



Joseph John Battistone

July 3, 1939 - March 14, 2019

Joseph John Battistone, 79, of Sandy, UT died peacefully on the morning of Thursday, March 14, 2019, in Salt Lake City, after a 6-month struggle with cancer. He was born July 3, 1939, in New Britain, CT, to Peter Louis and Constantina (Cifalu) Battistone—the second of four boys—and spent his childhood in New England, growing up in a vibrant Italian-American extended family. The family moved to Arizona in the 1950s, where he met the love of his life, Adrienne Louise Hussong, whom he married in Phoenix, AZ, on August 9, 1960.

Following collegiate and graduate studies at Arizona State (Tempe, AZ), La Sierra University, (Riverside, CA) Andrews University (Berrien Springs, MI), and Harvard (Cambridge, MA), Joe completed doctoral work at Duke University Divinity School (Durham, NC), earning a PhD in Biblical Studies in 1968. His early professional life included a faculty appointment in the Department of Religion at Andrews University, but like the theologians he found most inspiring—Martin Luther, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Reinhold Niebuhr—he was first and foremost a minister, serving as a pastor to numerous Seventh-Day Adventist congregations in North Carolina, Seattle, and Salt Lake City.

But most important of all to Joe was his family. There was no achievement of his own that brought him greater pleasure or pride than even the smallest accomplishments of his children and grandchildren. Nothing brought him greater joy than spending time with us—telling stories, playing games, making pizza and cinnamon rolls—and teaching us all through his words and actions the two most important truths: that God is love, and that everything is in His hands.

He is survived by Adrienne (his loving wife of 58 years); his son Michael (Salt Lake City) and daughter Rochelle (Nakanishi) (Susanville, CA) and grandchildren Benjamin (20), Nathaniel (18), Kaitlyn (17), Carolina (16), Natalie (15), and Jessica (13).

The family expresses sincere appreciation to the faculty and staff of the University of Utah,

the Huntsman Cancer Center, and Promise Hospital, for the outstanding care throughout his illness. Profound gratitude is expressed to Dr. Barry Stults, Joe's primary care physician and friend, and to Dr. Wallace Akerley, Joe's oncologist, who provided superb care during this difficult time. In particular, we also want to recognize the many interns, residents, fellows, and attending physicians, as well as the countless nurses, aides, therapists, and other providers, who all served tirelessly, and were a constant source of encouragement. You should know that Joe frequently described your labor in spiritual language, referring to this as a "ministry" (in addition to the "thumbs up")—there was no higher praise from him than this.

A celebration of his life will be held Tuesday, June 11, 2019, at 5:30 in the Fort Douglas Post Chapel on the University of Utah campus. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Huntsman Cancer Institute or the University of Utah in his honor.

Comments



“ In the late 1980s, Joe was hired by my conference administration to spend a year helping me work through serious problems in my two church district rural East Tennessee. Once a month for five months, Joe spend the day with me, working on strategies for healing the church wounds and regaining credibility with the conference. He never once blamed or shamed me for the situation, and as our plan began to work almost everyone who was part of the problem emerged from the situation better. I will never forget his encouragement and helping me develop relational skills which have endured through my career in ministry.

Warren Ruf, pastor New Haven, CT SDA Church

Warren Ruf - April 21, 2020 at 09:49 PM



“ I am saddened to hear of Joe's death. I knew him as the pastor of the Green Lake church. He officiated at our wedding, and I have always been grateful for the warm, funny, personal tone he set for the wedding. He knew we wouldn't remember the "usual" wedding sermon, and instead had us individually tell him something about our courtship. Then he wove the stories into a short wonderful personalized talk. Every time I hear a standard wedding sermon I am so glad we had Pastor Joe to officiate for us. He was a wonderful pastor, and a wonderful man.

Charlene Morrow - September 11, 2019 at 12:12 AM



“ I am so sorry to learn of Joe's death. I remember him well from the days he was working on his doctorate at Duke. His sermons were amazing but most of all, I remember not only his love for God, his shining intellect but his compassion and skill with people. All who knew Joe were better off for having known him.

Ann Hall - July 13, 2019 at 05:06 PM



“ I enjoyed talking with and joking around with Joe. He was an honorable, educated man that could still have a conversation with teens and have a laugh. One year at campmeeting we had sloppy joes on our menu. The teens in our group decided that the names wasn't appropriate because our Pastor Joe was not sloppy. Instead they were renamed, "Disheveled Josephs" because the new name seemed a little more dignified. The new name was shared with Pastor Joe and he found it amusing.

I appreciated Joe's intellectual sermons and how he made me think about things in a bigger way. I am grateful for his leadership. He baptized one of my daughters and dedicated another. He spent time talking with me and sharing his life stories. I admired his absolute love for his wife and children.

RIP Joe, until that golden morning.

Fondly, Brenda

Brenda Bates - June 11, 2019 at 01:39 PM