



Joseph Bayer

Alton | Thursday, September 28 2023

Joseph R. Bayer Jr., 80, passed away on Thursday, September 28, 2023, at his home in Alton, surrounded by his loving family. He was born at St. Joseph's Hospital in Alton on March 26, 1943, son of the late Joseph R Sr. and Pauline (Haley) Bayer. Joe married the love of his life, Mary K. Hamilton on October 28, 1967. She survives.

Joe was known for his warm smile, his zest for life, and his passion for local history. He touched the lives of many with his boundless energy and generosity. Joe's love for his hometown of Alton, Illinois, was evident through his dedication to preserving its rich history. He created the widely admired Facebook page, "Alton Illinois Area History," where he shared his knowledge and passion for the area's heritage with others as well as his daily jokes. Joe was a member of the Upper Alton Business Association and was very active in watering the flowers that line the streets of Upper Alton.

A man of many talents and interests, Joe was a proud member of several choirs including St. Mary's Choir, Collinsville Chorale, Great Rivers Choral Society, and Carrolton Choir where he participated in "The Witness" for many years. Joe was a proud member of St. Mary's Catholic Church, where he found solace in music and spirituality. In his youth, he displayed exceptional athleticism, holding several records at Alton High School in both track and football. Throughout his life, he continued to stay active by playing tennis, pickle ball and racquetball, inspiring those around him to embrace an active lifestyle. He was a wonderful dancer and could make any floor a dance floor. Joe was not only an athlete but also a master gardener with a green thumb that could make any garden flourish. He had a keen eye for capturing the beauty of the world around him through his hobby of photography.

Along with his wife Mary, Joe is survived by his children, Jeff (Jessica Hall) Bayer of Portland, OR and Amy (Tom) Wylie of Alton; siblings, Judith (Richard) Decker of Palm Coast, FL and Bruce (Janet Riley) Bayer of Alton; grandchildren, Abby (Nick Wilmsmeyer) Simonds, Emerson Wylie, and Sammy Wylie; several nieces and

nephews; many brothers and sisters-in law; and his devoted four-legged companion, Bella. Joe loved his big family, and will be missed by them all.

Along with his parents, Joe is preceded in death by his father and mother-in law, Robert "Whitey" and Norma Hamilton; and sisters, Joyce Kay Rothaug and Kristy Nelson.

In his final act of kindness, Joe chose to donate his body to Washington University, leaving a lasting legacy through medical research and education. His selflessness, even in his passing, reflects the caring and giving nature that defined his life.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to Julie Jackson, NP from Palliative Care, as well as Judy, Cathy, Chrissy, and Shari for the care they gave.

A memorial visitation to celebrate Joe's life will be held on Friday, October 6, 2023, from 9 am until time of Funeral Mass at 11 am at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Alton. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations be made to St. Mary's Choir or Marquette Catholic High School in Joe's name to continue his legacy of giving back to the community.

Online condolences and guestbook may be found at www.eliaskallalandschaaf.com.