



Joel S. Witkowski

March 13, 1951 - August 1, 2023

Joel S. Witkowski, age 72 of Mentor, passed away unexpectedly on August 1, 2023 at the Cleveland Clinic Mentor Hospital.

Joel was the beloved husband of, Ellen (nee Hearn); father of, Aaron Witkowski, Carly Paul, and Evan (Megan) Witkowski; grandfather of, Ella, Scarlett, Sawyer, Abigail, and Harrison; brother of, Laura Schickel, Cathy (Mike) McDonough, and Paula (Tim) Bates; brother in law of, Mike (Kate), Kit (Gus - deceased), Patrick (Kathy), Brian (Dawn); uncle of twelve; and great uncle of thirteen.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Arthur and Monya Witkowski.

Joel was born March 13, 1951 in Painesville, Ohio. Growing up down the street from Lake Erie, Joel spent all his free time at the beach. His parents encouraged all their children to swim at an early age, and generations later his gift continues with his grandchildren.

A 1969 graduate and three sport athlete, Joel left his imprint at Mentor High School. He was Mentor's first swimming National Age Group Champion in 1966. He proudly represented Mentor as the first student to receive a scholarship and compete as a Division 1 college athlete for swimming. His accomplishments were awarded recognition into the Mentor High School Hall-

of-Fame in 2001.

From 1969 to 1973 Joel attended Ohio University (OU) to train under the legendary swim coach, Fletcher Gilders. OU won the Mid-American Conference (MAC) Championships in 1970 and 1971. In warm-ups, his senior year, his swimming career ended at the MAC Championships with a torn muscle. Joel graduated with a degree in Journalism. At one point he took 23 credit hours to graduate on time, demonstrating how he thrived when pressure was at its highest.

It was no coincidence he would find his way into the high pressure field of sales. Joel established himself as an expert of the steel industry in sales and marketing. In the midst of a declining steel industry, Joel received Comat's Blue Suit award in 1995, as the top salesman in the company. His clients would find out how his personality drove his relationships in life.

In 2000, upon return to Mentor, he reencountered his high-school sweetheart, and the love of his life, Ellen. When the inseparable couple wasn't on stage with the Alabama Shakes, they could be found with their lovely dog(s) (Samantha, Tipperary, Fiona). Joel and Ellen would explore The Headlands Beach, Fairport Harbor, or lounge outside on their back patio.

One would always be on the consistent receiving end of greeting cards from the couple, signed Joellen. You knew Joel loved you when a nickname was bestowed. Joel could never resist a good joke and had a loving sense of humor. Always a terrific host, he would offer you ice with a drink. He would proceed to tell his joke, "I would make some ice, but I lost the recipe."

In addition to singing "Rocky Top", collecting license plates, and street signs, Joel followed every Tribe baseball game. In a tribute, on the night of his passing, the team lost a No-Hit game to Houston, his daughter's birthplace.

The family will receive friends to celebrate Joel's life from 2-6 p.m., Saturday, August 12, 2023 at the Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral Home & Cremation Center, 8466 Mentor Ave., Mentor, OH 44060.

A time of prayer to conclude the gathering will begin at 6 p.m. on Saturday at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions be made to a charity of one's choice in memory of Joel.

Please offer condolences at www.brunners.com

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 12. 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral Home & Cremation Center
8466 Mentor Avenue
Mentor, OH 44060
(440) 255-3401
ajs@brunners.com
<https://www.brunners.com/>

Prayer Service

AUG 12. 6:00 PM (ET)

Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral Home & Cremation Center
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Tribute Wall

AR

“ *Ellen, just heard today of Joel's passing. So sorry for your loss. Prayers for you and your family. Alice Roth*

ALICE J Roth - August 24, 2023 at 09:35 PM

GL

“ *Dearest Ellen and Family,
I am heartbroken to hear of this sad news. You know how much Joel (and you Ellen!) mean to me and will always hold a special place in my heart. Joel was truly one my most favorite people in this world and his light, goodness and kindness touched so many of us. I will always think of him fondly and chuckle, especially when I hear Karma Chameleon by Culture Club which is the song he asked me to play when he was falling asleep during anesthesia when I did surgery on him several times. He made my day every time I saw him and it was an honor to be his doctor and friend. I love you Joel and will miss you very much - Love and hugs Ellen. xoxo*

Gladys de Leon - August 20, 2023 at 10:52 PM

SA

“ *To Ellen and family: Joel made such an impression on me and he always talked about how much he loved his family. I'm so sad about his passing. He was wonderful human being*

Sarah Small

sarah - August 12, 2023 at 10:09 PM

BW

“ I knew Joel since probably 13-14 age group swimming, and eventually followed him to Ohio U. Swim team. He, along with Rick Baker, were the older brothers I never had. Ellen, it was wonderful to meet you at our OU swim reunion at Roy Cheran’s home, and see Joel again. Grateful to Roy for his hospitality and the chance to share stories with Joel again. He was always such a treat to be around and it was my honor and pleasure to call him my friend. Rare the man who loved his wife more than you, Ellen.

Bruce Woodford - August 12, 2023 at 12:45 PM

DI

“ The Witkowski family, my sincere condolences for your loss. I met Joel as a youngster when we were swimming at the Y where we had loads of fun. We stayed in touch throughout our school years even though we went to different school systems but went our separate ways after high school. I have fond memories of all the joking around as kids and his infectious laugh. My thoughts and prayers are with your family.

Doug Inscho - August 12, 2023 at 11:40 AM

RS

“ Joel will always be one of the BEST from the class of 1969!!! Thoughts and prayers. Bob & Betty Southall

robert southall - August 10, 2023 at 09:55 PM

CW

“ Ellen... my heart goes out to you during this time...my thoughts and prayers are with you Chris Wrenn

Chris Wrenn - August 08, 2023 at 07:10 PM

BB

“ *Ellen and Family. We remember several July 4th get together at your place. May he RIP and you all comforted in memories 🦋🌸*
Bob and Carole Bates

Bob and Carole Bates - August 08, 2023 at 05:22 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Joel S. Witkowski.*



August 08, 2023 at 02:04 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Joel S. Witkowski.*



August 08, 2023 at 09:54 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joel S. Witkowski.*

August 08, 2023 at 09:54 AM

LH

“ Joel was my swim coach years ago at Mentor recreation park, which is now Garfield Park. Whenever I would get in trouble, he would make me do laps of butterfly. Each lap was 50 m and I was grateful, later, when I did well in the individual medley, I'm sending love and hugs, Ellen and family.

Laurie Hummer - August 08, 2023 at 07:39 AM



“ Dear Ellen & Family - Please accept our most sincere condolences. You & your family are in our thoughts & prayers at this difficult time. Take care. Bob & Karen Mueller Krivanek



Karen Krivanek - August 07, 2023 at 11:39 PM

CM

“ Sending my deepest condolences to Ellen and to my three children as they try to process a forever goodbye. They have many great memories to sustain them. Caroline Martin

Caroline Martin - August 07, 2023 at 07:14 PM

CP

Love you, Mom💔😭

Carly Paul - August 07, 2023 at 07:54 PM

MW

“ Joel was a wonderful person. I so looked up to him as a younger age group swimmer. He carried me out of the pool when I hit my head on the deck needing stitches. He was a great talent, a great but humble soul. I followed him to OU and enjoyed his wonderful sense of humor and fun loving nature. Rest in peace my friend.
Marc Werbach.

Marc Werbach - August 07, 2023 at 05:08 PM

CP

“ My sweet Papa! My heart is shattered and my soul will forever feel empty without you! I miss you so much and just wanna hug you so bad!!!💔💔😭

Carly Paul - August 07, 2023 at 04:25 PM

CV

“ Carol VonSeggern lit a candle in memory of Joel S. Witkowski



Carol VonSeggern - August 07, 2023 at 03:48 PM

AH

“ I knew Joel from high school days. While he accomplished much, I remember Joel most of all for his friendliness and decency to all. With condolences to all the family. Alice Ann Hengesbach MHS Class of 1967

Alice Ann Hengesbach - August 07, 2023 at 03:44 PM

RP

“ Aaron, Carly & Evan, I first met your Dad when we were in high school- he was outgoing & involved with swimming and every other kind of activity. The obituary, captures him you always knew he was in the room! I know he loved each of you & he knew you loved him. I wish each of you peace during such a sad time. Respectfully, Aunt Becki

Rebecca Partington - August 07, 2023 at 02:14 PM

CP

Thank you so much 💔😭

Carly Paul - August 07, 2023 at 04:26 PM

RD

“ I will always remember Joel as a kind and considerate individual. He was gifted not only in sports but in being a friend that always encouraged others, as he did me, to always pursue and continue to try and improve ourselves in each and every step of our endeavors and pursuits in life..
My prayers to all of Joel's family and friends.

Richard DeFranco - August 07, 2023 at 01:54 PM

DS

“ Aaron, Carly, and Evan,

I'm so sorry to hear of your dad's passing. I remember he was gregarious and I have no doubt that's what made him great at his job! Please accept my deepest condolences and know that I'm hoping for strength for you all through this tough time.

With deepest sympathy,

Dana Muhleman Samardzich

Dana Muhleman Samardzich - August 06, 2023 at 08:39 PM

CP

Thank you so much 🙏💔🙏

Carly Paul - August 07, 2023 at 04:26 PM

KT

“ Ellen & Family,

Our Deepest Sympathy

May you get through this difficult time, through prayers and the comfort of Family & Friends.

Love,

Barry & Kathy (Albee) Traxler

Kathy Traxler - August 06, 2023 at 07:29 PM

TO

“ Met Joel in Toronto in 1979 at a steel convention

Great friends for 20 years.....some beers.....some hoops.....more beers

Miss you my friend

Tom - August 06, 2023 at 05:38 PM