

## HERMAN L. SKERLONG



A member of the Greatest Generation has left us. Herman Louis Skerlong, known to the world, as "Rocky," "The Mayor," and "The Hermanator," passed away peacefully on December 16, 2023. He is finally reunited with the love of his life, Violet Moore Skerlong. They were married for 54 years before her passing in 1995. Though no children of their own, they had many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and nephews, spanning several generations of his 103 years. Herman was born July 26, 1920, in Lawrenceville to Anthony and Agnes Skerlong. He was a member of Saint Valentine's Catholic Church in Bethel Park where he attended Saturday evening Mass, followed by coffee and camaraderie with friends at McDonalds.

Herman was drafted in 1942 and served under the great General George Patton in the 80th Division as a machine gunner. He earned the Bronze Star in the Battle of The Bulge putting himself in front of enemy fire to pull an injured brother-in-arms to safety. After being treated for significant frostbite on both feet, which were almost amputated, Herman returned to the United States and led a very fulfilling career. He worked for the U.S. Post Office driving an armored truck and then relocated to California where he was a civilian employee of the U.S. Navy. Upon retirement, Herm and Vi came home to Pittsburgh and enjoyed many years with family and friends, residing in Bethel Park. You would get engrossed in Herm's stories for hours, taking you back in time to WWII, and his details were as sharp as a tack until the day he passed. He proudly marched in all of the Pittsburgh and Brentwood Veterans Day parades, still fitting into his WWII uniform, and looking as handsome as he did the day he first put in on in 1942. Anyone who had the opportunity to meet Herm had the same impression of him: that he was a treasure, a true hero and were so proud to have known him. When you told Herm that he was a hero, he brushed it off and would say that he was no different than any other veteran and that "the true heroes were those that never made it back home." Herman was invited to speak to many organizations, including Thermo Fisher Scientific, as part of their Veterans' Business Resource Group, reaching hundreds of employees across the country. Over the years, he became known somewhat as a "community celebrity" throughout Bethel Park, being interviewed by various local news channels who wanted to hear about his WWII endeavors. He also received signed letters from both Presidents Trump and Biden, thanking him for his service.

Because of Herman's sacrifice and the members of the "Greatest Generation," we, as United States citizens, are able to enjoy the freedoms given to us through their heroic efforts. Herman is survived by several generations of nieces and nephews. Among the closest include: niece, Debbie Lappa of McKeesport; nephew, William (Mary Ann) Appelt of Pittsburgh; and niece, Marianne (Joseph) Cibulas of Sewickley. He was predeceased by his devoted wife, Vi; sister, Agnes Appelt; brothers, Anthony and Karl Skerlong; step-siblings, Louis, Lillian, and Robert, along with two infant siblings. He also leaves his lifelong friend and fellow WWII veteran, Nick Scarletelli of Carrick.

The family wishes to thank Herm's many friends and neighbors at Brightwood Apartments and the Rt. 88 Giant Eagle, to which he was a daily visitor and who affectionately called him Rocky. In addition, we want to thank the PA Department of Veteran Affairs for taking such good care of Herm through the years.

Friends received Tuesday from 2 to 8 p.m. at the **GRIFFITH FUNERAL HOME, INC.**, 5636 Brownsville Road (at 6th St.), South Park Twp., 412-655-4600 with a V.F.W. Service at 7 p.m. Funeral prayer Wednesday 1:30 p.m. at the funeral home, with a Mass of Christian Burial in Our Lady of Hope Parish - St. Valentine Church at 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his honor to the Brentwood VFW Post 1810, where Herm was a longtime member, or, the Battle of the Bulge Association: <https://battleofthebulge.org/store/donate/>.

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