessons, and exemplar of values of strength, compassion, and graciousness. He affectionately referred to Julie as his “honey bunny” and “dimples.” Victor was at the center of Julie’s most cherished childhood memories. From teaching her to ride her bike, building her childhood dollhouse (passed down to her girls) and playing with her on a CB radio they were side by side. An unbreakable bond and profound love, Julie is so grateful to have had the best dad, from the beginning to his last moment, and beyond. When Victor proudly walked Julie down the aisle, he was confident in his son-in-law, Jim, and felt that he would be the best husband for her. He loved Jim, often referring to him as a son and knew he could rely on him to care for his little girl. Connected by their deep love of Julie, Jim and Victor built a special bond that will be treasured for the rest of time.

Victor was wise and young at heart and each of his children and grandchildren benefitted from this wisdom and playfulness. Julie and Jim’s children Maggie, Bella, and Gavin affectionately referred to him as Poppy. Poppy was extremely proud of his grandchildren, and characterized this pride as “bragging points” which he shared with everyone he met. This devotion and “slowed down time” that only a Poppy knows allowed for conversation that

varied in purpose and meaning, but always laced with love. Granddaughter Maggie will fondly remember all the time spent with Poppy chatting, listening to music, hearing stories of his childhood and old time radio shows, and seeing him front and center at every concert and performance. She will especially hold deep in her heart how honored he felt hearing her sing in Italian and that his very last words to her were "I am so proud of you."

Granddaughter Bella, knows how nostalgic her Poppy was and recently created and gifted him a unique assembly of nestled picture boxes of photos from his youth to the present. His appreciation and joy of sentiment will hold an eternal place in her heart. Bella will forever feel supported by him because of his constant presence, and unwavering support of what he called her unique musical, artistic, and academic talents. And "Little Buddy", grandson Gavin was so taken by the time his poppy devoted to him, the special and memorable conversations and places they went, the playful time they spent because he was the youngest, and now, Gavin has created a picture memorial in his room to keep his best bud, Poppy as close as he can. They were all supported in their passions, and Poppy never missed an event. He always had a smile on his face and a camera in his hand. Each one of them got a piece of his heart and each of them has traits of his talents and personality. He was a great supporter of all of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and they will never forget a moment they spent with him. Victor is survived by his children and their spouses, Julie and Jim Stephens, Michael DeStefano, the memory of his son Victor L. DeStefano III who preceded him in 2011; and his daughter-in-law Sally DeStefano; his grandchildren, Chad and Danielle DeStefano, Joshua DeStefano; Danielle and Joey Kohlbrenner; Maggie Stephens, Bella Stephens, and his buddy Gavin Stephens; and his great-grandchildren, Daniel, Luke, and Kimberly DeStefano; Tucker, Carson, and Ryker Kohlbrenner. He also leaves many loved nieces and nephews, including special relationships with Denise, Renee, Johnny, Gil, Janice, Louie, and their families, great-nieces, many true friends who will hold his memory in their hearts; in-laws, James Colp, and Ceil

Waters; family friends, Betty Luciano, Lillian Spaziani; and Julie's in-laws, James and Patricia Stephens and family. He was predeceased by his brothers and sisters-in-law, Gennaro and Rosaria DeStefano, infant Mario DeStefano, Mario and Jane DeStefano, Gilbert and Marge DeStefano; and in-laws, Harold and Roswena Waters, Barb and Walt Stefanski, Sharon Colp, and Fred Waters.

The family is grateful to Dr. Atul Butala, Tanya Marr/NP, and staff. Victor had a pleasant relationship with the many nurses and aides who watched over him and his family.

Due to the abatement of COVID restrictions, Victor's funeral service and Celebration of Life will commence on Friday morning, July 9, 2021 at 10:30 at St. Anthony and St. Agnes Church, 422 Tilden Ave., Utica where his Mass of Christian Burial will be offered. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the family enabling them to establish a scholarship fund in Victor's name.

# Tribute Wall

PS

“ We have so many happy memories for the last 20 years with Vic who is our son's father-in-law. We spent many holidays with them and he was always so easy to talk to and always told you that the food was good. We never heard him say a bad word about anyone. We attended many of our grandchildren's performances together and he always had his phone ready to take pictures and sometimes he brought his tripod. He was so proud of his family. Two of our favorite memories are going into Jim and Julie's home and there he would be in his favorite Lazy Boy Chair, leaned back with his shoes off watching TV. He would yell out Hi Jim, Hi Pat and if we happened to be there before him he would walk in and attempt the Hi Jim, etc, but their dog Bailey would be jumping all over him and he would laugh and you could tell that he just loved that. He told us that "you know I'm a gadget man." An proceeded to show us his new phone. He had an interest in drones and he showed us a picture he took with the drone when flying his airplane. We loved to see him laugh and he had such a beautiful smile. We will miss him very much and feel the sadness that Jim, Julie, Maggie, Bella and Gavin feel. There is a special place above for this kind, hard working, unselfish and loving man. With love, Jim and Pat Stephens

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**Patricia Stephens** - January 31, 2021 at 07:53 PM

BD

“ We have lived across the street from Victor for over 40 years. We will always admire his craftsmanship and knowledge. We thoroughly enjoyed his many conversations where he shared his expertise. He will be missed.

*Brian and Lee Dubiel*

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**Brian Dubiel** - January 30, 2021 at 09:44 AM

BC

“ Julie I'm sorry to hear about Uncle Vic



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**Brian Colp** - January 27, 2021 at 06:43 PM

FL

“ So sorry to hear about his passing a very nice guy...remember him and marge following us throughout the Drum Corp days....prayers and hugs for the family...love the Legg family

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**Fran Legg Lyons** - January 25, 2021 at 10:40 AM

DW

“ Jim and Sharon Colp. So sorry for your loss. Condolences to the families and prayers of comfort.



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**Dawn Winston** - January 24, 2021 at 05:32 PM

MP

“ Michelle Brandenburg Patterson lit a candle in memory of Mr. Victor Leon DeStefano Jr.



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**Michelle Brandenburg Patterson** - January 23, 2021 at 08:04 AM

RM

“ *Rosaria Mancuso-Davey lit a candle in memory of Mr. Victor Leon DeStefano Jr.*



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**Rosaria Mancuso-Davey** - January 23, 2021 at 02:53 AM

RM

“ *I'm so very sorry to hear of Victor's passing. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.*

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**Rosaria Mancuso-Davey** - January 23, 2021 at 02:53 AM

DH

“ I don't know where to begin. My dear sweet uncle was one of the best of the best. He was my dad's little brother, the youngest of four boys. All four brothers shared a unique deep loyal love and pride for one another, their parents and their own families. They also had that same sweet, joyful and loving charisma about them! When you were in their presence you didn't want to leave. They were intriguing and captivating with joy and laughter and some of the best darn tradesmen this area had seen. After my dad's illness and death about 9 years ago, uncle Vic was right there by his side visiting his brother for hours at a time in the hospital or at rehabs, wherever he was at the time. I could see the love and tenderness in his eyes as he would communicate with my dad (his brother) in spite of a brain injury where my dad rarely could remember who we were, but that did not stop uncle Vic; he sat like a guard at his brother's side, watching and never giving up on his brother, hoping he would be able to help him some how, to trigger something. Shortly before my dad died, my uncle Vic walked into his room and said, "hello Gilbert, do you know who I am"? My dad said, "of course I do, you're my brother Victor". The look of great joy on my uncle Vic's face is one I will never forget. Just to have his brother remember briefly who he was gave him such a great joy. During this time my uncle Vic would sit with me at hospitals/rehabs with my dad and would worry about me as well. He would bring me a coffee and muffin or other treats. We would have meaningful conversations and many times would fill the room with laughter, as was typical for the "DeStefano brothers"! I got to know my uncle as not just "Uncle Vic" but as a good friend...we became buddies. After my dad passed, we went on to continue to spend time together attending parish festivals, fish fries, having coffee etc. Uncle Vic also enjoyed cookouts at my home with the rest of his nieces and nephews (my siblings) very much too. I will never forget his infectious smile or the stories he told but most of all, the way he would say "I love you Denise" each time when we were hanging up the phone after talking for hours! How I cherished those conversations and I know he did too. We spoke for hours of politics, airplanes, "the good old days", his work as a carpenter, family, and religion, basically everything and anything. He would tell

*me how blessed he felt to have such a beautiful family, from his daughter, my cousin Julie, and her family, his son Victor's family and grandchildren, and down to his nieces and nephews. I would then tell him we were the ones that were blessed to have him in our lives...and we were!!! I will miss you dearly uncle Vic, my buddy!!! I'll bet you, grandpa, your brothers and Victor Jr. are up there building something, it's just in the blood!!! Until we meet again, rest in peace. I love you Uncle Vic!!! <3*

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**Denise L Hensel** - January 23, 2021 at 02:03 AM

AC

“ *We've lived across from Victor for several years now and have been blessed with his cheerful smile and youthful activity around his house. Meticulous in his craft of building, Victor was the envy of the neighborhood with his final masterpiece, his Cupola. I just learned today that Victor even installed it himself atop his roof! We'll miss you Victor but I'm certain you're building a new stairway to Heaven*

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**A. Mark Cavalier** - January 22, 2021 at 10:24 PM

PS

“ So many memories growing up with your dad. Going into his shop watching and helping him build those beautiful crafted model airplanes. Then as I grew older Victor seen I was interested in carpentry. We built the cabinets for your moms new home in the cellar that's when I knew I wanted to be a carpenter. Your mom and dad would come over sometime Mom Marg would watch us she spoiled us all and your dad was like a uncle to us the man never had a bad word to say and he always was interested in what you where talking about. I used to see dad at Lowe's Home Depot where we would talk about what we where building rather it was a jewelry box for my granddaughter or remodeling a house he always showed me how to get deals on lumber lol such a fantastic man! Julie God Bless You and your family Love You and your family dearly 🙏❤️

Patrick J Lasher Sr - January 22, 2021 at 06:49 PM

RG

“ To the family Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't heal. Our sincere and deepest condolences to the family. He would always come to McDonald's in Washington Mills and it was a pleasure to serve him. He always had kinds to say to me as an employee. I would often hold conversations with him. He will be missed.



Rev. & Mrs. Arthur Gary - January 21, 2021 at 05:35 PM