



James "Riley" Tessaro

July 24, 1930 - June 22, 2024

James "Riley" Tessaro, 93, of Tontitown, Passed away on June 22nd, 2024, at Circle of Life Hospice. He was born July 24, 1930, in Tontitown to the late Dick Tessaro and Mary Fiori Tessaro Jones. Riley was raised from childhood by his loving Uncle and Aunt, the late Pete and Mary Brandellero Tessaro.

After Graduating from Subiaco Academy, Riley joined the United States Air Force where he served as a radar technician for 21 years before retiring as Master Sergeant. He fought and served our country in both the Korean and Vietnam wars. During his service, Riley was stationed overseas in Madrid, Spain and Freising,, Germany as well as stateside in Alaska, Oklahoma, California, Louisiana and South Carolina. He had a knack for languages and spoke Italian, German and Spanish.

On October 24, 1953, he married Marie Hawkins and they enjoyed 56 years together. After retiring from the Air Force, Riley and Marie moved to Tontitown with their four children and lived next to Aunt Mary and Uncle Pete. In 1979, Riley was one of the original firefighters who started the Tontitown Volunteer Fire Department. He loved the Fire Department and was still going on night calls into his 80's. In 2022, Riley retired from the Fire Department after 42 years of service where he served as Battalion Chief. He also worked for many years as a safety director for P.A.M. Transport before retiring at the age of 65.

Riley was an active member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Tontitown. As part of his church ministry, Riley served with the Knights of Columbus and worked every year at the Tontitown Grape Festival - for the past several years you could find him selling car tickets. He also served many years at the Tontitown Historical Museum including Vice President for a time. His Aunt Mary was an amazing cook which led Riley to his love of food, particularly homemade bread and desserts (he never missed a donut Sunday after Mass)! He loved playing bocce with his friends at the park, listening to music at the Tontitown Winery, riding his bicycle (and in later years his 4-wheeler) and tending to his garden.

Riley was preceded in death by his wife Marie, sister, Frances Holt and brother-in-law Jack Holt.

Survivors include four children, Kenny Tessaro and wife Debbie, Janice Della Rosa and husband Mike, Tim Tessaro and wife Melissa, all of Tontitown; and Mike Tessaro and wife Shelley of Dallas; twelve grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren.

Mass of Christian Burial will be 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 27, 2024 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Tontitown with Father Balaraju "Bala" Akkala officiating. Visitation will be from 6-7pm at the church on Wednesday, June 26, 2024. Rosary services will begin at 7pm on Wednesday at the church.

Pallbearers will be Russell Della Rosa, Jason Tessaro, Jeffrey Della Rosa, Chad Tessaro, Brian Tessaro and Tyler Tessaro. Honorary Pallbearers will be Tontitown Area Volunteer Firefighters.

Memorials may be made to the Historical Tower Memorial Gardens at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Tontitown or Circle of Life Hospice.

Online condolences may be left at www.siscofuneral.com

Cemetery Details

St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery

380 E. Fletcher Ave.
Springdale, AR 72762

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 26. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church
136 E Henri De Tonti Blvd
Springdale, AR 72762
<http://www.stjoetontitown.org>

Rosary

JUN 26. 7:00 PM (CT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church
136 E Henri De Tonti Blvd
Springdale, AR 72762
<http://www.stjoetontitown.org>

Mass of Christian Burial

JUN 27. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church
136 E Henri De Tonti Blvd
Springdale, AR 72762
<http://www.stjoetontitown.org>

Tribute Wall

AR

“ Alan And Nancy Roller lit a candle in memory of James "Riley" Tessaro



Alan and Nancy Roller - June 27, 2024 at 11:40 AM

TJ

“ The Jaro's purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of James "Riley" Tessaro.



The Jaro's - June 25, 2024 at 07:50 PM

TF

“ The Pianalto Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of James "Riley" Tessaro.



The Pianalto Family - June 25, 2024 at 04:33 PM

PG

“ To the Family. What a wonderful man Mr. Tessaro was. St. Joseph's Em to sick brought him the Holy Eucharist. I brought him the Holy Eucharist on June 9. His spirits were raised and he prayed with purpose. May you be blessed with the gifts of grace, patience, compassion, faithfulness and steadfast love. Patty Gross

Patricia Gross - June 25, 2024 at 03:57 PM

JR

Thankful for you Patty

Janice Della Rosa - July 16, 2024 at 08:33 PM

KM

“ James helped establish bocce for the Special Olympics. He came for at least 10 years to help out at the Area 3 competition. The number of players keeps growing each year!!! Thanks, James Karen Mowry, Special Olympics bocce coach

Karen Mowry - June 25, 2024 at 01:36 PM

JR

*Thank you
Janice Dellarosa*

Janice Della Rosa - July 16, 2024 at 08:34 PM



“ Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of James "Riley" Tessaro.



June 25, 2024 at 11:51 AM

TP

“ I was a volunteer firefighter with Springdale for 25 years. Sometimes we would go to Tontitown and hang out with the volunteer guys. He was a great guy and very knowledgeable about the fire department and what all was involved. He will be missed and I'll be praying for his family and friends.

Teresa Powers - June 24, 2024 at 11:08 AM

VP

When Felix and I owned and operated the Tontitown Mercantile Riley worked for us for a number of years after moving to Springdale. He was not only a great employee but wonderful friend. He helped anywhere he was needed. He will be greatly missed.

Virginia Pozza

Virginia Pozza - June 24, 2024 at 01:23 PM

MM

Well, Uncle Riley was our uncle. He was extremely to all of us. We so enjoyed being with him and his family. His wife Marie was a real character to. I really enjoyed all their kids too. May the Lord wrap his arms around all.

Love, Mary

Mary Mullings - June 24, 2024 at 01:54 PM

JH

Riley was my favorite uncle. He was always very nice & attentive to us. I loved visiting them. He will be missed. He was blessed & had a long life. Leaves behind a wonderful family. I pray the Lord comforts each of them.

Jenny Hawkins - June 24, 2024 at 05:09 PM

JB

I worked with his sweet wife, Marie at Dorman Clinc for several years . I remember him too . Prayers for family .

Janice Breshears - June 24, 2024 at 11:05 PM

JD

*Thank you for the memories
Janice Dellarosa*

Janice Dellarosa - July 16, 2024 at 08:36 PM