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Joseph Thomas RUKAVINA

Obituary



Beloved Husband and Father Grandfather and Teacher Croatian Humanitarian Democratic Activist Joseph Rukavina, 91 years old of White Bear Lake, MN died on June 10, 2013 at Southview Acres Health Care Center in West St. Paul after five months battling cardio-renal syndrome

and congestive heart failure. He was preceded in death by his beautiful wife of 61 years, Arlene Rukavina. He was born in Virginia, MN February 4, 1922 to Croatian immigrant parents, Thomas and Lucy Rukavina. He attended local Virginia schools and then two years at Virginia Junior College . Joe served in the [US Navy](#) for three years and earned a commendation for heroism on Iwo Jima. He graduated with two undergraduate degrees from the [University of Minnesota](#) and College of St. Thomas. He also, earned a Masters Degree in Education. He taught at Swanville H.S. for two years before starting his thirty plus years of extraordinary teaching and coaching at White Bear Lake H.S. Joe was a long time activist within the Democratic party and so proud of his work with three Croatian American groups: Croatian Fraternal Union, MN Croatian Cultural Society and the National Federation of Croatian Americans (co-founder). He was honored with awards from both the Republic of Croatia and The White House for his outstanding humanitarian work during the 1990s war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He was a founding member of St. Pius X Church in White Bear Lake and was active there for 59 years. Joe Rukavina, Mr. Ruk to many of his students and Deda to his many grandchildren and great-grand children was an unforgettable man who loved people and life to the fullest and was loved by so many. He is survived by children, Kay Marie (Steve Gavin), Joanne (Mark Fenner), Patty Bergstrom, Steve (Diane), John (Vickie) and Teresa; 13 grandchildren, Michael (Julie), & Tony (Jennifer) Barger, Eric (Greta), John (Keri) & Bridget Bergstrom, Jason Rukavina, Lisa (Todd) Rukavina Schwartz, James Rukavina Fenner, and Joy, Joseph, Jacob, Daniel and Faithanne Rukavina; 8 great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews. The family extends a very special thank you and appreciation to all the staff at Southview Acres for their loving care over the last four months. Memorials in his name can be donated to: CFU Scholarship Foundation (501) (c) (3) For the Joseph Rukavina Family Scholarship Fund and sent to: Mr. Bernard Luketich, Croatian Fraternal Union, 100 Delaney Drive, Pittsburgh PA 15235. Mass of Christian Burial Saturday, June 15 at 11 AM at ST. PIUS X CHURCH, 3878 Highland Ave., WBL. Visitation Friday, June 14, from 4-8 PM and one hour prior to Mass at church. There will be a 7:00 PM Sharing Time set aside as part of the Friday night visitation. Interment at Evergreen Memorial Gardens. www.honsafamilyfuneral.com 651-429-6172

Guest Book

"My wife, Luvvie, and I visited Mr. Rukavina in October of..."

- Tom Brown

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