



Michael J. 'JERRY' Noonan

December 1, 1940 - November 13, 2020

Noonan, Michael Jerome. "Jerry"

Age 79. November 13, 2020. retired Utica's Assistant Fire Chief.

Beloved husband of Jacqueline K.(Sheehan) former Utica Mayor.

Loving Father of Jerome E.(Brandi), Catherine A.(Gregory) Lelito, Melissa M.(Christopher) Rissman, Tracy M. (Bryan) Orlowski and the late Christopher Michael 06/24/2014. Loving Grandfather of eleven. Dearest Brother of Margaret Verrier and Declan Noonan, predeceased by siblings Emmitt Noonan and Mary Noonan.

He is an unsung hero, having dedicated most of his life to serving his community and his family. In the dark of night and in any kind of weather, he was ready to answer the call for help. After just under 42 years of service to the Utica Fire Department, Assistant Chief Jerry Noonan hung up his helmet and headed into retirement on Dec. 31, 2004. "The city has been good to me," he said.

In preparation for his upcoming retirement, Noonan's wife, Utica Mayor Jacqueline Noonan, prepared a short biography of his life:

Born in an Irish-Catholic farming settlement in Godfrey, Ontario, Canada on Dec. 1, 1940, Jerome, as his family called him, was the fourth of five children born to Michal Noonan and Beatrice Murphy Noonan. He was schooled nearby, then went to St. Edward's High School in Westport, Ontario about 10 miles away.

In 1961 Jerry arrived in Rochester as a guest of the Sheehan family. He decided to seek resident alien status and by 1962, he went to work in Utica at Roger's Mobil Service on Canal at Van Dyke and later Utica Recapping.

In March of 1963, Jerry joined the Utica Fire Department as a firefighter under the direction of Chief Marvin Stadler. He had also become a member of the Knights of Columbus in Rochester and later switched his membership to the Utica Council 2950.

In August of 1964, Jerry married Jacqueline Sheehan and the following year he joined the staff of Engel's Chevrolet as assistant service manager. A short time later, he became the service manager. He served on the Utica Fire Department under Chief Carl Albrecht and newly appointed Chief Robert Beck. After 11 months in an apartment on Brownell, the Noonans bought a home on Custer Avenue in Utica.

1968 was a banner year for Jerry with the birth of his first child, Christopher Michael, and the promotion to the rank of lieutenant of the Utica Fire Department through the competitive Civil Service Examination process. 1969 saw the birth of the Noonans' second son, Jerome Edward.

In early 1970, Jerry began a partnership with Dick Haines to Open Noonan's Sunoco. Two years later, Jerry bought out his partner and continued the full-service gas station, wrecker service, road service and towing for the city of Utica Police Department, Macomb County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police for the next 20 years.

In 1971, Catherine Anne was born and a year later the Noonans moved a block over and a block north to Hecker Drive at Hahn Street. 1972 was yet another exciting year as Jerry competed for the rank of assistant fire chief within the Civil Service system promotional process. He was successful and finalized his naturalization process by becoming a United States citizen in September of that same year.

March of 1974 saw more excitement at Melissa Margaret was born and Jerry completed Emergency Medical Technician training and licensure a few months later. He also joined the Ushers at St. Lawrence Catholic Church, a position he continues to hold today. In 1978, Tracy Marie was born and the Noonans enlarged their home soon after to match the size of their growing family.

In 1985, Jerry joined the Utica Lions Club of which he was president during two very active nonconsecutive terms in the mid-1990s. He also received the highest award in Lionism, the Melvin Jones Fellow Award, from Lions Clubs International in 1997 for dedicated humanitarian services. With the election of his wife to mayor in 1987, Jerry took on yet many more volunteer positions within the city of Utica including the Utica 175th Committee, Parks and Recreation Co-Chair, member of the Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors, Old Mill Arts and Crafts Festival Committee, chair of the Taste of the Community, Christmas Walk Committee, Michigan Week Activities and many, many more. He urged the development of a city flag and signature sign for the city as well as helping oversee the recent reconstruction of the Utica Fire Department's only station on Auburn Road.

In 1991, Jerry and Jackie sold their gas station business, and continued other pursuits. Jackie returned to full-time teaching and Jerry worked for Plumbrook Towing throughout the Midwest for a short time. Jerry was appointed fire inspector for the Utica Fire Department in 1992 and became state and nationally certified in 1997 and 2000. During his long tenure on the department, Jerry has been instrumental in many fundraisers and contributed many unique ideas to the department. Following is but an incomplete list of his dynamic leadership:

- ? Many fundraisers involving months of work to get \$20,000 in donations for a thermal imaging camera, as, as part of station rebuild, the furniture for the training room;
- ? Heading up and organizing such events as chili sale for ice carving festival;

- ? Chairing retirements for firefighters Brian Kraft, Bob Kleinow and Captain Mel Schroeder;
- ? Suggested and chaired dances for a number of years from 1976 into the mid-'80's;
- ? Organized first annual steak dinner for firefighters;
- ? Served on summer picnic committee for the Utica Fire Department families for 30 years;
- ? Organized water ball competition for many years;
- ? Chaired the committee for the creation of a new patch for the UFD;
- ? Sought donations for needed UFD equipment (LCD projector for training, cots from Salvation Army, lettering on car, U.S. flag at fire station);
- ? Donated many hours to refurbish the cars received from the Utica Police Department and putting the ladder truck and other vehicles in service;
- ? Held the positions of president, secretary and treasurer of the Utica Firefighters Association; and
- ? Sought to remove, preserve and mount the original siren for the UFD in front of current Fire Station as a memorial to all who have served.

When asked about any memorable moments, Jerry is quick to recall the December, 1973 fire that destroyed Church's Lumber Yard, working on the fire for 27 hours, trying to keep the fire from spreading to the gas tanks in the rear and adjacent properties

Noonan also remembers three other incidents. "I had a baby die about 20 years ago" he said. "I knew the parents and the baby didn't make it. That one really stands out. Then there was the car accident where the little boy was killed at Hall Road and Van Dyke a couple years ago, that one stands out, too. Then several years ago, two of our firefighters were on their way to a call and at McClellan and Cass they collided in their private vehicles. One of our firefighters, I didn't think was going to make it. He retired after that, but he was injured pretty bad. If I sat and thought about it, there would be so many of them, but those are the things that come to mind right away," he said.

Looking back, he said that he is proud of the fact that during his career at the department, the firefighters never had an accident with the engines or the ambulance. "to go 42 years without an accident, I think that's a record" he said. "We do preach safety and I think that's helped the guys stop and think.

If he had the opportunity to change anything over his life, his career, he said that he would do it all over again. Except for one thing. "I think that maybe I would have gone into full-time firefighting," he said. But that thought certainly does not reflect on the good experiences and strong bonds and relationships he had over the years with the Utica department, a part-time paid operation.

Noonan credits the support of his peers, colleagues, residents and city officials that he has worked with over the years for the success and satisfaction of a long, fruitful career. "I would like to thank all the firefighters for their support over the years, along with the fire chief, mayor and council," he said.

With a chuckle, he explained the being married to the mayor brought no special favor and even a higher standard. "The mayor in many ways helped us get turnout gear, the full turnout of suits we've got today. The new helmets we bought several years ago, she sat down and helped us adjust the budget to buy them" he said. "But I was never different than anybody else. I went through the same proves, tested and went through the oral boards. It was never a given."

And the brass tacks business of the city and the fire department was largely kept to the official areas of city business rather than the Noonan home. "We might mention something about a new truck or equipment at home, but only in passing," he said. "The serious discussion was all done in her office or at the fire station. I can also say that there are things that I suggested that I would like to see that she said 'no.'"

Now it's time to put that all behind him as he heads into retirement, December 31, 2004. It will be a big change. "I will miss the guys, the camaraderie," he said. "I will miss them, going to the hall each and every day. It was a morning ritual, going there around 7:30 or 8 a.m. until 1 or 2 in the afternoon. Then the everyday hustle of the fire department-well, maybe I won't miss that as much. It's time to retire and find something else to do," he said. Noonan said that he may work with his son, a successful businessman with several different endeavors. "I'd also like to spend time with the grandkids," he said. "I'm not worried about not having something to do. I've always made something to keep myself busy. After just about 42 years, I have to miss it I guess."

He also plans on continuing his work to rehabilitate the city's first fire siren, recently removed from the old fire station on Auburn Road. The siren will be mounted on a granite block in front of the current fire station. "I want to continue researching that, going through the microfilm at the library to see when it was purchased and installed," he said. "I want to keep going on that project. I Want to see it done and I will see it done."

Chief Beck said that Noonan will be missed. "Over the years we've shared a lot of exciting incidents over a period of 40 years," Beck said. "What it boils down to is that as officers, junior officers and firefighters we've seen a lot of changes and we've seen a lot of things happen."

The department won't fully realize Noonan's daily contributions until he's gone, Beck said. "My feeling is that you don't truly realize the weight he picked up over the years, things he picked up automatically," he said. "He was a dedicated member of the department. Few people have given up the things that more active people like him have given up, that includes times with family and time in business. In his case, the fire department was put first, and his business came second and that's definitely a sign of dedication."

Beck said that he would like to fill the vacancy as soon as possible, as leadership in the department is important. Particularly, he said, since 2/3 of the department's staff is young and relatively inexperienced in the trade. That may not happen, as the city weathers

budget woes.

But in the meantime, as Noonan goes, so goes a valuable asset to the department and to the community. "He will be missed by all of us," said Beck. "You don't miss the water until the well goes dry. There are things the he would do instinctively, and people like that, you don't miss that until they don't do them anymore."

In his retirement, Jerry enjoyed caring for his beautiful yard, tinkering in his garage, going to ballgames at Jimmie John's Field, wintering at their condo in Gulf Shores, AL, traveling to Canada, outings with friends, family events, babysitting Grandchildren, attending their sports, and of course many days of fun with his wife of 56 years, Jackie.

He loved life, Bud Light, his family, and his God! Looking back, he felt he had been blessed with a wonderful life.

Visitation Tuesday 3:00-8:00 p.m. at the Wm Sullivan and Son Funeral Home, 8459 Hall Road (3 Blocks East of VanDyke), Utica, Michigan. Funeral Mass Wednesday, November, 18,2020 at 12:00 p.m. with an 11:45 Firefighter Pass and Review. at St. Lawrence Catholic Church, 44633 Utica Rd.Utica,Utica, Mi. If you are unable to join the family at church services will be webcast at <https://www.facebook.com/STLUtica>

Memorials appreciated to the to the Noonan Family, distribution of funds to Benefit Utica Fire Department, Utica Library and Utica Lions. are appreciated. Share your memories at <http://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com>.

Cemetery

St. Lawrence Cemetery

Auburn Road

Utica, MI, 48317

Events

NOV 17 Visitation 03:00PM - 08:00PM
Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Utica
8459 Hall Road, Utica, MI, US, 48317

NOV 18 Burial 12:00AM
St. Lawrence Cemetery
Auburn Road, Utica, MI, US, 48317

NOV 18 Firemans Pass & Review 11:45AM
St. Lawrence Catholic Church
44633 Utica Road, Utica, MI, US, 48317

NOV 18 Funeral Mass 12:00PM
St. Lawrence Catholic Church
44633 Utica Road, Utica, MI, US, 48317

Comments



“ Mary Layman lit a candle in memory of Michael J. 'JERRY' Noonan



mary layman - November 21, 2020 at 09:32 PM



“ Podolaks, Kirkums, Belskys, Jones and Cortis. purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Michael J. 'JERRY' Noonan.



Podolaks, Kirkums, Belskys, Jones and Cortis. - November 17, 2020 at 02:22 PM



“ We are so sorry Jackie and send our sincere sympathy to you and your family. May the beautiful memories you have help get you thru these tough times
Dan Crisan - Loretta Zeeb



Loretta Zeeb. Dan Crisan - November 17, 2020 at 10:00 AM



“ Jerry was the life of any gathering, it didn't even have to be a party. Everyone wanted to be in his and Jackie's circle. He was wise and kind and loved life! His family was his world, and he dedicated his life serving others. God had to have been so very proud of Jerry. This world is not going to be the same. Much love to the Noonans, Sheehans, Lelitos, Rissmans and Orlowskis. Our pain certainly doesn't go as deep as yours, but we feel your loss and will help you in any way we can. Much love to you.

Jeff and Nancy Carter

Jeff and Nancy Carter - November 17, 2020 at 09:56 AM



“ Heartfelt Memories was purchased for the family of Michael J. "Jerry" Noonan.



November 17, 2020 at 08:37 AM



“ My deepest sympathies go out to the entire family. Mrs. Noonan and Katie Lelito have been part of my life and my kids here at Eisenhower - the memories along the way will always be treasured. May you all find the peace that your husband/father/grandfather now has.



Alicia Singer - November 17, 2020 at 07:51 AM



“ My sincerest sympathies go to you and to your family, Jackie. We heard so many wonderful stories about Jerry and the kids when we were teaching together at Eisenhower. May you be comforted by the wonderful memories the two of you created together. I am so sorry for your loss.

Caroline Cochran

Caroline Cochran - November 16, 2020 at 04:49 PM



“ Lorraine Woods-Hickey lit a candle in memory of Michael J. 'JERRY' Noonan



Lorraine Woods-Hickey - November 16, 2020 at 04:49 PM



“ So sorry to hear of Jerry's passing RIP

Lorraine - November 16, 2020 at 04:52 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Michael J. "Jerry" Noonan.



November 16, 2020 at 04:37 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Michael J. "Jerry" Noonan.



November 16, 2020 at 01:11 PM



“ Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of Michael J. "Jerry" Noonan.



November 16, 2020 at 09:36 AM



“ Pretty Please was purchased for the family of Michael J. "Jerry" Noonan.



November 15, 2020 at 03:23 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael J. "Jerry" Noonan.



November 15, 2020 at 02:42 PM



“ Jackie and family,
My condolences to you and your family. Our friendship goes back many years. I will always cherish the dinners we had with good friends on New Years Eve and the many laughs we had, we had some great times. Jerry was a great man and he will be missed. My prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time.

Carol Hudson
xoxo



Carol Hudson - November 15, 2020 at 02:39 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael J. "Jerry" Noonan.



November 15, 2020 at 12:54 PM



“ My deepest sympathy to Jackie and family.
A luminous light remains where a beautiful soul has passed. Jerry, you were truly a pillar of our community. May your memory be eternal.

Sincerely,
Dolly Popovich



Dolly Popovich - November 15, 2020 at 12:37 PM



“ Steve and I were saddened to hear of Jerry’s passing. May his memory be eternal and perpetual light shine on him. Sending love to you Jackie and all of your children and grandchildren.

Jerry was a wonderful source of light he was deep seated in his faith and love of his family. In Greek we say Zoe Sa Sas !

Linda Davis-Kirksey - November 15, 2020 at 09:57 AM



“ So sorry for your loss Mayor Noonan.

Amy Mangus OLeary - November 14, 2020 at 10:01 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Michael J. "Jerry" Noonan.



November 14, 2020 at 09:29 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Michael J. "Jerry" Noonan.



November 14, 2020 at 08:57 PM



“ Marcia Lemley lit a candle in memory of Michael J. 'JERRY' Noonan



marcia lemley - November 14, 2020 at 08:51 PM



“ So sorry to hear of Jerry's passing. He was a great guy, enjoyed working with him and considered him a great friend. Prayers and hugs sent to the whole family



Bonnie Bowman - November 14, 2020 at 05:56 PM