

## Downs Funeral Home

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### Ron Orlandi

( August 21, 1928 - February 15, 2017 )

Ron Orlandi, 88, of Duluth, passed away unexpectedly on February 15, 2017, while vacationing in Las Vegas with his wife, Peggy, enjoying a mini family reunion with cousins.



Ron was born in Brooklyn, NY, to Italian immigrant parents, Savino and Elia Orlandi, on August 21, 1928. He was very proud to be a first generation American. His school years started at his favorite, PS 216. Summers were spent at the beaches of Coney Island and hanging out with life-long friends, Hank D'Onofrio (his cousin) and Joey Marrese.

He attended Alexander Hamilton Technical High School, starting on a path that would lead to a career of teaching art and developing an enduring love for baseball.

Upon graduation, Ron was signed to a baseball contract with the Washington Senators (later, the MN Twins) organization, at the age of 19. He played in the Virginia State League, the Florida State League, and the Georgia State League. He loved those years. He was drafted into the Army in 1950, serving with the 45<sup>th</sup> Div., 179<sup>th</sup> Heavy Tank Co. as a tank driver during the battle on Old Baldy in Korea.

Upon discharge from the Army, Ron returned to baseball and was sent to the Northern League, where he played for the Superior Blues. It was here, in 1953, that he met and married his first wife, Marilyn Erickson. They had 3 children; Linda, Ronnie, and Danny.

Ron entered Superior State Teachers' College (now UWS) in 1955. He graduated in 1959 with a degree in Social Studies and Art. (He completed his Master's degree in 1966.) His teaching career began at Nemadji School, where he started the baseball program. When the new Superior Senior High School opened in 1965, he was transferred there, to continue coaching and teaching. He remained Head Coach of the SSHS Baseball team until his retirement in 1988. His coaching spanned 29 years. His teams amassed a record of 327 wins and 127 losses, winning 6 Sectional tournaments and playing in 6 State tournaments. He was very proud of the boys who played for him. Many have maintained close relationships over the years.

Ron was inducted into the Superior/Douglas County Athletic Hall of Fame twice, in 2007 for accomplishments as a coach and again in 2014 recognizing the 1970 team in the Team Accomplishment Award (they went undefeated that year, until the semi-final game).

In 2015, Ron was honored to throw out the first pitch at the new Baseball complex at SSHS. Because of a shoulder issue, Ron chose his great-grandsons to throw the pitch in his place. Memories were made!

In 2016, a baseball tournament in his name was played for the first time.... The Ron Orlandi Invitational Tournament.

Ron married Peggy Young in 1986. In the nearly 31 years they were married, they traveled to Italy 6 times. "Itchy Feet" doesn't begin to cover his love of travel. As soon as he returned home, the next trip was being planned.

His love of family was first priority for Ron. Time spent on the ski slopes and at the beach with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren made many memories. Annual Christmas breakfasts with all the generations were the centerpiece of every year.

Ron never stopped developing his art skills, especially painting and jewelry making. Hours flew by when he worked in his shop.

Ron loved and lived every day... Always looking at what was ahead. His enthusiasm for life will long be remembered, as much as he will be missed by so many.

He is survived by his wife, Mary 'Peggy'; his children, Linda Johnson, Ronnie (Patty) Orlandi and Danny (Cathy) Orlandi; grandchildren, Marc (Rich Thompson) Johnson, Sarah (Mark) Ward, Angela Orlandi, and Anthony Orlandi, Anna Orlandi, and Danny Orlandi; step-grandchildren, Alexandra Olsen, Adam LaVine, and Richie Rupp; great-grandchildren, Austin, Aidan, Andrew, and Brooklyn Ward (named for Grandpa's hometown.)

Everyone who has a piece of Ron's jewelry is encouraged to wear it if attending his memorial.

His visitation will be on Thursday, March 2, at St. Michaels Church in Duluth, from 10 until the 12 p.m. memorial service. Fr. John Petrich as celebrant. Military Honors will be accorded by the Duluth Combined Honor Guard.

In lieu of flowers, the family prefers donations be made in memory of Ron Orlandi to: The Superior Youth Organization Baseball League or to The Superior High School Baseball Fund, either can be sent to Don Dembroski, 2600 Catlin Ave., Superior, WI 54880. Or make a donation to a charity of your choice.

