

ROLAND A. WATT



Age 85 of Pittsburgh, passed away peacefully on December 7, 2024. The courage to be Roland (Ronnie, Rol) was not always easy. It is a life story that is worth sharing to understand that a worth of a person is not in money, but in the love from his friends.

Roland was born August 14, 1939, at St. Francis Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was a child with functional disabilities.

This was a time when a parent could relinquish their child to an institution. In 1943, Roland was taken by his mother to Polk Institute. He never saw or heard from her again. He grew up at Polk Institute, a place not known for kindness. He had the scars that you could see and the sadness you knew was deep in his soul.

In the 1970's, the rights for people with disabilities changed, Roland was mainstreamed into the work force in Pittsburgh. Although he could not read or write well, it did not stop him from succeeding using his work ethic and vocational skills he learned at Polk Institute. Moving to Pittsburgh he met his dear friends Tommy and Jackie. Tommy was his Power of Attorney for 37 years, and helped Roland get his job at the Home for Crippled Children. Roland was part of the family of the "Home". It was a term affectionately labeled when it was called the "Home for Crippled Children." In this nurturing environment Roland flourished and found the acceptance and love he longed for. He strived to work hard. He could polish a floor that you could see your face in. He had a 34-year work history and retired in 2004. He was very proud to have a pension. Always ready to work, he worked part-time at Laurentian Hall (where he had an apartment) to stay busy and have a paycheck. A paycheck was very important for his self-esteem.

Roland never stopped looking for his mother and her family. He wanted to know who they were, what they were like, and whether they had similar health issues. In 2010, he found records about her. She was a single mother. She also was deceased. He had hoped there would be siblings, but there were none.

Roland had a way of finding and attracting good and dear friends. He had friends from Polk Institute, Erie, St. Lawrence Church, Children's Institute, bowling friends, fishing friends, sports friends, vacation buddies, Canterbury Place. He had so many friends that his social calendar and phone were always taking him places.

Each day he shared local news and the best homemade food ever with his firemen buddies. On holidays, he was often with Nancy and her family or Edward and his family; they were the families he always wanted. He cherished the memory of his best friend Kenny, who grew up with him at Polk and was a roommate in Pittsburgh.

Roland loved teasing (jinxing) everyone. He was known for his colorful shirts, building puzzles, card and video games, photography, fishing, and going to Mr. D's farm. He walked everywhere to the point he would wear his shoes out in weeks. Roland loved animals and he rescued a cat he named~ Butchy Boy Boy .

He had a full life and was 85 years young when he passed. Roland is survived by so many friends, who love him. A private interment will take place in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. A Celebration of Life will be held to honor his life in early January. Friends will receive more details.

Please consider all donations to The Children's Institute. <https://amazingkids.org>

Arrangements were entrusted to Pittsburgh Cremation & Funeral Care, Robinson Township, PA.

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