



## Arthur Joseph Robillard

November 17, 2020

Arthur Joseph Robillard of Foster, RI passed away due to Covid-19 on November 11, 2020. Artie was the last child born to Genevieve (Tremmel) and Joseph Robillard on October the 11th, 1949. He had three brothers, Gene, Peter and Frank (all deceased) and one sister, Melanie Gatlin of Providence, RI. Along with his sister, Artie is survived by his wife Lona (Boivin) Robillard, their son Russell and his wife Shanna of Virginia Beach, VA, as well as their daughter Ellen and her wife Jody Weiner of Foxboro, MA. He also leaves behind his sisters-in-law Beth Fitzpatrick of East Greenwich, RI and Rachael Robillard of Cranston, RI. There are also many nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews that he may not have been able to visit with often, but loved greatly.

In his youth, Artie was a member of the Naval Cadets and enjoyed spending summers at the Narragansett Jr. Police Camp. When he was growing up, his older brothers were involved with drag racing, which influenced Artie's life-long love of cars. Although Artie didn't go very far in school, he certainly earned a master degree in the school of "hard knocks". His first job was at Coro's Jewelry, in the 60s. He had many jobs back then; they were easy to get and he even ended up earning a degree in Auto Body Repair.

1972 was an eventful year for Artie. He would turn 21 in October. He married his sweetie Lona in February. Over the summer, they traveled with the Richard

Vulcane Magic Show throughout Massachusetts. Artie was the road manager and even dressed up as a clown, riling up the audience up during the show. In the early fall, the couple moved back to Providence and Artie took a job with the City of Providence Water Supply Board. He began as a laborer and later became a heavy equipment operator, running the back hoe and hoist truck. His father Joseph was very proud of his son, sticking it out during the hard labor, as Joe was known to say (and Artie would in turn tell his kids), "You've got to pay the bills."

Artie and Lona had two children, Ellen and Russell. He loved taking his children to the beach, Beavertail in Jamestown, Roger Williams Park Zoo, and for going on long walks in the city as well as spending time in the country at either Pulaski Park or The Tri-Town Rod and Gun Club. When they went out for a drive, his kids would ask, "Where are we going?" to which he would reply, "Crazy."

In 1986 Artie's life was drastically changed. One night in October, while Artie and several others were working overtime, a drunk driver crashed into the site. Artie was impaled on a fire hydrant. His left leg would need to be amputated above the hip. According to the doctors, he was not expected to recover from this crash but defied the odds. He underwent countless operations and his life was completely altered.

In spite of chronic pain and many disabilities, he continued to live his life with optimism and humor. Even though he was unable to return to work, he became "Mr. Mom" by taking over all the household chores while Lona went back to school. And once she had graduated and began teaching first grade, he was her "unpaid teacher's aide." He also took great care of his mother-in-law Edna over the years. Artie would not let his disabilities slow him down and continued to be as active as he could for as long as he could.

The Robillards moved to Foster in 1992. Artie and his family joined Saint Paul the Apostle Church where he eventually became a member of the Knights of Columbus. He was also involved with the Swamp Meadow Community Theatre as a director, producer, board member and actor. He had most recently been working on his third installment of “The USO Camp Show” a dinner-theatre based on Bob Hope’s variety shows performed around the world for our armed forces.

Artie was a huge fan of the arts. Music was always a significant part of his life. During the 60s, he played bass in the Early Reign band with his cousin Ray Waugh. He met numerous people over the years through music, including one of his closest friends, Jim Kenney. Artie often spent time searching online for just the right songs to post on Facebook. Meeting up with folks at Chan’s for live music was one of his favorite things to do. He was a subscriber to PPAC and enjoyed plays at Theater by the Sea as well as Trinity Rep. He also liked watching movies on the big screen. Water Fire was another event he looked forward to and was happy to share the handicapped boat ride with family and friends.

That’s what Artie was all about...spending time with family and friends. He had a great sense of humor and loved to make folks laugh. Most of his jokes were the so-bad-they’re-good “dad jokes.” One of his favorites was “What’s a henway? Oh, about 5 pounds” (hen weigh...get it?) which he would inflict upon his daughter-in-law Jody fairly often throughout the years. No one was safe from his corny antics. Whenever he went out to eat, Artie would tell the wait staff a joke before ordering. There was a group of people he was friendly with at YouFit Gym and very often you would hear them laughing during a workout. The cast & crew of SMCT were also familiar with his loud, boisterous sense of humor. Even in the Emergency Room or on his many hospital stays over the years, he always tried to provide comic relief for the nurses and

CNAs.

His son Russ often states, “Arthur J. Robillard: The Man, The Myth, The Legend.” And for good reason! He knew so many people from diverse walks of life. He was an amazing husband and father, always putting his wife and children first and we will miss him taking such good care of us. We will miss him opening the front door to his log cabin and yelling nonsense out into the woods just because. We will miss how he was able to name the make, model and year of classic cars driving by. His daughter will fondly miss what a grumpy old man he could be sometimes, and especially his stubborn thick-headedness (which she has inherited) but most of all, she will miss kissing him on the top of his head. We will miss going out to eat with him even though he would reach out with his fork and steal food from just about anyone’s plate. We will miss his determination and endurance; despite a variety of daily pains, he would “endeavor to preserve.” We will miss his laughter, his smile, his gentleness, his vast appreciation for life, family and friends. He was an inspiration to so many people and his memory will live on.

Artie’s mass will be private due to Covid-19 but it will be live streamed on Facebook on Saturday, November 28th at 11:00 AM. In lieu of flowers we want to help those affected by Covid-19. Please make donations to the St. Paul’s the Apostle Church Food Closet or The Foster Dept. of Human Services.

Please view Mr. Robillard's video at: <http://videos.lifetributes.com/1102277>

# Tribute Wall



“ Winfield & Sons Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Arthur Joseph Robillard



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Winfield & Sons Funeral Home - November 18, 2020 at 02:44 PM

AB

“ I'm just learning of Artie's passing and am tearing up at his obituary and all the wonderful tributes left on this page. Lona, Ellen and Beth, I send you all heartfelt hugs. Artie was a welcome distraction to my days at A Bee's Buzz as I would always have a "battle" and a laugh. Our battle was over the imaginary delay in installing the elevator to the second floor and always ended with some sort of corny joke. He gave as good as he got and I enjoyed the fact I could count on him for a witty exchange. He was a powerhouse and a friend to all. I'm so sorry this horrible pandemic has taken so many wonderful people. ~Abby

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Abby - September 30, 2021 at 12:31 PM

TV

“ My deepest condolences, he truly was one of a kind and lived an absolutely extraordinary life. We'll miss you Artie, rest in peace my friend.

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Tyler Vigeant - December 01, 2020 at 09:26 PM

SA

“ I was shocked and saddened to hear of Arthur’s passing. Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. Sincerely, Sarah Arendt a friend from St. Paul’s church

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**Sarah Arendt** - November 27, 2020 at 09:25 PM

LR

“ Artie's memorial mass will be streaming on Facebook Live tomorrow at 11 am via this link  
<https://www.facebook.com/foster.catholic>

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**Lona Robillard** - November 27, 2020 at 02:32 PM

PF

“ Artie you were a wonderful friend to my brother Chris & Donna and their Family. I always enjoyed your company whenever I saw you . you will be sadly missed. Our comfort and prayers to your Family . Rest in Peace.



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**Pat & Frank Russo & Family** - November 25, 2020 at 06:58 AM

MG

“ Artie, I was blessed to have you as my younger brother. I surely didn't want a younger sister. We had our ups and downs. Sometimes you would get on my ugly side. And you told everyone that I pulled your hair. Well I did, but you made it a big joke. You did a lot of fun things when you were younger. Then you met Lona. What a great thing - you loved her before you knew it and guess what- she ended up loving you. Blessed is what I say- both of you loving each other.

You two had some special experiences. Artie got a very good job and went from a laborer to an operator. You surely made us proud. I hope you knew it.

Then you had two beautiful children. You had many good experiences with them. And did many very simple things together. Good job you were a great DAD. Then you had a very horrific accident. Lona kept vigil with the rest of us. You on the other hand left it up to the LORD and he let you get back to us. Your wife and family prayed together. Nobody could have been as happy as we were. Lona had a very long road ahead of her. She went to school and became a teacher. She was always there for you.

Let us not forget Mrs. B. She helped you as much as anyone. You two had a very special relationship.

Thank the Lord for the many years we had with you. It will take me a very long time to come to terms with you leaving. I loved you in life and I will love you until we are together again. I believe we will all meet again.

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**Melanie Gatlin** - November 24, 2020 at 12:32 PM

MC

“ With many fond memories of Artie. We're so fortunate to have spend many moments together.

Mary Jo Chretien

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**Mary Jo Chretien** - November 22, 2020 at 11:13 AM

TR

“ Thinking of Artie, and all of his family- and sending prayers for peace in the difficult time.  
Tracey



Tracey - November 21, 2020 at 10:38 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Arthur Joseph Robillard.



November 20, 2020 at 03:44 PM

MW

“ Michelle Whittaker sent a virtual gift in memory of Arthur Joseph Robillard



Michelle Whittaker - November 19, 2020 at 11:49 AM

MW

“ Michelle Whittaker lit a candle in memory of Arthur Joseph Robillard



Michelle Whittaker - November 19, 2020 at 11:46 AM

MW

*I'm so sorry for the loss of Uncle Artie. My prayers and sympathy are with the family in this time of sorrow.*

**Michelle Whittaker** - November 19, 2020 at 11:49 AM

LD

“ 6 files added to the album Memories Album



**Liz Dubois** - November 19, 2020 at 11:25 AM

LD

*I'm having a hard time imagining Artie as having left us all. At SMCT, he was a creative dreamer, capable of drawing everyone into his world. He was at any given time a visionary, a clown, a cranky old man, and a community organizer. But if you knew him, and worked with him, you knew that he literally had a heart of gold, and cared deeply for those around him. And that's why so many of us stepped in to try to make his stage dreams happen- because he made the journey worth it.*

*Reading his obituary makes me realize that I really didn't know his backstory, or probably how much of a struggle it was for him to do the many things he did- and that just makes them all the more remarkable. I'll carry Artie's strength and spirit with me, and I know many others will as well.*

*Hugs to you, Lona, and to your family.*

*Love,  
Liz Dubois*

**Liz Dubois** - November 19, 2020 at 11:46 AM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Arthur Joseph Robillard.*



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November 18, 2020 at 09:02 PM



“ *My deepest condolences to the Robillard Family and Friends. Artie was and always will be one of my favorite people ever. I will always have a spot for this man in my heart. There are truly not enough superlatives to describe this kind, generous, talented and caring man. It was always very clear that he was happiest by being surrounded by family and friends. That sentiment was returned, people were happiest being around Artie. Although we did not spend a lot of time together, I will miss you and hold you dear in my heart. Artie, you are one of the good guys. – Say hello to Edna for me- Jimmy*

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**Jimmy Capone** - November 18, 2020 at 08:18 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Arthur Joseph Robillard.*



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November 18, 2020 at 07:56 PM

EL

“ *My dearest sympathies. Artie will truly be missed* ❤️



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**Elijah** - November 18, 2020 at 06:40 PM