



Neil J. Zuehlke

September 6, 2024

Neil Joseph Zuehlke of Hartland, Wisconsin was called to eternal rest on Friday, September 6th at the age of 83 years with his loving family at his side. Neil was preceded in death by his parents Edward and Mary (Balas) Zuehlke. Neil is survived by his beloved wife Christine (née Pagliano), his three daughters Kirsten, Kandace (Kirk) Simonis, Karla (Rob) Navarro, and grandson Mitchum. Brother in-law to Mike and Corinne, uncle to Ben and Tricia. Further survived by great-nephews and niece, cousins, and cherished friends.

Born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Neil was a proud graduate of North Division High School and Marquette University where he received an Associates Degree in Police Science. Neil dutifully served the citizens of Milwaukee as a member of the Milwaukee Police Department starting as a Patrol Officer at District 5 in 1963 and retiring with the rank of Detective in 2000. During his 37 years of honorable service with MPD, Neil was guided by compassion and dignity when investigating crimes and interacting with victims. In 1978 Neil was one of the original detectives of the newly-formed Homicide Detail which then became the Homicide Unit. In 1980 with Neil's leadership, the Confidence Crimes/Senior Citizen Unit evolved, occasionally finding Neil interviewing for TV news segments and in the community warning senior citizens of scams and criminal activity. In his retirement, Neil relished the monthly breakfasts with his fellow retired "Coppers".

In 1963 Neil met Christine his beloved wife of 59 years at St. Rita's church on Milwaukee's Lower East Side where they married 2 years later. The neighborhood and the treasured lifelong friendships they formed there with "the Eastside Italian guys" have always been special for Neil "the honorary Italian" and Chris, the daughter of Italian immigrants.

As the father of three daughters, it was often joked that this was the source of Neil's beautiful head of silver gray hair, but to all who knew him, Neil's "three K's" were his pride and joy.

Neil had a love of history and sharing stories about the city he grew up in. He had an appreciation for Wisconsin arts as much as 18th and 19th century Americana.

Neil's patriotism ran deep. An avid runner and member of the MPD Running Club, Neil completed dozens of races over the years, but none as poignant and special as the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington D.C. in 1983.

On any given day, Neil was rooting for his Wisconsin teams, especially the Brewers, Bucks, Badgers, and Packers. With the season opener in Brazil on tv in his hospital room his last night, we all knew the exact words Neil was saying as the game ended with a Packers loss.

We mourn the loss of days spent with Neil, but he leaves us with a legacy of kindness and love.

Memorials in Neil's honor may be made to the Milwaukee Police Association Fallen Heroes Fund.

Neil's family expresses gratitude to the doctors, nurses, and staff at Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Franklin Campus for their exceptional care and compassion during the final days of Neil's life. A special heartfelt thank you to nurse Danielle, who selflessly stayed at Neil's bedside with us until the still of the night. Please join us in celebrating Neil's

remarkable life on Friday September 20th at Three Holy Women

Parish- St. Rita Church (1617 N. Cass Street Milwaukee, WI). Visitation from 3:00-5:00 pm followed by a Funeral Mass of Christian Burial at 5:00 pm with the Very Reverend Timothy L. Kitzke presiding.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

SEP **20**. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Three Holy women - St. Rita
1601 N. Cass St
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Memorial Mass of Christian Burial

SEP **20**. 5:00 PM (CT)

Three Holy women - St. Rita
1601 N. Cass St
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Tribute Wall

DT

“ There was not a finer, gracious, or humble man as Neil. I knew him from the Antiques Center at Wales where I work. I loved his stories about family , the force, and his love of singing and the opera. This past spring , he came in to the shop. He was getting more frail at that time. He had a big antique grain bin that he was struggling to bring in . A young man said , I'll take that for you sir, and put it in his booth. Neil reached in his wallet to give the man money to take his girlfriend to lunch. (which he would not accept). Neil said to me, why wouldn't he take the money?? I said, would you have? He just smiled humbly. 🙏 RIP

Deb Tula - September 20, 2024 at 12:05 PM

JC

“ Jason and Lisa Coffey purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Neil J. Zuehlke.



Jason and Lisa Coffey - September 20, 2024 at 09:06 AM

RD

“ Rick and Katie Guindon, designXchange purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Neil J. Zuehlke.



Rick and Katie Guindon, designXchange - September 19, 2024 at 06:54 PM



“ *Mr. Zuehlke was a great man and a cherished friend of our family. We always enjoyed hanging out with the Z's. Such a great family and such a kind and genuine man. May god bless you and may you live on in all of our hearts. Rest in peace Mr. Z. Say hi to all those east-siders in heaven.*

Chris Corrao - September 19, 2024 at 12:18 PM

LB

“ *Love from Doug & Molly Bell purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Neil J. Zuehlke.*



Love from Doug & Molly Bell - September 18, 2024 at 05:52 PM

CH

“ *I was very saddened to hear of Neil's passing. My prayers for Chris and the girls.*
I had the distinct honor of recommending Neil for promotion to 'acting detective' and transfer from District 5 to the Detective Bureau. Later, we would be assigned to the newly formed Senior Citizen Unit. Still later, I was one of Neil's supervisors.
You couldn't find a more calm and confident investigator. I can't recall a time when Neil lost his composure, regardless of the nature of the crime or the criminal behavior of the suspect.
He truly was a consummate professional and will be dearly missed.
God Bless
Craig V. Hasting
Deputy Inspector of Police-MilwPoliceDept. (ret)

Craig Hasting - September 16, 2024 at 02:03 PM

DM

“ Neil was my partner on the Milwaukee PD for many years. He was the nicest and most knowledgeable man one could ever hope to meet. We had many family get togethers and lots of wonderful memories. Our time on the department was also filled with on the job memories. Some good and some not so good. Nevertheless we survived and got to enjoy many good years of retirement. To say he will be missed is an understatement, however he will never be forgotten. Our most heartfelt condolences to his beautiful family.

Dennis Marlock - September 15, 2024 at 08:21 PM

SW

“ It has been many many years since my family has seen the Zuehlke family. I was very young but remember Neil and Christine lived next door to my grandparents on Cass st. My Aunt Erma spoke of them often as did my grandparents Dan and Josie Legnini. I am so sorry he has passed away. My parents Joe and Serafina are also gone now. Be pleased he was spoke of fondly thru the years. Sandy Rosso Wilson

Sandra Wilson - September 15, 2024 at 03:31 PM

TP

“ Our condolences to the family of Neil Zuehlke. We looked forward to seeing Neil and his wife Christine at their antique booth at the Waukesha County Expo. Neil was a friendly and generous man who we always enjoyed talking to and buying from (especially his fish) A good man who will be greatly missed

Terry and JoAnn Parker

Terry W Parker - September 15, 2024 at 09:18 AM

JK

“ *My sincere condolences to the Zuehlke Family! You are in my thoughts and prayers. Judy Kalinowski*

Judith Kalinowski - September 13, 2024 at 05:16 PM

BH

“ *Belong Health purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Neil J. Zuehlke.*



Belong Health - September 13, 2024 at 12:24 PM

KN

“ *Karen N. purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Neil J. Zuehlke.*



Karen N. - September 13, 2024 at 08:52 AM

HH

“ *Howard & Terry Humer purchased the Pink Potpourri Bouquet for the family of Neil J. Zuehlke.*



Howard & Terry Humer - September 12, 2024 at 07:01 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Neil J. Zuehlke.*



September 12, 2024 at 06:42 PM



“ *Scott, Kristen, Angie and Tony planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Neil J. Zuehlke.*

Scott, Kristen, Angie and Tony - September 12, 2024 at 06:42 PM