



Joseph "Joe" Cillis

December 24, 1935 - March 24, 2021

Voorheesville - Joseph "Joe" Cillis, 85 years old, passed away Wednesday, March 24, 2021 surrounded by his loving family.

Joe was born in Albany, NY, to the late Theodore and Julia Cillis on December 24, 1935. Joe graduated from the former Cathedral Academy in Albany and SUNY Cortland, where he earned his Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree in Education. He married his high school sweetheart, Mary Janice (Jenny) O'Connor. Joe taught Physical Education at Shaker Road Elementary School for 9 years. He left teaching to pursue another passion - home building. He established JJ Cillis Builders, a family business, building custom homes for over 50 years in the greater Albany area.

A lover of people, Joe enjoyed talking and laughing with anyone he encountered in his daily life. He was a consummate educator and was generous with his life lessons and advice. He enjoyed seeing families make homes from the houses that he built. He loved what he did and could be found on the job site into his eighties. When asked when he would retire, his classic response was, "I would have to find a job first."

He built his family home in Voorheesville, where he and Jenny raised their five children. Joe enjoyed spending Sundays “on the farm”, usually on his tractor cutting brush. He thrived on making people feel welcome in his home and part of the family. There was always room for one more seat at the table or one more dog in the yard.

He is predeceased by his wife of 57 years, Jenny, and their son, Joseph. He is survived by his brother, Theodore Cillis; his children James (Carol), Suzanne Keenan (John), Christine Dearth (Samuel), Matthew (Elizabeth); and his daughter-in-law, Sharon Cillis. He was the devoted grandfather of Michelle Budge, Joseph Cillis, James Cillis, Jennifer Cillis, Joseph Keenan, Christian Keenan, Stephany Keenan, Andrew Cillis, Caroline Cillis, and Violet Cillis, as well as his great-grandson, Jude Budge.

The family would like to express a heartfelt thank you to the caregivers at the Atria assisted living facility in Delmar, Daughters of Sarah Nursing & Rehabilitation Center and the Teresian House Center for the wonderful care they provided.

There will be a private funeral service for immediate family.

To leave a message for the family, please visit www.LGFuneralHome.com

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the Alzheimer's Association NENY; 4 Pine West Plaza #405 Albany NY 12205 (act.alz.org) or the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany; 40 North Main Avenue Albany 12206.

Cemetery Details

Our Lady of Angels Cemetery

1389 Central Ave
Albany, NY

Tribute Wall

AP

“ While I spoke with Joe only a few times on speaker with his son, Matt, I feel like I truly know him. I heard so many stories of his influence, big personality, work ethic, life lessons, and wisdom. He was an exceptional, unique, and strong man. I wish the family much serenity in their mourning. With love and regards, Palladino Family

Anthony Palladino - April 15, 2021 at 04:47 PM

 Joe Tierney

“ When I was a Cathedral Academy HS senior, Joe returned to his alma mater as a volunteer assistant baseball coach. His schedule limited the visit to 3 days.

During the brief tenure, he shadowed each position, gave a tutorial and explained the value and responsibilities of every player. He demonstrated batting stances and structured a simulated game to help us understand more precisely just what and when to execute. I was thoroughly astounded by his knowledge and the way in which he delivered the messages, not to mention the great sense of humor. I learned more about baseball in those 3 days than in the prior 3 years.

Joe already was one of our heroes, evidence his own skill and success in the classroom and on the playing fields. Additionally, he had captured the heart of Jenny O'Connor, another CA graduate and one of our most revered women. They were truly a royal team. Thank you Joe for the fabulous memories and lessons. My sincere condolences to the entire family and all friends. RIP

Joe Tierney, CA 1957

Joe Tierney - March 31, 2021 at 03:02 PM

JN

“ I was unaware of Joes passing. In Florida when it happened. He lived right behind me. Kids grew up together. All's we had was fun. He built two homes for us. Both to die for. I could go on for a long time. He was a great builder. But more than that he was a great man. My wife and I will have him and his family in our prayers.
Eileen and Joe Nichols

joe lanf eileen nichold - March 31, 2021 at 10:45 AM

WM

“ I met Joe while working at Niagara Mohawk as a home builder coordinator. He was an absolute joy to meet and talk with. I'm sure his family and friends will miss him. My sincere thoughts and prayers for your loss.

William Munro - March 29, 2021 at 06:59 PM

GH

“ To the entire Cillis Family,

My thoughts and prayers are with you in this difficult time of loss.

Rest In Peace "Popa Joe"

Glenn Hebert

Glenn Hebert - March 29, 2021 at 03:52 PM

DO

“ *Least we forget, Joe as a star (with Joe Conley, et al) on the great Cathedral football team of 1953. As kids, we were thrilled when Joe took a more than casual interest the O'Connor family, our neighbors on the other side of the Church. We now had our own hero.*

*The Doyle Family
379 Hamilton*

Doyle - March 29, 2021 at 10:33 AM



Hamilton Street adopted Joe as their own new brother-in-law, favorite in-law

Joe Tierney - March 31, 2021 at 05:18 PM

CA

“ *The smartest man in the room is gone but will never be forgotten. Time to step up to the plate Jim, I'm ready for you.*

Rest in peace Joe.

Chad

Chad Ahr - March 29, 2021 at 10:31 AM

BG

“ I have known Joe for over 20 years and for all that time I think I never won a fight with him even when I was right. A two minute call with Joe usually lasted at least ten minutes between the jokes and lectures about how a home should be built.

Joe always built quality homes with the best materials. that was just the way he was.my condolences to Jim and the rest of the family.

bob glasser



bob glasser - March 29, 2021 at 07:36 AM

GA

“ While i attended Shaker El., Mr.Cillis was our Gym teacher. It was his last year there..We always had fun, kickball, dodgeball and playing games..I remember clearly when Mr. Cillis introduced the new Gym teacher..He had us do Calisthenics, doing laps around the gym or outside..It wasn't fun anymore..To the family of Mr. Cillis know that now as a sixty five year old man, i remember his smile and teaching us to be kids and having fun..

Gary - March 28, 2021 at 08:58 PM

RF

“ To all of Joe's family,
It saddens me to think about all of the things left unsaid, like living summers at Lincoln Park, hiking at Rocky Ledge, playing on Madison Avenue the summer it was closed to traffic, and all of our kid's birthday parties and weddings. Now I only have my memories to reflect upon.

Until we meet again, and we will, your best friend from childhood,
Bobby

Robert Fazio - March 28, 2021 at 04:27 PM

MW

“ Jim, Sue, Chris, Matt and Sharon, I was shocked when my mother called me yesterday to share this news. My father and Joe were best childhood friends and our parents were best friends for so many years of my childhood, which is how your parents became my godparents. So many wonderful memories of summertime get-togethers when we were kids! All his crazy stories and silly jokes, I can't help but smile when I think of him!!! So, so sorry for your loss.
Mary Kay

Mary Kay Wengler - March 28, 2021 at 03:56 PM

ML

“ Sue and John, Ted and the entire Cillis family, I will remember Joe fondly after meeting him at Tom Jeram's office where I worked for so many years. We all loved his wit and smile and friendliness. I am so sorry for your loss. Marcy.

Martha E LasherWarner - March 28, 2021 at 10:27 AM



“ I always enjoyed working with Joe and Jim Cillis on the North Forty West subdivision. Joe always had good advice on business issues and solutions. I will miss our conversations. Mark Kestner

Mark Kestner - March 28, 2021 at 05:44 AM

JG

“ Bill and I are so very sorry for your loss. Uncle Joe was an incredibly kind and generous man. May he rest in peace.
Justine & Bill Guernsey

JUSTINE M GUERNSEY - March 27, 2021 at 05:02 PM

BM

“ We lived in a beautiful JJ Cillis home on Princess Lane , Loudonville, for years. Mr. Cillis built a home of above average construction and his attention to detail was meticulous. May he rest in peace knowing he did his best.
Bill & Joyce Miller

Bill & Joyce Miller - March 27, 2021 at 03:05 PM

JH

“ Our condolences to the entire Cillis Family. We will always fondly remember his genuine nature and great conversation. *Jim & Tanya Hensel*

Jim &Tanya Hensel - March 27, 2021 at 02:23 PM

JH

“ Please accept my most heartfelt condolences on the passing of Joe Cillis. He built a house for me in the 80s and it was a wonderful experience. As with everything Joe did, he delivered more than he promised. The education he gave me in the process was very valuable. He had a new homily every time I saw him. After he had finished building all of the houses on Princess Lane one of the customers had a party and Jenny came as honored guests. All of the people he had built houses for loved respected Joe. He was a man of his word and one who had strong business ethics. A very good man. I am sorry for your loss. *Joel Howard*

Joel M. Howard III - March 27, 2021 at 01:27 PM

TN

“ My condolences to the whole family, I always had a lot of respect for him, he was always a gentelman, .
Tom Nasadoski Sr.



Thomas J Nasadoski - March 27, 2021 at 12:10 PM

RG

“ Jim, Sue, Chris and Matt so sorry for your loss. Thinking of your dad will always bring a smile to my face. Whether it be hearing his stories or just chatting when he was working on building our house he had a way about him. I am glad to get to know him better during that build and experience first hand his determined work ethic and attention to detail. One instance was when he was working on some landscaping with the tractor and tipped it over. He lost track of his cell phone and went over to my mom's house to call for help to right it. Of course he looked a bit disheveled and dirty so mom had to do a double take but after that they sat down for a piece of homemade bread and a meatball and visited. This is the way of that generation ❤️ We will truly miss him but know that we have a bit of him with us in your whole family and these memories. I am sure he is with your mom looking over you all and of course advising Jim on how to do something on a new house;-). Hugs from Suzy and myself.

Robert Grassucci - March 27, 2021 at 10:25 AM

TO

“ I met Joe later in life and he made my heart sing with his wit and laughter. With deepest sympathies to his children, grandchildren, and brother.. Papa loved you all.You were his joy. tg

Toni - March 26, 2021 at 07:21 PM

LD

“ So sorry to hear of your loss. He was so friendly and always had a story to share. His personality was uplifting to be around.

Gary & Lynne DeRusso

LYNNE DERUSSO - March 26, 2021 at 04:44 PM