



Anthony DeStefanis

April 20, 2024

Anthony DeStefanis entered this world on December 5, 1938 ready to enjoy life which he did with a smile on his face for 80 plus years. He was the son of Theresa (Camuso) DeStefanis and Dominico DeStefanis. Lovingly surrounded by family, Tony died on April 20, 2024.

Tony enjoyed his educational experiences from the beginning to end: Marieville Elementary School, North Providence High School, Providence College BA of history, Rhode Island College MEd, University of Colorado-Masters of Economics Education, and Rhode Island College Certificate of Administration. He taught in Warwick Public Schools throughout his career at the upper elementary level for 26 years and 3 years as an elementary principal. As president of the Warwick Education Association he was part of a team that negotiated the first teacher contract in Rhode Island. After his retirement Tony continued in the system as a substitute principal for about 10 years.

Tony loved music as much as he did teaching. He always had a guitar nearby whether in school, at home, or gatherings of family and/or friends. He joined a group of musicians who entertained at nursing homes around the state on a weekly basis.

Tony enjoyed scouting as a youngster and later in life enjoyed mountain climbing, hiking, golfing and skiing. Traveling abroad was another interest as he chaperoned People to People students and later switched to bicycle trips in Europe with a friend. For over fifty years Tony played cards weekly with a special group of friends.

Tony is survived by his loving wife Sonja Carlson DeStefanis and his two daughters Rebecca DeStefanis of Silver Spring, MD and her husband John Spirtas with their children Ben, Ella, and Marie, and Laura DeStefanis of Warwick, RI. Tony was very proud of his daughters and grandchildren. All of whom learned to sing a myriad of the 4th grade songs and nursery rhymes. As well, his many nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews remember and often reminisce about the songs and tales he would tell.

Also, surviving Tony is his youngest brother Joseph and his wife Peggy, sisters-in-law Lucille DeStefanis, Ann Destefanis, Carol Carlson Cunningham, Raynee Carlson and husband Buzz Holmes, and Claudia Carlson Vars. He is predeceased by his sister Marie Pistacchio and her husband Paul, and brothers Vincent and Paul.

Tony held a special place in his heart for his family and extended family of cousins, nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, and great great nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life will be held on June 8th (hopefully in our outside worship area) at 11:00 AM at the First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 124 Division Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818.

In lieu of flowers, donations to First Evangelical Lutheran Church, or Hope Health Hospice at 1085 North Main Street, Providence, RI 02904 would be appreciated.

Tribute Wall

LO

“*Mr. DeStefanis was my teacher in 4th grade at Nausauket School, I think for the first half of the year. Maybe it was his very first year, possibly student teaching, as we had another teacher in the room at times. This would have been in the early 1960s. I remember him as a wonderful teacher and gentleman. One day he was surprised to find out we didn't know a particular patriotic song, so he sang it for us, which impressed the entire class immensely. I think it was Columbia the Gem of the Ocean. Condolences to the family, and rest in peace, Mr. DeStefanis.*

Lois - April 27, 2024 at 04:49 PM

BZ

“*Mr. D, an integrity icon, will be cherished in our hearts forever. One of his exceptional talents as an educator was his ability to teach mathematics to students below grade level at Oakland Beach Elementary School in the 1980s. Tony's classroom was a bustling math flea market, filled in organized chaos: tables, chairs, gadgets, puzzles, adding machines, dice, spinners, flashcards, charts, worksheets, sticks, blocks, reward stickers, candy, crayons, pencils—all meticulously arranged and familiar only to him and his students. Tony greeted his students each period with a warm smile, ensuring their success for the day. Often, when class ended, many students were reluctant to leave. Tony always rewarded his students, playfully cautioning them about overstaying and joking that he might get in trouble with the principal. Even during lunch, Tony continued sharing math insights with his colleagues, using his “HLJ Method of Instruction”. I am privileged to have been one of his students at lunchtime.*

Thanks for the valuable lessons, Tony.

Bob Z

Bob Z - April 26, 2024 at 01:01 PM

LB

“ Our dear, sweet and lovable uncle Anthony, or as we affectionately called him, “Saint Anthony”, will be sorely missed. He brought so much joy to everyone’s life. I still remember songs that he taught us and I have passed those songs on to others. Like did you know that I’m a little teapot had a second verse? Well, I’m glad Anthony did and he taught it to me, and I have passed that on.

He was the keeper of the family history, the gather of all of us together❤️ the last big family reunion that we had❤️ one of the days was spent at Uncle Anthony and auntie Sonjas home, where the food, laughter, love, songs many hugs and sharing of family stories never ended. It’s a memory that we will all take with us. Uncle Anthony was a beacon of joy and always had a kind word for everyone.

You could always count on a smile, laughter, and a huge hug when you met, if you were lucky enough to know him, you were lucky enough in life. I will never forget you and you will always be in our prayers as will your beautiful loving family, auntie Sonia, my cousins and family .

You will live on in all of us .. thank you for always being there for us all .

I know there was an amazing songfest in heaven the day you arrived.

Until we meet again, fly high and sing loudly, my dear uncle , love you

Lucille Brown - April 25, 2024 at 06:57 PM

JD

“ I forgot to mention Tony love for our sister Marie and her husband Paulie. A great couple who gave us a great family. Tony loved them all.

joe destefanis - April 25, 2024 at 04:12 PM

JD

“ My brother Tony was a very good man. He was a good son to his parents Paul and Theresa. He was a good brother to his siblings Vinny Paul and Joe and their spouses Lucille, Ann and Peggy. He was a good husband to his wife Sonja and a good father to his daughters Becky and Laura and his grandchildren Ben, Marie and Ella

Tony was a caretaker. He took great care of his mother,s sisters. He cared for his brother Paul. He care for many people

Tony married up. He married Sonja. What a great match. He loved his wife and her family. He was very close to his brother in law Rick. No one could have cared more for Tony in his last years than Sonja. She is a saint

Rest in peace Tony

Joe

joe destefanis - April 25, 2024 at 04:07 PM

FC

“ *In loving memory of Tony,*

Tony was a remarkable individual who emanated pure happiness and positivity in every aspect of his life. His words were always filled with optimism, as he had an incredible ability to transform any negative situation into a source of positivity and hope.

One of the things I cherished most about Tony was his passion for music and singing. Whether he was performing or simply enjoying the melodies, his love for music was infectious and brought joy to those around him.

Tony was blessed with a beautiful family, including his loving wife Sonja and their two talented daughters. Together, they created a bond that was filled with love, laughter, and endless support for one another.

He truly was an American treasure, a beacon of light that constantly uplifted those fortunate enough to know him. Tony's presence in our lives will forever be cherished, and his legacy of spreading happiness and positivity will continue to inspire us all.

Rest in peace, dear Tony. You will be deeply missed, but your spirit will live on in our hearts and memories. Frank Camuso

Frank Camuso - April 24, 2024 at 02:50 PM