

Joseph P. DiTore

Joe had a knack for finding those who had strayed from the congregation and tenderly impressing upon them Jehovah's continued love and concern, helping them to return. He spent many sleepless nights worrying about those struggling in the congregation and prayed earnestly to be able to help them. One brother says, "Joe's superpower was recognizing the pain in others and being willing to do something about it". Joe was known in his congregation as being the Child Whisperer as he frequently got down on their level and drew them out in conversation with both silly and serious topics. He cherished his relationships with young ones, and it warmed his heart to see them grow in their relationship with Jehovah God.



In recent months Joe struggled with the life-long culmination of an inconsolable mental darkness that could only be caused by the sin and imperfection passed down by Adam (Ro 5:12). His hope that he imparted to countless individuals included the bible truth of the future resurrection on paradise earth (John 5:28,29; Ps 37:29). We have no doubt that Jehovah, the loyal God, is holding

Joe in his perfect memory and yearns to bring him back from his deep sleep to a beautiful earth, perfect body and peaceful mind (Job 14:14,15).

Joe is preceded in death by his father John, mother Dorothea, sister Joan, and brother Michael. He is survived by his wife of 35 years Gay; stepson Jeffrey, his wife Robyn and their children Zachary and Addyson; daughter Danielle and son-in-law Tyler; sisters MaryAnn and Patricia, brothers John and Peter and an abundance of spiritual family members who will miss him dearly.



February 19, 1954—July 31, 2019

Joseph Paul DiTore was born February 19, 1954 in Mount Kisco, NY as the 6th of an eventual 7 children to Dorothea and John DiTore. Joe spent his childhood in Pound Ridge, New York picking fresh apples from the neighbor's orchard and running around the eclectic town with his younger brother Peter. They loved climbing tall maple trees together, splashing in the pool, and going for hikes in the back woods. Their older sister Patricia often kept the boys corralled, safe, and occupied by setting them up with arts and crafts at the house and packing them sandwiches for picnics below the big peach tree.

Unsurprisingly, Joe was the ham of the family at a young age and enjoyed being the center of attention, dancing without rhythm and telling stories to whomever was a captive audience. One of his favorite audience members was a loyal golden retriever named Danny who was a veritable Good Boy and shared many adventures with gentle, sweet Joe. John DiTore worked as the neighborhood dairy delivery man and Joe was often put to work early in the morning as his helper.

One of Joe's chores as a teenager was to mow their almost 4 acres of lawn which prompted hours of self-reflection and philosophical ponderings. Admiring the exquisiteness of his surroundings, Joe determined that he did not want to go to heaven as he was taught in the Church. He wanted to stay right here on earth where creative beauty abounds. It was sitting on that very lawnmower where he prayed to God asking for answers. He didn't have to go too far as his long-time best school-friend Paul had a rich spiritual heritage as one of Jehovah's Witnesses and Joe was known to share many a dinner and Bible conversation with the family as years passed. He was a model Bible student who progressed quickly and asked many questions such as "why do other religions not use the Bible in teaching?"

Joe was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1972 in Danbury, CT. He was a hard worker for Jehovah and rapidly developed a deep love for his organization. He volunteered his youthful energy in mixing cement and carrying bricks and blocks for Kingdom Hall, assembly hall and Bethel building projects in addition to helping serve food at conventions. Following a hard days' work, Joe and Paul could be found hosting festive ping-pong tournaments in the basement with music and laughter.

After one too many snowstorms, Joe headed West to sunny California in 1980 due to an invitation from Long Beach natives on a preaching assignment in New York. Being the social butterfly, Joe enjoyed his time at gatherings, gesturing wildly and telling stories in true lively and loud Italian fashion, not needing a drop of alcohol to feed his gregariousness. Eventually a young sister in his congregation caught his attention with her infectious smile, beautiful long hair and respectable spiritual routine

with her toddler in tow. He managed to convince her into a date to The Chart House and a walk around the marina and they were linked from then on. A family was created May 5, 1984 when Joe married Gay Sammons Ellis and brought her son Jeffrey Baird Ellis into his life and heart.



Four years later a daughter, Danielle Alyse, was born to Joe and Gay. Joe was a Papa like no other.

He chased the squealing kids around the block with animal puppets Bun Bun and Mousey, spoke to them about their problems in unique and loving fashion, and encouraged a rich sense of imagination. The family enjoyed many cherished memories vacationing in Cambria and Big Sur, appreciating the ocean breeze and active wildlife. Joe supported his family by working for IBM until 1995 when he started a career as a real estate agent in the North Long Beach and Los Altos territory. His gift of gab and genuine, friendly disposition made him a natural at building relationships with strangers and gaining their trust and business. He often described the unique nature of helping a family with the biggest purchase of



their life and explained how patience and understanding was necessary to ease the emotional aspect of such a weighty decision. Many a client became a lifelong friend due to his ability to empathetically yet firmly direct these large business transactions.



Joe was privileged to serve as a congregation elder for many decades, most of those years with the arduous but rewarding responsibility of acting as congregation secretary. His favorite role over the years was serving as the Watchtower study conductor where he could organize the symphony of heartfelt expressions shared in the congregation. He enjoyed being able to give public

talks on a local level affording him the opportunity to meet many friends in numerous congregations. Joe felt humbled each time he was asked to give parts on Circuit Assemblies and Regional Conventions knowing what a grand privilege it was.



He and Gay were blessed to attend several International and Special Conventions including those in Long Beach, Ireland, Italy, Hungary and Czech Republic. The travel bug took the two on various other trips around the world expanding their horizons over Central America, the Mediterranean, Iceland, Alaska, Lithuania and more. Despite these exotic adventures, Joe's favorite vacation spot remained Yosemite National

Park. He and Gay savored early morning walks there in the valley among the trees in virgin snow and peaceful quiet.

In 2005 Joe and Gay joined the Southern California Italian-language group of Jehovah's Witnesses in order to help local Italians learn about Jehovah. Joe unabashedly practiced his new-found knowledge of the Italian language and, although not always grammatically precise, he quickly began conversing in Italian to anyone he could. Much work was done in the Italian group and he was overjoyed to see it flourish with Jehovah's blessing and eventually become a congregation. In 2007 Joe began pioneering (spending 70 hours per month in the ministry) which afforded him the opportunity to engage in special forms of service such as Harbor Witnessing and Special Metropolitan Public Witnessing. Countless hours were spent speaking to ship crew members who yearned to know the truth about the Bible. Joe's compassionate personality would prove to be invaluable in speaking with others about his hope found in the Bible.

