



Joel C. "Duke" Donahue

August 19, 1937 - August 28, 2020

Dodgeville - Joel "Duke" Donahue, age 83, passed away peacefully on August 28, 2020 surrounded by his loving family following a long battle with Frontotemporal Dementia, (FTD).

Duke was born on August 19, 1937 to Charles and Gen Donahue in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. He attended school in LaCrosse and graduated from Aquinas High School in 1955 and married his high school sweetheart Louise Giraud on June 1, 1957. While growing up, Duke developed a very strong passion for baseball. After high school, he played for several home talent and fast pitch softball teams. A lot of date nights were spent at a ball field with Louise cheering from the stands. In 1957 he was selected as the outstanding fast pitch softball player in the LaCrosse area being awarded the Claire Raith Trophy. Duke's ability on the baseball field led to a contract offer from the St. Louis Cardinals in 1959. However, he chose family over baseball.

After graduation he went to work for Thorpe Finance. In 1958 they moved to Darlington as he was promoted to Manager of the Thorpe office. In 1961, another transfer with his job brought him to Dodgeville. In 1970, Duke became the manager of the Richland Center Savings and Loan in Dodgeville. After that, he eased into retirement working at Lands' End.

Duke continued to be active in sports with softball and baseball. He was a

member of the Dodgeville Home Talent team for several years and was on the championship team in 1972. He was an outstanding baseball player and was known to hit a “few home runs”. He continued to play baseball until he was 39 yrs old.

Duke continued his love of baseball through his sons’ which led to him coaching teams at the “Stars of Tomorrow” baseball tournaments in LaCrosse. This tournament was organized by a former baseball coach of his, Kooch Carroll. It was important to Duke that all the Little League teams had uniforms so he led a fundraising effort to make that happen.

Duke was an avid golfer and darn good at it. He belonged to the Dodge-Point Country Club - some would say the golf course was his second home. He was proud of his 8 hole-in-one’s. His golf team won a qualifying tournament which allowed them to play in an NFL Alumni Tournament in Phoenix, Arizona.

Duke always enjoyed playing city rec basketball. In later years he would referee high school and city rec basketball. He was often known to stop at half court and let the younger referees do the full court running. He did a lot of joking and harassing with the players.

Duke had a love for the trumpet that started in grade school. He was a member of the National Champion Commanders Drum and Bugle Corp from LaCrosse. He continued to play trumpet in the Dukes of Dairyland Band , playing big band/dixie/jazz music at the Don Q Inn, Dodge Point Country Club and supper clubs in Madison. In his later years, he was very honored to play taps for military funerals. He was a charter member and past president of the Lion’s Club.

Duke is survived by his loving wife of 63 years, Louise; his children Deb (Dan) Rosenthal; Scott Donahue; Jeff Donahue; Ann (Jim) Swenson; and Patti Jasinski; twelve grandchildren; 2 step granddaughters; 5 great grandchildren;

and 6 step great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his infant granddaughter Mara.

A Memorial Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 5, 2020 at ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH in Dodgeville. Fr. Tafadzwa Kushamba will officiate. Inurnment will be held in St. Joseph's Cemetery. Family and friends may call from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Friday at the GORGEN-McGINLEY & AYERS FUNERAL HOME in Dodgeville.

Due to Wisconsin's public health mandate, masks are to be worn during the duration of your visit inside of the funeral home and that you practice proper social distancing guidelines.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Alzheimers and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin and Upland Hills Hospice.

The family would like to thank Dr. Emily Jewell and staff, Christian Servants and Upland Hills Hospice for their compassion and care for Duke.

Cemetery Details

St. Joseph's Cemetery

Compassion Way
Dodgeville, WI 53533

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 4. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Gorgen-McGinley & Ayers Funeral Home
400 East Grace Street
Dodgeville, WI 53533
(608) 935-5222
gorgenfh@mhtc.net

Mass of Christian Burial

SEP 5. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Joseph's Cemetery
Compassion Way
Dodgeville, WI 53533

Tribute Wall



“ Joel C. "Duke" Donahue

November 15, 2022 at 06:49 AM



“ One of the greatest men I have ever known. So glad to have had the opportunity to know him since 1964. Heart goes out to Louise and their wonderful family.

Rich Buck

Richard S Buck - October 17, 2020 at 02:03 AM



“ As a young boy I used to watch Duke play baseball for Dodgeville Home Talent. I was in awe at how Duke could hit a baseball. When I got older I enjoyed playing tennis with Duke. He always was a great guy. Rest In Peace Duke.

*Sincerely,
Bruce Nelson*

Bruce Nelson - September 04, 2020 at 10:12 AM



“ Dear Louise and family, so many wonderful memories you all have with Duke. I met him just a few years ago when he was in therapy at Bloomfield. He was still working at "his best potential" then. Now that I read his touching obit, I realize where his determination came from. Heartfelt condolences at this difficult time from Renee Wenger

Renee Wenger - September 02, 2020 at 07:46 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joel C. "Duke" Donahue.*



August 31, 2020 at 08:35 AM



“ *Denver Bruhas (Mike, Susan, Jess, Chelsea, Michael) purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Joel C. "Duke" Donahue.*



Denver Bruhas (Mike, Susan, Jess, Chelsea, Michael) - August 31, 2020 at 08:28 AM



“ *My heart goes out to all of you, as we just lost Dad it is so hard to believe Duke has passed as well. Please know our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.. with Love, Melissa (Richards) & Chuck LeVine*

Melissa LeVine - August 31, 2020 at 08:23 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Joel C. "Duke" Donahue.*



August 30, 2020 at 01:38 PM