

JAMES SAMUEL LaROCCA



James Samuel LaRocca, of Pittsburgh, died Saturday, February 17, 2024, at his home. He was 78.

James was born in Pittsburgh on July 11, 1945, son of the late Mary Louise (Nicolette) and Samuel LaRocca.

He is survived by his son, J. Bradd; daughters, Lauren and Abagael; and granddaughters, Alexis and Arianna.

He was preceded in death by his brother, Dave LaRocca.

James grew up in Pittsburgh, graduated from Oliver High School, and earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature and Theology from the University of Pittsburgh. In his younger years, he was a boxing trainer at the LaQuatra Boys Club on Eighth Avenue.

He went on to teach high school English, own and run Bellevue Vision Center, work as an accountant and a Taylor wine salesman, and publish his own magazine, Penn Quarterly. He also worked as a clinical iridologist throughout his life through his company Nutra-Choice and was teaching iridology to an apprentice in recent years to pass along his lifelong knowledge of the subject.

He and his family moved to Hagerstown in 1993, where he managed Allegany Optical at FSK Mall in Frederick. He returned to Pittsburgh in 2010.

Throughout his life, he was a caring father, grandfather, neighbor and community volunteer. He coached his daughter's softball team, taught Sunday school through St. Ann Roman Catholic Church in Hagerstown, and played jazz piano whenever he could.

He was a huge Pirates and Steelers fan and loved watching the Bucs at the former Three Rivers Stadium, but he equally loved Shakespeare and Hemingway - and Vince Guaraldi and Mozart.

He remained Catholic throughout his life. He was deeply dedicated to studying religion, as well as music and alternative medicine, often sending detailed notes to friends and family when he thought his findings might help them.

He will be greatly missed.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday, February 22, 2024, at Christ Our Redeemer Catholic Cemetery, 204 Cemetery Lane, Pittsburgh. Online condolences may be made at www.mcdonald-linn.com.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb