

EUGENE "UNC" PALENCHAK



A lifelong resident of Braddock, PA, Eugene Palenchak, age 97, died peacefully on Monday, March 24, 2025.

Gene was well-known as "Unc," especially by his nieces and nephews, John "Jack" (Lisa) Senkow, Keith (Peg) Senkow, Daryl (Cheri) Senkow, Michalene "Micki" (Ted) Bargiel, Ron (Marivic) Senkow, Richard "Rick" (Amy) Senkow, Diane Markel, Gary (Deanna) Palenchak, Carol

White, and the late Debbie Legge.

Gene was also "Unc" to 21 great-nieces and great-nephews.

"Unc" was preceded in death by his sister, Irene (late John) Senkow; and his brothers, Edward (surviving spouse, Eleanor) Palenchak and Richard Palenchak.

Gene was proud to have been born in Braddock, and live in the community for his entire life. He was a 1945 graduate of Braddock High School, where he excelled in basketball and was a star pitcher in baseball. While pitching the 1945 WPIAL Section V championship versus Turtle Creek, Gene played against future Heisman Trophy winner, Leon Hart, and Gene won the game by hurling a four-hit shutout. He was termed a "little twirler" because of his diminutive size, but won eight games that year, including three one-hitters.

A local newspaper, The Independent, boasted, "Gene is an outstanding diamond star and figures to go on in baseball. If he doesn't, it will only be because of his size. Palenchak is the best pitcher in the Section. He's a hitter too, batting leadoff, he sports a batting average of .562. On the base paths, he's a whiz and in the field he's all over the diamond."

Gene also played basketball as a guard for Braddock High and matched up against Leon Hart and Scott High's Fran Rogel on the court.

Upon graduation, Gene was awarded a full scholarship to play baseball at Duke University, however, he unselfishly began immediate employment to support his family at USSteel's Edgar Thomson Works in Braddock. He continued to play sandlot baseball and enjoyed the opportunity to play with future National League MVP, Dick Groat. In 1950, he joined the U.S. Army and served during the Korean War. Upon his honorable discharge, he returned to Edgar Thomson, from where he eventually retired.

In retirement, Gene enjoyed playing golf at South Park Golf Course, bowling, pitching horseshoes at family events and visiting with his nieces and nephews.

Although Gene was an expert in vintage television, appliance, auto and radio repair, he also adapted to early computer technology, and enjoyed scouring the internet for Braddock artifacts and even purchased one of the first home computers. Gene also graciously shared his time and vast knowledge of the building trades with family members, and all will miss his invaluable guidance. Unc, a lifelong bachelor, notably treated all of his lucky nieces and nephews as "his own children."

All are welcome on Friday, from 2-8 p.m., at **PATRICK T. LANIGAN FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY INC.**, 700 Linden Ave. at Cable, East Pittsburgh, PA 15112, 412-824-8800, where a Blessing Service will be held on Saturday, at 11 a.m.

Gene will be laid to rest with Military Honors in Braddock Catholic/All Saints Cemetery.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb