



## Joseph L. Schiavo

March 27, 2024

Joseph L. Schiavo, aka "Joe the Butcher," died on March 27 at the age of 100. Born in 1923 in South Philly, Joe was the son of Irene (DeLeo) and Salvatore Schiavo, Italian immigrants who raised a brood of nine on Titan Street. Joe went to work as a butcher's apprentice at age 9, going to the store before and after school every day. As he picked up the trade, his schoolwork suffered. His most vivid memory from his school days was of falling asleep with his head on the desk. When he was still a teenager, his father died, a loss Joe would feel his whole life. Through his father he learned to live joyfully and love deeply. Through his mother, he learned to be responsible and practical. When he was 18, he met Mary Grace Santangelo, the woman who would become his wife of 76 years. Most of their courtship occurred through letters, as Joe was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1942, serving proudly as an anti-aircraft gunner with the 559th AAA in England, France, Germany and Belgium, where he was part of the Allies' decisive victory in the Battle of the Bulge. He and Mary married on April 24, 1948, and a year later, they welcomed their first child, Marie-Elena, named after their favorite song. She would become their crutch as their mobility waned in later years. Joe and Mary raised their family on 64th Street in Southwest Philly, where their porch and basement were neighborhood hangouts in the 1960s and '70s. In that little house, Frank Sinatra and Louie Prima blared every Sunday - Joe believed that music should be played at high volume. Long before Penn State or the Boston Red Sox adopted "Sweet Caroline," Joe claimed the song that would become his signature. At his

grandson's wedding last year, Joe led a rousing rendition of the song on the dance floor. ("So good! So good! So good!") His zest for life was unmatched. When we think of Joe, we'll picture him laughing, singing and dancing. He has the Army to thank for his suave ballroom and smooth disco moves. Through the GI Bill, he took lessons at the Arthur Murray dance studio. When the DJ was spinning Donna Summer's "Last Dance," Joe was still on the dance floor. Though he liked to have fun, Joe worked six days a week for most of his life, opening Joe's Market on Oregon Avenue in 1947. For the next 45 years, customers would find Joe behind the butcher's block, cutting a perfect New York strip and the thinnest chicken cutlets. "Hello, Joe Speakin," greeted every customer who called in an order or placed a bet on the street number. Joe knew his customers by name and let them buy on credit. When he and his son Joe, who followed him into the trade, closed the store in 1992, thousands of dollars in tabs were forgiven. After retirement, Joe devoted his time to his family and friends, offering handyman services free of charge with his late brother-in-law Anthony Lombard. His favorite time of year was the first two weeks in August, when the entire family would go to North Wildwood. At a table by the motel pool, he played pinochle nearly around the clock - Frank and Louie blaring (sorry other guests), a cooler of Budweiser's handy. A true Philadelphian, Joe loved the Phillies, the Eagles and the Mummies and was holding out hope for another World Series win in his lifetime. Joe outlived all of his siblings, his Army buddies and his friends but loved reminiscing about them. He may have been a regular Joe, but he was no ordinary man. He lived in the moment - joyful, engaged, giving, loving, dancing, singing, celebrating every day.

In addition to his 99-year-old wife, Joe is survived by four children: Layna Rizzo and husband Billy; Joe and wife Mary; Christine; Mark and wife Kerri. Ten grandchildren: Michael Glaze and wife Christa; Jackie Daly and husband

Paul; Matt Rizzo and wife Katie; Gina Rizzo; Joe Schiavo and wife Katie; Kate and Claire Corcoran; Jordan, Luke and Allison Schiavo. Nine great-grandchildren: Michael, Christina and Melissa Glaze; Alyssa, Paul and Samantha Daly; Rocco, Vincent and Stella Rizzo; and many nieces and nephews including the Lombards, Ricevutos, Ochipintis and Barsottis.

Friends may call from 9 to 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 3, at St. Barnabas Church, 6300 Buist Ave., Philadelphia, 19142. A Mass of Christian burial will be at 11 a.m., followed by burial with military honors at Holy Cross Cemetery in Yeadon.

Those looking to honor Joe can make a donation to the International Rett Syndrome Foundation or the Travis Manion Foundation, which produced a video about Joe's service. Or just enjoy a Budweiser while listening to his favorite song: Frank Sinatra's "My Way."

\*\*\*Written by: Christine Schiavo\*\*\*

# Tribute Wall

MC

“ I just learned today of Joe's passing. Joe showed many kindnesses to this single mom and her little son. It was always a pleasure to be in his store. My cousin from Media was amazed that I could play a number, get a pound of freshly ground beef and a pair of Isotoner gloves all in a butcher shop!  
Thanks Joe. Our neighborhood sees very few gentlemen of your caliber today. Rest in Peace..



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**Maggie Daly Conroy** - April 26, 2024 at 03:08 PM

CS

*Thank you, Maggie. My Dad loved his customers.*

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**Christine Schiavo** - May 11, 2024 at 09:26 AM

AS

“ Christine,  
Zero words.  
Thank you for sharing a wonderful tribute of your father.

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**Anthony Salamone** - April 03, 2024 at 09:29 PM

AF

“ I just read the most beautifully written tribute to a father who was obviously very much loved.  
May he rest in peace.

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**Annette Stavola & family** - April 02, 2024 at 09:50 PM

PF

“ There we a lot of kids on 64th street when I was growing up. With Joe's work schedule, I suspect that it may have been difficult for him to to keep track of them all. I was lucky. After his work day. He would drop off meat at my house, and I would get to interact with him. Even as kid, I could feel His good nature and positivity imprinting on me. How fortunate I was to have known him, and how special I feel that he knew me!

Like me, anyone who ever met him is carrying a piece of his greatness with them.

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**Patrick Friel** - April 02, 2024 at 04:46 PM

FM

“ He is one of my favorite people in the world. Love him like a grandpop.

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**Frankie Mirigliani** - April 02, 2024 at 03:33 PM

DW

“ Christine -- a touching and wonderfully written tribute to your Father. Though I never met him, I feel like I knew Joe from all our conversations about your glorious South Philly childhood. You will miss him dearly, but know that he couldn't have had a more devoted and loving daughter -- he was so lucky to have you!

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**David Washburn** - April 02, 2024 at 12:14 AM

LE

“ I have such fond memories of "Joe the butcher" growing up on Sheridan st. My daily chore to get dinner of fresh meats . Joe used to let me work the counter that I so wanted to do . I was 12-13 yrs old and loved the adding machine. He is the reason I still go to a butcher for my meats. Can't buy at a supermarket . Thanks for the memories Joe!

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**Lillianne "Riley" Eggers** - April 01, 2024 at 01:42 AM

GP

“ to have him in my life. My life will never be the same without him in it. Love you Joe❤️

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**Gerri Santangelo Pilcher** - March 31, 2024 at 08:12 PM

CS

“ I remember those parties well, Terry. That's where "Sweet Caroline" started -- with your Dad and mine, their arms around each other, belting it out. He really missed your Dad.

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**Christine Schiavo** - March 31, 2024 at 05:45 PM

CJ

“ Beautiful tribute. . . my heart was filled with joy just reading it. My thoughts and prayers to the Family

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**Cissie Johnson** - March 31, 2024 at 04:15 PM

RB

“ Beautifully written about a remarkable man. I count it as one of blessings of my life that I was able to get to know Pop over the last few years. He made me feel like family from the moment he met me. I'll eat a bit extra at dinner tonight in his honor, knowing that he's likely looking down from heaven, seeing my empty plate, and challenging me with a "you're not done yet, are ya?"

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Ryan Brown - March 31, 2024 at 02:03 PM

KC

“ Tina

*What a wonderful tribute to your father! You captured every essence of him!*

*Justin recalled being at the shore and playing pinochle with your father lol We all have such fond memories of your father and your family ❤️*

*Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time*

*With lots of love*

*Karen, Tug, Justin and Patrick*

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Karen Corcoran - March 31, 2024 at 12:11 PM

TC

“ *The reason I and my siblings party hardy is because of what we experienced as kids from Joe, my dad Rocky and the crazy fun singing parties on 64th street! I hope Joe, Dad and Paul are singing in heaven!! Rest Easy Joe!*

*All my heartfelt condolences and prayers to the family, especially Mary* ❤️🙏

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**Terry Giancaterino- Carbonara** - March 31, 2024 at 11:25 AM

TM

“ *Pop-The Man, the myth and the legend* ❤️ *He loved us like his own from day one and for that we will be forever grateful. Always a joke, a good story, offering up some pepper jack cheese, an ice cold Budweiser, Bloody Mary or a Mudslide. He definitely did 100 years his way. What a party heaven is having. We will miss "this guy". Hugs, love & prayers to Mama Luce and the entire family*  
XOXO

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**The Marozzi's** - March 31, 2024 at 02:14 AM

KW

“ *Joe was a great man and a great neighbor you don't find people like Joe He was a great father and the life of a party I will always have happy memories when I think of my neighbor. He will be missed by all who knows Joe May you Rest In Peace and I know you will be dancing and singing up in heaven* ❤️❤️❤️

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**Kathleen Ciccarelli Walker** - March 31, 2024 at 01:37 AM

JS

“ I got to know my cousin, Joe Schiavo, about 8 years ago after a thorough search for the Schiavo cousins that my Dad kept saying we had that lived in Philadelphia. I remember meeting Joe with his son, Joe Jr. at his house in SW Philly for the first time and I knew he was a relative...he looked just like a younger version of my grandfather (also named Joseph Schiavo). Joe Sr.'s father, Salvatore, was my grandfather's brother. Because of Joe's kindness, we hit it off right away and through the years we got to know Joe, Mary and their children and grandchildren better. I would sit back and listen to the stories that Joe told me about his parents and siblings and when I had questions about certain gaps in my family research, he would fill me in. He loved his family! That is an understatement. And that love was contagious to everyone who knew him. I am better because I knew him.  
~ Joseph John Schiavo III, First Cousin, once removed

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**Joseph Schiavo** - March 31, 2024 at 01:30 AM

CS

“ Thanks, Jackie. Your note made me smile.

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**Christine Schiavo** - March 31, 2024 at 12:39 AM

CS

“ What a well lived life, something to be proud of. People sometimes say you were lucky to have him for so long, I think because you did, it's harder to let go. Sending my thoughts and prayers to you all. God bless him, your family and especially your mom.

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**Carol Diemer Smith** - March 31, 2024 at 12:26 AM

AW

“ I feel like I know this man. He was a lot like my father, who had 11 siblings and also fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Even the photo of him holding a Bud reminds me of my Dad's Army photo of him with a beer bottle!

I wish I had known Joe and had gotten to see him dance and sing. He raised at least one fantastic daughter, who I know as Christine, but he called Tina. Joe, you lived a great life, worked hard and showed the world how to be a role model husband, father and friend. Thank you for all your sacrifices. You are already missed.

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**Ann Wlazelek** - March 31, 2024 at 12:07 AM

TS

“ One in a million man on this earth. Great loss but heaven's gain. Blesssd to have known him !❤️🙏🏻✝️

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**Theresa selvaggi** - March 30, 2024 at 08:27 PM

PJ

“ Blessed to have known him and been included in the many family celebrations he so enjoyed. Thoughts and prayers to Luce an the Schavo/Rizzo families. May he rest in peace. 🌹

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**Peggy Ann Johnson** - March 30, 2024 at 08:21 PM

AL

“ Uncle Joe was my favorite Uncle! Along with being my Uncle he was my Godfather. He was such a character and the life of the party. He was an extremely generous man and he always had my back. He loved his entire family so much! I, along with my family, will miss you so much uncle Joe! Your nephew & Godson and the rest of the Lombard family!

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**Anthony D Lombard** - March 30, 2024 at 08:17 PM

MH

“ Your father seems like a Remarkable man, I never got the pleasure of meeting him but I'm blessed to call layna my friend. I always was in Aw how close your family is and make time for one another and that came from your parents and good up bringing. He was an inspiration even to people who didn't know him, seeing the videos and pics of him dancing, laughing, the love for his family. I am deeply sorry for your loss. I wish I could pay my respects but I live in Massachusetts. Sending prayers to you and your whole family

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**Michelle Hurley** - March 30, 2024 at 08:04 PM

AB

“ So sorry to hear, he was quite a character. Our condolences. Rest in Peace!

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**Andy and Rachel Black** - March 30, 2024 at 07:18 PM

JC

“ I will miss the resounding YO Jack! when Joe and I would see each other. Always a smile on his face and an offer of a beer. Living next to the Schiavos growing up was a girl's dream come true. They would always look out for you and had a lot to offer: sage advice and sports talk sitting on the front porch, mouth-watering Italian dishes, and that always important last stop on New Year's Eve for a nightcap. Joe loved to sing and dance and cared deeply for his family which included the Conrans. I won't get a chance to say Yo Joe back, til we meet again. So for now, I'll just say thanks for everything and I appreciate you! You will be greatly missed!💔

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**Jackie Conran** - March 30, 2024 at 06:30 PM