



Vladimir "Walter" Zivkovich

January 26, 1928 - April 23, 2017

Vladimir "Walter" Zivkovich, age 89, passed away peacefully on April 23 in Leesburg, Florida surrounded by his loving wife and three children.

Walt was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on January 26, 1928 to Vaso and Bozana "Bernice" Zivkovich. He grew up in Duluth and graduated in December 1944 at the age of 16 from Denfeld High School and was a member of the class of 1945. After high school he joined the United States Navy in January, 1946 and served in the Pacific region on the Navy Cruiser USS Saint Paul, and was honorably discharged in November 1947.

Walt married the love of his life, Genevieve Lukovsky on June 21, 1953 in Duluth. "Vlado" and "Gen" were married for 63 precious years and shared in the joy of raising a family.

After his naval service, Walt attended the University of Minnesota Duluth and received a bachelor's degree in 1953, and two Master of Arts degrees in 1963. He was initiated into the Phi Delta Kappa fraternity in 1963.

During his undergraduate years, Walt became a member of the Duluth Police Force. He served as an officer for 7 years and became an educator for the Duluth Public School System in several capacities as a classroom teacher, counselor, director of adult education, and vocational administrator for 32

years, retiring in 1987.

He was a talented and innovative educator who was dedicated to his students, inspiring them to use their full potential and follow their dreams. During his 32 year career he improved the quality of public education in Duluth. His students fondly referred to him as "Mr. Z", and he touched hundreds of students' lives with his compassion and wisdom. He often said his educational philosophy was to treat each and every student as if they were his own child. Many students contacted "Mr. Z" years after his retirement, and as recently as last Fall, expressing their deep gratitude for his mentoring and guidance which had a profound and lasting impact on their lives.

Walt was also a successful entrepreneur and owned several local businesses including a driver's education school.

After retirement Walt and Gen spent time with their children and grandchildren and traveled, finally settling in Leesburg in September, 1994. Surrounded by year-round sunshine, the couple were active social members in their community. Walt, a lifelong athlete who played fastpitch softball for the Serbian Orthodox Church in Duluth and Crosby, returned to the sport and was a star pitcher on several Leesburg softball teams. He also golfed and played pickleball. He and Gen frequently hosted their children's families and friends, and Grandpa Vlad loved spending time at the pool with his grandchildren.

Walt was preceded in death by his mother Bozana "Bernice" Perovich (Zivkovich) Carich; father, Vaso Zivkovich, stepfather Eli Carich; and stepbrother Emil Carich.

Walt is survived by his beloved wife of 63 years, Genevieve Lukovsky Zivkovich; his three children, who were the apple of his eye, Cindy (Tom) Wilmers of Bloomington, MN; Kim (Don) Mastro of Atlanta, GA; Roddy

(Laurie) Zivkovich of Chanhassen, MN; grandchildren Natalie Wilmers (Tim Olmstead, Fiancé) of Minneapolis, Jaclyn Wilmers of Minneapolis, Lauren Mastro of Atlanta, Daniel Mastro of Atlanta, Peyton Zivkovich of Chanhassen and Greta Zivkovich of Chanhassen.

He is also survived by his dear brothers, Donald "Dan" Carich (Cynthia Mohr) of Superior, WI; and Sam (Beverly) Zivkovich of Duluth. These brothers shared a special bond with Walt throughout his life.

Other survivors include sisters-in-law Olga Milosevich of Minneapolis, Darlene Lukovsky of Duluth; brother-in-law Connie Lukovsky of Duluth; and special nephew Jeff (Cynthia) Milosevich of Aurora, CO, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Walt's family would like to thank his special friends, Dr. Keith R. Oken of the Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, FL; and Dr. Patrick Williams of Leesburg for their dedication to medicine and their outstanding patient care.

A Military Funeral Honors Ceremony will take place at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis followed by a Celebration of Life Service in Duluth. Information to be announced at a later date.

We pray that Walt will be filled with joy and eternal peace in Heaven. We know that by the glory of Our Lord he is sweetly reunited with his father after 86 years of separation. We imagine he is the starting pitcher on a Heavenly softball team, and his mother and father are there cheering him on.

Memorial donations may be made to the St. George Serbian Orthodox Church, 1216 104th Avenue West, Duluth, MN 55808.

Tribute Wall

GA

“ Mr. "Walt" Zivkovich was a great guy and a wonderful co-worker. I worked with him at the Duluth School District, Community Education Office. "Walt" always spoke highly of his wife, Gen, and of his children. I always enjoyed his visits to the office. Always saw your names in the articles on "Duluth Day in Florida". Now the mystery is clear to him. I know his loss will leave a hole in your hearts and in your lives. Our prayers are with you all. I will watch for the Celebration of Life Service in Duluth. Hopefully, I will be able to attend. Peace, Gloria Lavato

Gloria Andrews-Lavato - May 02, 2017 at 10:42 AM

GG

“ Dear Family:

No words can express how I feel about Walter. What can you say about a person who changed your life in such a profound way. The guidance and wisdom he provided set me on a course of true inspiration. I am a counselor today because of Walt's direction. He had higher expectations of me that I had for myself, but most important provided a plan. He took under his wing my brother and I who were energetic at best. He instilled a purpose and a love for others that is unmatched in my 20 years of counseling. Every day I work with students, Walt's leadership kindness and grace goes before me. He taught me I could do anything but not in the since of grandiose ideas but he saw what talents we had and provided direction. His best wisdom was he could provide the plan and we had to put in practice . My brother and I did. He was truly one in a million whose legacy is and will be forever one who truly cared for others. I have attached a letter he sent to me and my brother in 1987 before his retirement. This letter provided inspiration that helped me though my 4 year degree, graduate school and life. As the years went by I would read the letter from time to time especially when times were tough those words would reassure my self confidence and self worth. I could do it, no matter what trial or adversity would arise. I was special and my goals were obtain. I love you Walter... Godspeed.

Gary Gibson - April 30, 2017 at 08:28 PM

SG

“ Rest in Peace my friend.



Steve & Linda G - April 29, 2017 at 08:11 PM

SG

“ To the family: Walt is still with us in spirit. He was such a special soul that he lives on in our fondest memories.

Steve & Linda Grzanich - April 29, 2017 at 08:07 PM

EF

“ Walt was my boss for several years when I taught evening classes at Washington Jr. High School, and of course I remember you three kids. Those were the days! I'm sorry for your loss.

Edward Felien - April 29, 2017 at 08:32 AM

BC

“ Mr. Z was my favorite teacher at West Jr. He was so handsome, a classy gentleman.. He was one of the good ones, but I was happy to see he had such a beautiful, long life.

*Barbara Christensen
Cocoa Beach Florida*

Barbara Christensen - April 29, 2017 at 07:38 AM