



John F. LaBrecque, Sr.

June 18, 1924 - December 9, 2018

Dixieland jazz pianist, artist, teacher, inventor and animal lover John F. LaBrecque, Sr. passed away December 9, 2018 at the age of 94. John was born in Alpena, Michigan to Ernest, and Helen, a Huron Indian who graduated from Adrian Academy with honors and a degree in music. He listened and learned by observing his mom play classics and jazz on the piano. Although unable to read music, John had an uncanny ability to play chords to match melodies by ear. At the age of 68, he decided to take lessons on how to read music at Gus Zoppi Music Center in Warren. When John was a young boy, the family moved to the east side of Detroit to the neighborhood around St. Jean and Vernor Hwy where he attended St. Rose catholic school. He went on to attend Southeastern High School where his piano playing, and artistic abilities got him invited to many house parties, picnics and proms. One of the high points of these years was being invited to sit in with Woody Herman's Band at the Book Cadillac Hotel during a D.S.R. dance.

After graduating high school in 1943 he joined the United States Army Air Force where he was a radio operator and gunner. He flew on B-17 and B-29 bombers over Germany during WWII. During this time, he played at service clubs, officer's clubs, USO's and NCO clubs. He entertained his fellow soldiers with his ability to caricature them into humorous backgrounds and various situations. He achieved the rank of Sergeant in the 1077th AAF and received honorable discharge in 1946 with a victory medal, American theater ribbon

and good conduct medal.

After leaving the Air Force, John married Patricia Newberry and had four children. He worked as a commercial artist and draftsman at various art firms. Detroit Art, Creative Industries and Ford Tractor to name a few. He went on later to become a self-employed artist and musician. In the late 1970's he taught graphic and commercial art at Macomb College in Warren, Mi.

John was one of the founding fathers of the Zug Island All-Stars who played many a gig in the Detroit area. As a Dixieland jazz boogie woogie player, he had the opportunity to play with numerous Dixieland jazz greats at Clinton Gables, Jude's Plantation, Grapevine, Lee's Imperial Tavern, Air Force Club of Windsor, Marge's, and many, many others. In his early 80's he formed the Zug Island Trio and played nursing homes and assisted living centers for the entertainment of the residents. John was entertaining folks playing boogie woogie as well as drawing and painting well into his early 90's. He was a proud member of the Detroit Federation of Musicians Local 5 and Greater Detroit Jazz Society.

He was predeceased in death by his wife Patricia and daughter Yvonne Flynn. He is survived by his daughter Marie Ciarkowski, sons John LaBrecque, Jr. (Lori), Louis LaBrecque (Julie), and many loving grandchildren and great grandchildren. The family will receive friends Sunday from 3 pm until time of memorial service 7 pm at Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Home, 705 W. 11 Mile Rd. (4 blocks E. of Woodward), Royal Oak.

Memorials to Save the Wolves Foundation, ASPCA or St. Joseph's Indian School (South Dakota) are appreciated.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

DEC 16. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Royal Oak
705 W. Eleven Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067
(248) 541-7000
royal@sullivanfh.com
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

Memorial Service

DEC 16. 7:00 PM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Royal Oak
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Tribute Wall



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of John F. LaBrecque, Sr..*



December 15, 2018 at 08:24 AM



“ *St. Therese of Lisieux Staff purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of John F. LaBrecque, Sr..*



St. Therese of Lisieux Staff - December 13, 2018 at 04:46 PM

MB

“ You taught me how to appreciate bad jokes, play poker, drink beer, and even walk! I have so many wonderful memories of you, I could write a book. I honestly do not know where to start.

I've always been so proud to have you for a grandfather. Your many talents and accomplishments have inspired me throughout my life. Your "tell it like it is" outlook on life has been the catalyst for many of my own major life decisions. You never sugar-coated anything, and in many ways I am better for that.

You had the most affectionate and selfless side to you. If I ever went to you with a problem or something that needed to be fixed, I knew without a doubt that you would do everything you could to mend it. Your family, (especially your grandchildren), always came before yourself.

I remember your cool black glasses, and when I was horrified as a little girl when you shaved your goatee. I remember falling asleep with you in that black and gold rocking chair as a toddler, and you putting up with watching "All That" with me when I spent the night at your house years later. I remember laughing until it hurt, watching you watch us try to play your trombone.

I'll miss being at your house and hearing the baseball game on the radio. I'll miss your famous bloody marys (still the best by far), and your enthusiasm for Yahtzee. I'll miss blowing up watermelons in your backyard, and you always trying to figure out who stole your lawn darts game. I'll miss the grill that went up in flames at nearly every family get together. I'll miss watching all of the great-grandchildren look at you in awe as you drew Donald Duck or Charlie Brown for them. I'll miss hearing "how are you my dear?" every time we spoke on the phone.

I'm thankful for the portrait that you drew of my mother, which you gave to me at her funeral. I'm thankful for your jokes and (let's face it, sometimes inappropriate) comments that made my stepsons red

with laughter. I'm thankful for the posters you drew for me when I ran for student council in Junior High, and for the many instruments you gave us to play with throughout the years. I'm thankful for all of the whole-hearted I love yous we exchanged each time we said goodbye.

This year, I won't have anyone to buy Grey Goose or Emmet's for, for Christmas. This year I won't hear your voice on July 14th, singing happy birthday on my voicemail. This year, you won't be there to say "grace" at holidays and make us tear up. You were always most thankful for "another year that we've had together", and this one is now our last.

I hope that you're up there somewhere watching over all of us. I hope that you see some of yourself in how I'm raising my daughter. I hope you're proud of the family that I have now, which you helped nudge me toward. I hope that you're feeling all of the peace and joy that you deserve.

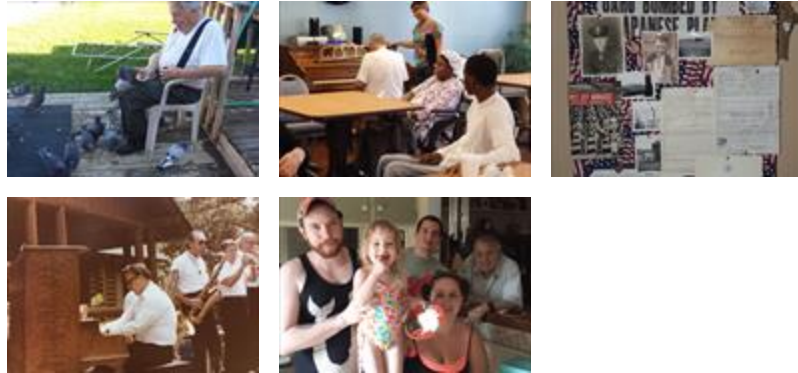
Rest well, "bumpa." Mom and Grandma get to be with you now. We love you so very much and miss you terribly.

*Love,
Melanie*

Melanie Barbaza - December 12, 2018 at 04:55 PM



“ 11 files added to the album Memories



Marie Ciarkowski - December 12, 2018 at 02:51 PM



My dad lived a long, full life. As I put together memories of him and our family growing up, I am truly honored to have called him "dad". He accomplished much in his 94 years and only slowed down the last 6 months of his life. He loved entertaining people whether by music or by art, loved spending time with his family especially playing poker on holidays. He enjoyed and cared for every animal or bird that made it's way onto his porch for a hand fed treat. I will miss his faith, sense of humor, his ability to rig anything to fit his needs and his deep love and protection. I love you dad. I will miss you a lot and your 5 minute answering machine messages. He never just said call me back. ;) I hope I did right by you with your final wishes and honoring you. I hope you are at peace and in reunion with those you loved here on Earth who went before you.

Marie Ciarkowski - December 12, 2018 at 04:12 PM



So sorry to hear of the loss of your farther. May your memories give you peace and comfort. James Ciarkowski and family.

James Ciarkowski - December 15, 2018 at 09:13 AM

MC

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories*



Marie Ciarkowski - December 12, 2018 at 02:05 PM