



Joseph Harper

January 23, 1962 - May 16, 2023

Joseph M. Harper, age 61, of Madison Heights, passed away peacefully at his home on May 16, 2023. He was born on January 23, 1962 in Detroit to Michael Harper and Janet (Seery) Harper and lived in Royal Oak for many years and spent his summers at the family cottage in northern Michigan. Joe was a 1981 graduate of Shrine High School and was employed by Shrine Elementary School as a custodian for nearly thirty years. Affectionately known to all as "Mr. Joe," he was beloved by the faculty and students at school and worked at Shrine long enough to see many children's children attend the school. Mr. Joe was their pied piper and will be remembered as the first to lend aid to a scraped knee on the playground and as the gentle soul consoling a child in their difficult moment. Joe was an avid sports memorabilia collector and lifelong fan of the Michigan State Spartans. Go Green, Go White! Joe was a familiar face at concerts in the Detroit area and enjoyed traveling to see his favorite bands. Joe had a soft spot for animals, especially his cats, and had many pets throughout his life. Joe will be dearly missed by all whom he cheered with his beaming smile and ready welcome.

Loving son of the late Mike and Janet Harper. Dear brother of Mike (Donna) Harper, Linda (Todd King) Sargent, Laurie (Scott) Claeys and the late John Harper. He will also be missed by many nieces and nephews who hold many cherished memories.

The family will receive friends on Monday, May 22, from 4 pm until 8 pm, with a praying of the Rosary at 7:00 pm at Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Home, 705 W. 11 Mile Rd. (4 blocks E. of Woodward), Royal Oak. A celebratory funeral Mass will be held at the National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica in Royal Oak at 8:30 am on Tuesday, May 23. Family will greet friends beginning at 8:00 am. The Mass will be live-streamed on the Shrine of the Little Flower Website for friends of Joe's who are unable to attend. Memorial contributions to the Michigan Humane Society are appreciated. Please share your memories of Joe at www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

MAY **22.** 4:00 PM - 8:00 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/>

Rosary

MAY **22.** 7:00 PM (ET)

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors-Royal Oak
705 W. Eleven Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48067
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Memorial Mass

MAY **23.** 8:30 AM (ET)

National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica
2100 W. 12 Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48073

Tribute Wall

MI

“ I miss you, little brother

Mike - March 15 at 02:14 PM

MK

“ Was always nice to see "Mr. Joe" helping out as a crossing guard when I went to pick up my children from school. 😊 He was truly a treasured friend to so many of us parents as Mr. Joe had made our children feel safe and welcomed each day. It wasn't just the grade school students who Mr. Joe would help out either. Mr. Joe had helped out the High School Dad's Club during our annual Christmas tree sales too. Mr. Joe would always make sure we had access to the school bathrooms back-in-the-day while we Dads' were all outside working the tree sale during the weekends. Mr. Joe will be missed for his quick smile and his friendly willingness to help out even after his work hours were long over.

Martin Klemet - May 23, 2023 at 04:50 PM

PC

“ I love you cousin! You are Home, safe in the arms of God. Please Give all of our family in Heaven a hug for us. God hold tight Mike, Linda and Laurie and all those that loved Joe so dearly...sending so much love to all of you. 🙏❤️🙏

Patti Charette - May 22, 2023 at 10:55 PM

JM

“ I will forever cherish our 10 minute chats waiting for my granddaughters. He always made me smile RIP my friend ❤️

Joanne M. - May 22, 2023 at 05:57 PM

DE

“ Joe related so well to all the children because he was truly a kid at heart himself. He loved with a purity of heart and made each and every person he came in contact with feel special. He will be sorely missed by all ❤️

Denise Eakins - May 22, 2023 at 12:01 PM

SE

“ Joe Harper was a one of a kind, devoted, caring, loyal gift to this part of our world! Joe was one of the best imitators of his patron saint, St. Joseph, the loyal, humble, caring spouse of the Virgin Mary and foster father of Jesus, the Son of God. What a heavenly welcome our Joe must be receiving! Condolences to Joe's family and to the Shrine community for the loss that will be felt when Joe doesn't appear in person. I think Joe will now be helpful to us in a new and unseen way! Sister Noreen Ellison, SC

Sr Noreen Ellison - May 22, 2023 at 09:53 AM

HF

“ Sending love and prayers across the miles from the Harper cousins in Ontario.

Harper Family - May 21, 2023 at 10:33 PM



“ Fairest of All was purchased for the family of Joseph Harper.



May 21, 2023 at 12:47 PM

TL

“ I’m truly blessed to have worked with Mr. Joe the last 11 years at Shrine. Kind, gentle and loyal to a fault, this was Mr. Joe. As I sat in the dark halls of the school this morning I had a moment to reflect on just how much Joe meant not only to the school but to the entire Shrine community. It’s amazing how one man could touch so many lives but that was Joe. Let us all find comfort in knowing Joe is with our Lord now and he will always smile down upon us. Thank you for being my right hand and good friend, I will miss you. Rest in Peace Joe.

Terry Lynch - May 21, 2023 at 09:29 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joseph Harper.

May 20, 2023 at 03:37 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Joseph Harper.



May 20, 2023 at 03:37 PM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Joseph Harper.



May 20, 2023 at 12:33 PM

EP

“ Oh Mr. Joe ... How I will miss that ready smile & the spirit of Jesus ever-present at the grade school. You knew EVERYone's name. Kids & parents alike. That is remarkable & it made us all feel special. You had such a deep & genuine caring for all the GS kids. You went out of your way to attend Tait, Frankie, & Jamie's baseball game last summer! You were never rattled. Always kind. I have heard countless stories of your innate goodness & kindness & the positive mark you made on so many children's hearts. Those stories simultaneously warm my heart & bring tears to my eyes at the same time. I am not even entirely certain what your 'official' title or job description was, the good you did & the impact you made would not fit on a resume. It's hard to leave the grade school behind as Tait graduates from 5th grade & it is even harder knowing you won't be there anymore with the rest of the children being their constant & making every day brighter. God bless you. God rest your soul in heaven. Thank you for all you did for all the children. #WWMJD (what would mr joe do). You are deeply missed, loved, & appreciated.

erin c patterson - May 20, 2023 at 10:53 AM

A'

“ Shrine has lost another legend! Mr. Joe embodied what it truly means to be a Christian. He will be missed by so many. He was a senior when I was a freshman. Then he was working at Shrine when my son was there. It was comforting to know such a kind spirit was a staple at the school. My favorite memory of Joe was when he worked the Fish Bake with my dad, selling pop. He worked there all day, then all night. Dedication and love. He was the salt of the earth. Rest In Peace with the angels, Mr. Joe.

Amy (Bauer) Campbell '84 - May 20, 2023 at 05:50 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joseph Harper.*



May 20, 2023 at 12:16 AM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Joseph Harper.*



May 19, 2023 at 05:27 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Joseph Harper.*



May 19, 2023 at 04:07 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joseph Harper.*

May 19, 2023 at 04:07 PM



“ *Fairest of All was purchased for the family of Joseph Harper.*



May 19, 2023 at 02:27 PM



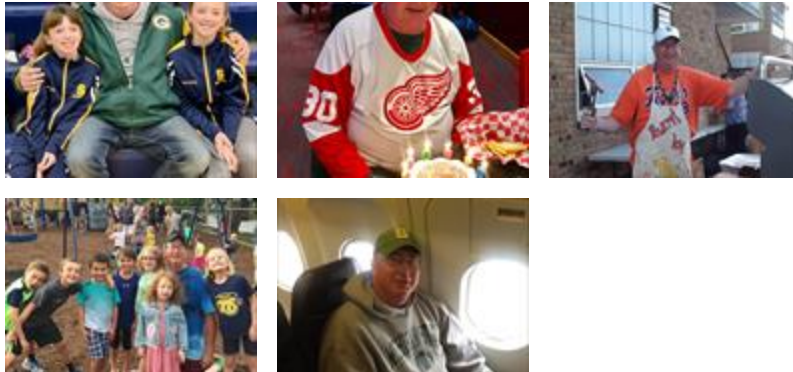
“ *1 file added to the album Joe*



Michael Harper - May 19, 2023 at 01:09 PM



“ *6 files added to the album Mr. Joe Harper*



Michael Harper - May 19, 2023 at 12:40 PM

SM

“ I knew you throughout our years in school. You always had such a great disposition. Who knew you would become Mr. SHRINE after we graduated. You made such a wonderful name for yourself. My nieces and nephews; great nieces and great nephews; sisters and sister-in-laws all got to know you and grow to love you there at the grade school. I always heard such wonderful stories about you and how everyone loved you. You were SUCH a gem for the school! And you knew ALL the kids' names!! You will be very missed. May you rest in peace knowing you were SO loved.

Shar Miller - May 18, 2023 at 11:34 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Joseph Harper.



May 18, 2023 at 09:47 AM

KK

“ One of the Good Guys. So glad my son got to attend the grade school during Mr. Joe's tenure. We were blessed to know such a good soul!

Kelly Kennedy - May 17, 2023 at 11:03 PM

LR

“ Mr. Joe helped protect us from cars at stop lights and in the parking lot. He wore a football jersey on Fridays and we talked about the teams. I will miss him. <3 Lucas

Lucas R - May 17, 2023 at 08:06 PM



“ Joe became Mr. Joe. What a gift! Life gives us special people. Bless us all in hope that we all can give the love that Mr. Joe provided.

Jerry Campbell - May 17, 2023 at 07:49 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Jerry Campbell - May 17, 2023 at 07:44 PM



“ When I taught in the old double wide preschool on the Woodard parking lot, Mr. Joe came out to our building to help with whatever task was needed with his bucket on wheels or tools to unplug a toilet. The children loved when Mr. Joe came. (I sometimes wondered if perhaps they “plugged” the toilets on purpose just to have him come visit! He would leave with a cookie in his hand and a special song in his heart sung by the children as he left. 💕😊 Mr. Joe was loved.

Thank you Mr. Joe—Mrs. Oldani

carhy Oldani - May 17, 2023 at 06:34 PM



“ Serenity Wreath was purchased for the family of Joseph Harper.



May 17, 2023 at 05:57 PM



“ [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was purchased for the family of Joseph Harper.

May 17, 2023 at 05:49 PM



“ Mr. Joe, you have meant so much to all the children and families that have passed through the halls of Shrine. So many great memories of you from Field Day, manning the grill making hotdogs, to being a smiling face the kids could always count on to be there for them, to playing kickball with the kids in the parking lot, so many memories. Our hearts are breaking but I know your parents were there to greet you with open arms. It was an honor and privilege to know you.

Amy Howard and Colton Baldauf - May 17, 2023 at 05:45 PM



“ The Shrine community has lost an icon. The Grade School students have lost a best friend. “Mr. Joe” was Shrine Schools.....kind, empathetic, humble, always helpful and caring. Rest in peace Joe knowing thousands of kids and their parents will always remember you with love.

Vee Barnes - May 17, 2023 at 05:24 PM



“ Mr. Joe was my boss when I worked maintenance as a high school student. He was always kind, loved his students, and gave to the Shrine community his whole life. He is the definition of Christ-like virtues. You will never be forgotten Joe.

James Mio - May 17, 2023 at 05:09 PM

TG

“*Mr. Joe" took such good care of Shrine Grade School and several generations of students. He opened juice boxes, zipped up jackets, crossed students safely across 12 Mile Rd and remembered ALL their names. Loved his Spartans and Packers and wore his cheese head proudly! Gone way too soon. Things will never be the same. God bless this big hearted man. Say hi to your Mom & Dad.*

Trish Guarino - May 17, 2023 at 04:32 PM

JR

“*To my Brother from another Mother - I guess now we won't get to dance at a future weddings, enjoy a group meal at your new-ish home, or argue over bands, sports, or who's cat was cooler. Godspeed, dear Joe.*

Jaymarie Reddie - May 17, 2023 at 04:06 PM