



## Ronald "Roy" Spadafora, Sr.

November 12, 1932 - March 19, 2020

Ronald "Roy" Spadafora, Sr., 87, passed away peacefully on Thursday, March 19th. He was a lifelong resident of Syracuse, and a 1950 graduate of Christian Brother's Academy, as well as a graduate of Syracuse University. He was a man who wore many hats, but the one he is most widely known for was as an educator and administrator in the Syracuse City School District, where he was employed for more than 25 years. He was a loving family man who raised five children of his own, took great pride in his 8 granddaughters, and most recently was enjoying watching his 5 great-grandchildren learn and grow. Roy loved attending the sporting events, recitals and events of his loved ones. He enjoyed his winter vacations with his wife and numerous friends in Florida and Myrtle Beach, and also attending his Friday Night Dinner Club with friends.

Roy was predeceased by his wife, Delores Spadafora; son, Frank Spadafora; parents, Rose and Frank Spadafora; brother and sister-in-law, Patrick and Laura Spadafora; mother and father-in law, Molly and Leonard Tucci; and son-in-law, Joseph Mazella.

Roy is survived by his loving family, including: son, Ronald (Wendy) Spadafora Jr.; daughters Valerie (Joel) Brennan, Janice Mazella, and Susan Spadafora; granddaughters, Shannon, Kailey, Breanna (Chris Cunningham), Olivia (Don Sherman) Spadafora, Marissa (Trevor Barbano) Paparo, Leah (Patrick) Mannion, Alicia (Derek DeMass) Mazella, and Brena Brennan; great-grandchildren, Milana Paparo, Cameron and Aria Cunningham, and Amalia and Patrick Joseph Mannion; sister, Phyllis Spadafora; brother-in-law, Leonard (Lucille) Tucci; several nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Private funeral services were conducted at FARONE & SON Inc FUNERAL HOME and followed by entombment in St. Mary's Cemetery Mausoleum. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at a later date followed by a reception for extended family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Francis House, 108 Michaels Avenue Syracuse, NY 13208.

# Comments

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“ To the family...We shared a large study hall/homeroom at Henninger in what became eventually part of the library and of course saw each other over the years.  
A warm and gracious colleague with a lovely family.  
Marjorie Julian

marjorie t julian - March 25 at 08:00 PM

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“ Ron, Wendy and family,  
We were sorry to hear of Ron, Sr.'s passing. He was a real gentleman and an "old school"educator in the best sense of the name. Please accept our condolences.  
  
Howard Kligerman and Nance Geiger

Howard Kligerman - March 24 at 05:55 PM

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“ March 22, 2020  
To the family of Ron Spadafora

Hello Janice. You may remember me as the physical therapist who at various times was assigned to Lincoln Middle School. We did meet a few times, as Lincoln had Special Ed kids that I treated. I had also, on occasion worked with your husband, Joe. Once, in a brief hallway chat with you I alluded to the tremendous impact that your father, Ron, had on my life. As I probably didn't give the story its due, I wanted to relay it again.

I was an "indifferent" scholar, to say the least. In Junior High (the old Lincoln) I was in a bad crowd. Bad influences...leading me to segue right into Henninger High as the perfect business or vocational program candidate.

One day, early in my sophomore year (Henninger began as 10th-12th grades) as I sat unchallenged in GENERAL MATHEMATICS, Mr. Spadafora strode past my desk and quietly asked, "What are you doing in here with all these dummies?" Just to make my case, I could have said "Duhh...I dunno." Instead, I truthfully answered: "I can't do Algebra." (failed it miserably in 9th grade). He gave me a displeased look and said bluntly, "GET this course out of the way and GET into an ALGEBRA class, then GEOMETRY will have to be in your senior year but at least you will back on a college track as you SHOULD be!" I was to find that Mr. Spadafora didn't mince his words and with the LOOK he gave me, I shook off my indifference at once, and wrapped my brain around getting out of this room full of dummies.

For brevity I'll skip a lot and get right to the heart of this narrative: I took ALGEBRA in 11th grade. It was EASY ! Likewise GEOMETRY in 12th – Aced it. Went off to

college successfully . But here it gets providential : Geometry teacher assigned to this class ? Ron Spadafora. But even more important for this big Senior in a class of sophomores, there was one little sophomore that wound up seated directly BEHIND me. Perfect for before and after class socializing. Yep, it became the upending experience of my life. Patti Burak, already pretty well known and liked in the school, became (in time) an item.

Went off to college together - I transferred in after 2 years . Graduated SUNY Oswego. Eventually earned advanced degrees (nothing to do with math). Got married in 1974, homeowners from 1979 – on. Careers - Patti at SU /Programs/Professor, Me - Exercise Physiology/ Physical Therapy/karate school owner.  
Children - Billy 35, Santa Cruz; Anna 27, Auburn.

All of this....Okay, there were other important influences in our truly blessed lives, but, I will ALWAYS contend things would never have turned out this good if it hadn't been for the strong admonishment and subsequent guidance from Ronald Spadafora. I told him this at some social event or another in the ensuing years but a long time ago. My most heartfelt prayers go to you and family. He's with his brother now (who also taught me). Heaven has gained two great educators.  
Bill Prusinowski Henninger '67

**Bill Prusinowski** - March 22 at 10:44 PM

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“ A few years before I went to CBA, I attended a football game @ Roosevelt field between CBA & Eastwood, with my cousin. After the game, riding up Salina St on a bus, I heard a group of CBA students & students from the Convent School, singing a cheer. Of course, CBA had won the game. It went like this: "Spadafora you're a wonder, & you never make a blunder. Spadafora you're a wonder, & we're always here with you". I have never forgotten that cheer. Having known Roy for many decades now, He was a good athlete, but more importantly, a Good Man. Please accept our sincere condolences & sympathy for your loss. Ed & Betty Ferrante

**Ed & Betty Ferrante** - March 22 at 08:41 PM

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“ Roy, A man with a beautiful smile came into our life for such a short time but will leave a lasting mark of decency and kindness . He will be terribly missed and we can be joyful that Roy is with his beloved Dolores in Gods kingdom forever. Our prayers go out to the family to get them through this sad time and let them know that Roy and Dolores are just a prayer away.

**John & Mary Sgroi** - March 22 at 04:12 PM

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“ I had the pleasure of working with, and for, Mr. Spadafora for quite a few years. Always the teacher, I could not list all that I learned. He was such a warm person. He made all of us feel like part of his family. After he retired, it would always be great to run into him at various school events to catch up. He will be missed.

Our most sincere sympathy to all of you.

Denise and Tom Gillies

**Denise T Gillies** - March 22 at 01:23 PM

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“ To Ron's Family,  
I so loved Ron; working with him was a joy. He was so good to me and I knew that whenever I asked him for something for my school, I would get it. He had a kind heart and a generous spirit.  
I know he's with his beloved family members who left this earth before him, and I hope you all take great comfort knowing that.  
Bless your sweet soul, Ron; I am a better person because I knew you. Rest In Peace.

**Mary Ellen Andrews** - March 22 at 01:07 PM

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“ We are so sad for your loss of such a unique and great man.....we are part of the Friday night dinner group as well as a past golfing buddy with my husband .....he will be missed and we feel honored to have known him....and his wonderful sense of humor.  
God Bless you all,  
Mike and Ellen Daignault

**Mike and Ellen Daignault** - March 22 at 11:11 AM

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“ Fondly remember Ron. Best to all.  
Ron & Cathy Margrey

**cathy margrey** - March 22 at 11:03 AM

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“ So sorry for your loss of the family patriarch and a great friend.  
He was a great guy and will be missed by all.  
Don Cook



“ I do not know any of you but I am very sorry for your loss. I am not sure if this is the Mr. Spadafora who taught math at Henninger in the late-1960s but if it is, I owe more to him than anyone can imagine. I am a chaired professor at the University of Michigan, but in the summer of 1969 I was a struggling high school kid at Nottingham who, after being really good at math through 8th grade, suddenly couldn't seem to do it any more. I was so sure that I'd fail "Math 11" that I enrolled in summer school at Henninger between my sophomore and junior years, figuring that if I failed I could re-take it my junior year. It was four hours of math every morning, and a week's worth of homework every afternoon and evening. I felt lost at first, but I loved the teacher, Mr. Spadafora. He was so enthusiastic and dynamic that he made four hours of math completely stimulating and exciting. I was still having a difficult time, though, and about halfway through the term I was on the verge of failing. Around that time we had a trig exam. Miraculously, while studying for that exam a light went off for me. It was almost like a religious experience. All of a sudden I seemed to know everything. I aced the test and everything else for the rest of the summer, and I ended up getting a 99 on the regents exam, taking excelled math (including calculus) in high school, going to a top university, and now I teach multivariate statistics to doctoral students at Michigan. My intention in all this is not to brag, but only to say that whatever success I've achieved, I owe it all to Mr. Spadafora. I had some great teachers over the years, but he was the best teacher I ever had, and he turned my life around. I really don't know what would have happened to me if I hadn't had his class. One last story: After 9/11, many of us were in shock, and for some reason I felt that I needed to track down someone in Mr. Spadafora's family and let them know how much he had meant to me. I found a Ronald Spadafora in the Syracuse phone book and called, figuring that it was probably a son or a nephew (for some reason I assumed that Mr. Spadafora was no longer with us). A man answered the phone and after a few minutes he said that he was in fact \*the\* Mr. Spadafora. Not only that, but over three decades after the fact he \*remembered\* me. I was able to tell him how much he meant to me, how he was responsible for completely turning my life around, and for the success I have experienced. I am so grateful that I was able to thank him. He of course would have none of it- it was all my doing, he said. Baloney. It was his doing. I lost both of my parents two years ago- both were in their 90s- and I know this has to be a difficult time for all of you. I just want you to hear one story about what a wonderful man Ronald Spadafora was, and what a great, great teacher he was. God bless him, and all of you.

Mark Mizruchi



“ Ron, Val, Janice, Susan and families

I was fortunate to have met Mr. Spadafora over 50 years ago and see him several times over those years. He was a great guy to talk to and along with his wife raised a wonderful family. I hope the many fond memories comfort you now and in the future. My condolences to you all.

**Mike Cartini** - March 22 at 06:44 AM

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“ Ron and Jay and families, our thoughts and prayers are with you all. He was great guy and will be missed. May he Rest In Peace.  
Mike Verone and family

**Michael Verone** - March 21 at 05:11 PM

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“ To the Spadafora family

My prayers are with all of you.

Mike Campese

**Mike Campese** - March 21 at 02:54 PM

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“ My condolences to the family, it is never easy to lose a loved one and I'm sure it's harder than ever under these circumstances. We were at the same rehab after surgery and I remember what a trooper he was. He also had a great sense of humor. Thinking and praying for all of you.

**MaryAnne Crawford** - March 21 at 11:21 AM

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“ Spadafora family,  
May your dad Rest In Peace. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you.  
John Zagata

**john zagata** - March 21 at 11:04 AM

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“ Jay, Val, Susie and Ron - We are so very sorry for your loss of the patriarch of your family. Certainly greeted in heaven by your mother and brother that should bring some comfort during this sad time. Keeping you in our thoughts and prayers.  
Michael and Annette



**ANNETTE KRISAK** - March 21 at 10:40 AM

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“ Prayers of comfort to your family. He is a great man! Kept me in line in the 70s at Corcoran. He touched many young hearts and gave them guidance. God speed Mr Spadafora!

**julia jones** - March 21 at 07:51 AM

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“ Phyllis,

I am so sorry to hear of your brother's passing, he was a very accomplished man. I worked for you in the mail room at Metropolitan Bank in the late '60's. I noticed in the obit that I have cousins in you family. I will keep you in my prayers.

God Bless All in Your House.

Patrick Mannion  
Bethel Park, PA

**Patrick J Mannion** - March 21 at 07:19 AM

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“ We are praying for all of you at this difficult time. Our heartfelt sympathy for the loss of your dad,brother,grampa,cousin. Hopefully the memories you share with each other at this time, will make you smile and feel blessed to have had him in your life's. Love to all of you, Nancy and Kevin, Elise, and Austin Dunshee

**Nancy Dunshee** - March 20 at 08:55 PM

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“ Val and family. Thinking of you in these difficult times.  
Love Sheila and Matt

**Sheila Brennan** - March 20 at 12:24 PM

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“ With heartfelt sympathy and love to the Spadafora Family! Cousin Roy was more of a father than a cousin. We have been honored to have been part of his family. We will carry such great memories which will keep him alive in our minds and hearts forever! A heavy loss for us. We will miss you Roy! God Bless all.

Joseph Pelligra

**Joseph Pelligra** - March 20 at 11:33 AM

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“ Ron and family- I am so sorry to hear that "Dad Spad" has passed away. My heartfelt sympathy.

Stacey Levin

**Stacey Levin** - March 20 at 08:08 AM

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“ Valerie & families: Sending "Heart Felt Sympathy" on the loss of your loved one, may he "Rest In Peace"

**Patrick W Aregano** - March 20 at 07:29 AM



“ "Dear Spadafora Family, Friend is the word that comes to mind when I think of Ron. We played poker together, played golf together, went to conferences together, visited each others homes and enjoyed working together as school administrators. Ron loved Delores and all his family. A great guy and I miss him."

Jim Salviski\_\_ March 23

**James Salviski** - March 23 at 12:25 AM



“ I had the pleasure of being a student of Mr. Spadafora at Henninger High School. Years later I saw him and he remembered me. May his memories bring peace to your entire family. Maxine Blazak Shields class of 1968

**Maxine Shields** - March 23 at 01:25 AM