



John "Gerry" O'Rourke

February 9, 1937 - May 8, 2017

John "Gerry" O'Rourke, 80, of Kearney, died Monday, May 8, 2017 at CHI Good Samaritan Hospital.

Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:30 am Monday, May 15, 2017 at Prince of Peace Catholic Church. Reverend Michael McDonald, Reverend Donald O'Brien and Reverend Sagar will concelebrate. Visitation will be from 6-8 pm Sunday at Prince of Peace with a 7 pm Scripture Wake Service. Following visitation Mr. O'Rourke will be cremated. Interment will be at Kearney Cemetery. O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Home is serving the family.

Memorials are suggested to Prince of Peace Catholic Church. Condolences may be shared online at www.osrfh.com.

John Gerard O'Rourke was born on February 9, 1937 in St. Louis, Missouri to Jack and Angela (Hemmer) O'Rourke. He grew up in St. Louis and graduated from Christian Brothers High School in 1954.

After high school, he entered the United States Marine Corps. Following his honorable discharge Gerry traveled extensively while competing in professional speed skating and freestyle skating. During this time, he also instructed several skaters, both amateur and professional. After his skating career he worked as a salesman for Sears, based out of Chicago, while

putting himself through college.

In the early 1960's Gerry moved to Grand Island where he managed and taught lessons at Skate Island. While working at Skate Island he met his future bride, Mary Hehnke. Gerry and Mary were married on August 14, 1965 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Grand Island. They made their home in Kearney where they owned and operated the Roller Ranch. Along with running the skating rink, Gerry also worked at Kizzier Chevrolet for 18 years. He would later own and operate J & M Property Management, J & M Taxi and J& M Limousine.

Gerry was an active member of Prince of Peace Catholic Church. He loved serving as a greeter on Saturday evenings, and would always welcome both parishioners and guests alike, with a warm smile and conversation. He was also a member of the Knights of Columbus and the Kearney Volunteer Fire Department for over 20 years. He was active in Little League Baseball and also coached Jr. High basketball at Kearney Catholic for several years.

Throughout his life, Gerry's faith, his love for his family and his tireless work ethic remained constant. He lived with a servant's heart and always offered a helping hand to those in need. He never met a stranger and enjoyed getting to know everyone he came into contact with. Gerry and Mary would have been married 52 years this August.

He is survived by his loving wife, Mary O'Rourke of Kearney; his three daughters, Shaun Hiemstra and husband Russ of Kearney, Shannon Almassian and husband Trent of Ada, MI and Shanne Reifenrath of Grand Island; his grandchildren, Mitchell and Jaret Hiemstra, Jack and Abigail Almassian, and Kyla, Payge and Jayce Reifenrath; and a sister, Maureen Tomek and husband Emil of St. Louis, MO.

Gerry was preceded in death by his parents.

Cemetery Details

Kearney Cemetery

4400 Avenue I
Kearney, NE 68847
(308) 233-3244

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 14. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Prince of Peace Catholic Church
2407 W. 56th Street
Kearney, NE 68845

Vigil / Prayer Service

MAY 14. 7:00 PM (CT)

Prince of Peace Catholic Church
2407 W. 56th Street
Kearney, NE 68845

Mass of Christian Burial

MAY 15. 10:30 AM (CT)

Prince of Peace Catholic Church
2407 W. 56th Street
Kearney, NE 68845

Tribute Wall



“ *John "Gerry" O'Rourke*

January 28, 2023 at 08:01 AM



“ *Grandpa, I will always remember your funny jokes and smile everyday without you hurts a lot but you are always looking down on me and I can't wait to see you in heaven. I will love you and you are a huge puzzle piece in my life and it will stay there for as long as I remember. I love you more than anything you will never be forgotten G-Pa Gerry
R.I.P You're way better up with Jesus now*

Payge Reifenrath - December 07, 2017 at 03:59 PM



“ *Gerry was an amazing man!! Mary is a wonderful woman. I wasn't baptized when I was little but when Mary and Gerry kinda took me in I went to church with them all through junior high and senior high. I took classes at the St. James Catholic Church and became confirmed and baptized at age 16 it was truly a blessing!! I'm proud to say they are my God parents, love there family so much!!! May god bless them now and forever!!! 🙏🙏🙏*

Jackie Rae Maglione - May 17, 2017 at 10:53 AM



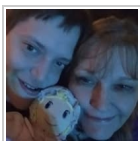
“ *If you knew him, you loved him. If you didn't, your life will never be fulfilled. See you again my brother.*

Robert Peterson - May 16, 2017 at 07:11 AM

CW

“ Gerry will be dearly missed. It did not matter where he saw me he would stop and say hi and see what I have been up to. He even rode in the ambulance with me after I rolled a car so many years ago. I was one of his KCHS girls he would always say. He will be thought of often. Mary, Shaun, Shannon, Shanne and families you are also in my thoughts and prayers. Carol "Loeffelholz" Weber.

Carol Weber - May 15, 2017 at 09:01 AM



“ Gerry saved our mothers life about 10 years ago. My mom was in her 80s and she had slipped on ice during a storm and fallen behind a snow drift...on her sidewalk...in front of her house. She would have layed there and maybe froze to death if it hadnt been for Gerry driving by and just caught a glimpse of her laying behind the drift. He got her up and brought her to our house. Thank you Gerry for giving my mom life again...we'll never forget it. Rest in Peace

Joyce Peterson - May 15, 2017 at 12:39 AM

DS

“ Used to sell cleaning supplies to Gerry 20 years ago. He always wanted you to sit down and visit. Gerry loved talking Kearney Catholic girls sports. He lit up when he talked about his girls, all the girls. My sister in law Lori Rall was on those teams , a reserve on the back to back state championships. He was so positive. When we lost Lori he insisted on giving us a ride in his limo to the cemetery. I am glad to have had Gerry as a friend. Dave Sayler and Cindy Sayler

dave Sayler - May 14, 2017 at 09:47 PM

DB

“ May at this time Mary that you can remember all the great memories and may God comfort you during this time. Jerry was always good to my Mom "Lucile" and myself. I am very thankful that he was a part of our lives. Deb Forey Brandt



Debra Forey Brandt - May 13, 2017 at 05:23 AM

CB

“ I remember Mr. O'Rourke from Grand Island Skate Island where our late daughter used to skate & Kearney J&M Limousine. With deepest sympathies to his family. He had a life well lived!! Ron & Connie Bernt

7

Connie Bernt - May 12, 2017 at 08:01 PM

TS

“ Thinking of Gerry brings a smile to my face. Rest In Peace my friend. Tom and Leslie Sams.

tom sams - May 12, 2017 at 07:20 PM

JF

“ My deepest condolences go out to you and your family Mary. Gerry was a bright light shining for all to see. His cheerful smile was contagious and he will be missed. Jean Fendt

Jean Fendt - May 12, 2017 at 05:21 PM

SL

“ Gerry was always such a supporter of Old Town Kearney. He would stop by and stick his head in to say Hello to many of us at our business down here. Always brightened our day and never said no to anything he could help with. He will be missed greatly! Prayers to his family. Old Town Kearney Association

SHERRY LANE - May 12, 2017 at 11:25 AM



“ My heartfelt condolences to you Mary and your family during this time of sorrow. You're in my thoughts and prayers . Gerry will be greatly missed by a lot of people. Joel B.

DeerCreek Ranch - May 12, 2017 at 09:38 AM

JN

“ Gerry will be remembered for being a great husband and friend. Gerry would drive around town very slowly and come to the tennis courts to cheer for Mary. Gerry drove like he owned the road alone. He would stop traffic with some of his Y turns. He wasn't in a hurry. He was out to say hello to everyone in Kearney and to see his girl kick some butt on the court. RIP my dear friend.



Jody Nieves - May 12, 2017 at 07:40 AM

JR

“ Gerry memory to Marvion and I is when we used midtown service for phone use. His number was 123. He would say 123 an out. U knew from his voice who was talking. A great memory for all! The reicherts Marvion and janet

janet reichert - May 11, 2017 at 09:58 PM

JB

“ He was really great visiting with my Barb when she was at St. Lukes. I really appreciated his concern. Thanks John

John H Bancroft - May 11, 2017 at 03:56 PM

JB

“ Where to start, I am sad. Gerry was a man, a friend, a boss, a boss for this 12 year boy whom worked for Gerry and was embedded with his endless working command. The year was 1968 and my roller skates were size 13. Gerry touch me with his everlasting love. Get to Work. Roller skating saved me and Gerry was the leader.of my first real job. We have history I will miss... Just think if Heaven has a roller skating rink all is well and if not Gerry will build one and will do a perfect triple toe loop.

James (Jim) Brandt Roll on Gerry.

James Brandt - May 11, 2017 at 01:27 PM

DC

“ What a fine man. And a great family. Hold hands. Gather close.
Don Cunningham

don cunningham - May 10, 2017 at 08:27 PM

NH

“ I always love how you would greet our kids in church with a fist bump and a smile on your face. Our deepest sympathy to Mary and the family. May your memories help you comfort you during this difficult time. *The Hollingsworth Family*

Nicole Hollingsworth - May 10, 2017 at 07:14 PM

SA

“ Mary, I am so sorry to hear about Gerry. Memories--where do I begin. Both you and Gerry were so much a part of my young life. Such a positive influence on me and many other kids. I am not sure where I would have ended up without your support and guidance. I also appreciate the fact that Gerry stopped and visited Mom so faithfully those 8 1/2 years she was in the care home. He was a very good man and I love you both. I am so glad I stopped to see you both last fall. God's comfort to you and your family. Sandy (Knox) Adams



Sandy Adams - May 10, 2017 at 07:05 PM

VL

“ My thoughts and prayers go out to Gerry's family. He was more than my neighbor, he was family to me. He always had a smile and a smart remark for me. I will miss both. I will never forget him calling me "herkamere j herkamere" or taking my dog Diamond for cheeseburgers. Rest In Peace my dear friend. You will be missed.

Vicki Londer - May 10, 2017 at 06:55 PM

DF

“ Don And Sabina Frank lit a candle in memory of John "Gerry" O'Rourke



Don and Sabina Frank - May 10, 2017 at 06:08 PM

TP

“ Gerry never met a stranger and just thinking about that reminds me of MANY memories. He was the BEST neighbor, friend, employer and ambassador of Kearney. He was so loved and deserved it. God bless Gerry O.

Tamy Peterson

Tamy Peterson - May 10, 2017 at 04:25 PM

TP

“ 3 files added to the album New Album Name



Tamy Peterson - May 10, 2017 at 04:22 PM

JB

“ Gerry always, ALWAYS, greeted us at church--even if he had to walk out of his way to get to us! We will miss his welcoming heart!

Jerry and Vivian Brown - May 10, 2017 at 03:48 PM

TH

“ I am so sorry for your loss. Gerry was a wonderful man and so loved and respected by all. I will keep you all in my prayers. Traci Hanel (Becker)

traci hanel - May 10, 2017 at 03:37 PM

DK

“ Gerry was such a sweetheart. He called me "Solo" anytime I played at church. He was always welcoming, with a big smile, wherever I saw him. I grieve with you for the loss of Gerry. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.

Dianne M. Keiter - May 10, 2017 at 02:20 PM

MW

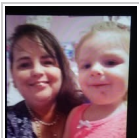
“ What a special man Gerry was - we served on the Rescue Squad at KVFD together - I always enjoyed Gerry's love and concern for other people - Gerry was loved by so many and will be missed - condolences to the family.

Marci Walker - May 10, 2017 at 01:58 PM

BR

“ Holding this family up in prayer. I am a Kearney native and have known of Mr. O'Rourke for years. Know people who have shared how he helped them by listening and prayer and however he could. Thankyou

Brenda Rainwater - May 10, 2017 at 12:41 PM



“ So sad to hear the news of Gerry. he was a good man. We knew him 15 year's. And he was so good to us. He stayed at court with us one day for our son Ozzy. He said I am staying to support my family. We were blown away. We never knew he thought that of us. We were blessed to have him in our lives as well as his lovely wife. They were so very nice people. Our thought's and prays are with his family.

Holly Thomas - May 10, 2017 at 11:53 AM