

Paul J. McPolin

January 14, 1942 - February 19, 2024

Paul J. McPolin, 82, a former US Navy submariner and 40-year union steamfitter foreman who worked on such iconic projects as the World Trade Center and the Navy Homeport, died Monday in his Staten Island home after a long illness.

He was born in Red Hook, Brooklyn, where he lived with his mother and eight siblings. His father Michael, a native of County Down, Northern Ireland, was in and out of their lives. As a young boy, Paul helped support the struggling family by working in Maresca's fruit and vegetable market. He remained lifelong friends with the Marescas.

He was a promising student at Grady Technical High School in Brooklyn, but dropped out to join the Navy as a 17-year-old, intent on sending most of his paycheck to his mother every month. He kept \$9 for himself.

He was admitted to the Navy's submarine corps and rose to the rank of third-class petty officer, serving four years on diesel and nuclear subs - the USS Sabalo and USS Halibut – out of Pearl Harbor and San Francisco during the height of the Cold War. He would later regale his sons with stories of patrolling the Pacific, including how the sailors would bathe in the ocean while riflemen stood on deck watching for sharks. He wore his silver dolphins – the symbol of the elite Silent Service – proudly.

During his time in the stifling, close quarters of attack submarines, he contracted tuberculosis — and a third of one of his lungs had to be surgically removed. His lung problems would remain an issue for the rest of his life, even after he developed, and defeated, lung cancer late in life. The US government sent him a \$67 disability check every month for his trouble. And he never complained.

Upon his return to civilian life, he married his neighborhood sweetheart, the former Evangeline Monroig, in 1965. It was a rare wedding that merged a first-generation Irish-American with one of the first Puerto Rican families to settle in South Brooklyn. Not only did the “West side Story” not break out, people still remember the affair as one of the most joyous they ever attended.

Their 58-year union produced three sons, Paul Michael, the Sunday editor of the New York Post; Raymond, a New York City Fire Department captain; and Gregory, an attorney.

His sons learned their work ethic from their father, who was a member of Steamfitters Local 638 for more than four decades. He specialized in installing complex sprinkler and fire suppression systems. The work often meant hoisting heavy pipe up ladders all day long in skyscrapers without walls in the dead of winter. He did this job well into his 70s and never once called in sick.

One day, a passing Regis Philbin stopped and offered to help Paul and his partner as they struggled to install a siamese standpipe connection in a Manhattan sidewalk. After one failed turn with the giant wrench, a crestfallen Philbin wished the laughing hard hats good luck and went on his way. Paul was active in his kids' lives, coaching Little League and coordinating Cub Scout trips. He was a doting grandfather to his eight grandchildren, always ready to cook up a batch of banana pancakes.

After their marriage, the young family moved to Sunset Park, Brooklyn, where they lived in a four-story walkup on 40th Street owned by Evangeline's parents, Juana and Ramon Monroig, and where Evangeline's older sister Elba Fernandez also lived with her young family. The entire clan later moved to Great Kills, Staten Island, where they built a triplex on Armstrong Avenue to fit all three loud and fun-loving generations. The grandparents and sister Midgie lived on the lower level, the McPolins were in the middle, and the Fernandezes lived on top.

Paul and his brother-in-law Louis Fernandez became as close as blood brothers, and cousins Evangeline and Lisa Fernandez were sisters to the McPolin boys. The cousins lovingly called Uncle Paul "Uncle Holey," for his penchant for wearing ragged T-shirts.

Paul was a master joke teller who could bring you to tears, especially his tall tale about seeing a human foot topple out of the back of a moving ambulance on the Belt Parkway.

"What did you do?" his stunned listeners would ask.

"Called a toe truck," he'd deadpan.

He also would gift a broken toaster every Christmas to his nephew Jeff, who would then gift it back the following Christmas.

Paul had a special relationship with his nieces and nephews, especially with Peter John, a decorated NYPD sergeant who tragically died in a car accident several years ago.

Paul and Evangeline were very close to Paul's brother Peter and his wife Mary Alice, who lived only a mile away. They vacationed together, raised their kids together, and played cards together. Their weekly games of hearts were loud enough to raise the dead. Evangeline and Peter had the same card-playing philosophy: take no prisoners.

After retiring, Paul moved into a duplex in Annadale owned by his son Ray, and he maintained a second home in West Palm Beach, Fla., where he was vice president of the condo association and a regular in the weekly poker game. The couple had many friends there and were socially active, and were known to dance at the local Irish pub, to the delight of the bartenders and the other patrons, who sat on bar stools, not dancing. Paul was a connoisseur of perfect Manhattans.

He loved doing the New York Post's daily suduko, word games, and playing scrabble, which is considered bloodsport in the McPolin clan.

Paul was a champion napper – he could sleep at any time, anywhere. In fact. His daughter-in-law Ann Marie once spotted him sleeping while standing up in a bank line.

He was a Jets fan and season ticket-holder who attended games with his sons, nephews and their friends. Everyone called him "Yucca" at these games for some unknown reason, and he was so popular his fellow tailgaters often made up chants in his honor, to the tune of an Eminem song. They would belt out these odd odes to Yucca – with lyrics that cannot be repeated in polite company – in the middle of Met Life Stadium.

In the last months of his life, when he was hooked up to an oxygen machine and not very mobile, his sons and grandchildren would go to his house on Sundays to watch Jet games. Sometimes the Jets even won.

Originally a Brooklyn Dodgers fan, he became a Mets fan for many years, before wisely deciding that rooting for the Yankees would make life easier. His sons remained despairing Mets fans.

He is predeceased by seven siblings, "Sissy" Campitelli, Danny McPolin, Maury Doyle, Barbara Gallagher, Michael McPolin, Peter McPolin, and David McPolin.

He is survived, in addition to his wife and three sons, by eight grandchildren, Kathleen, Colleen, Connor, Claire, Patrick, Emma, Manuel and Luna McPolin; his sister, Joanne Amitrano; and three daughters-in-law he considered the daughters he never had, Maura, Ann Marie and Kirstin McPolin.

The funeral will be from John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals, Eltingville, with a wake on Thursday, followed by Manhattans in his honor at Joyce's Tavern.

And now his watch is ended, we shall never see his like again.

Cemetery Details

Resurrection Cemetery

361 Sharrott Ave
Staten Island, NY 10309

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **22**. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals, Inc.
28 Eltingville Blvd
Staten Island, NY 10312

Visitation

FEB **22**. 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals, Inc.
28 Eltingville Blvd
Staten Island, NY 10312

Service

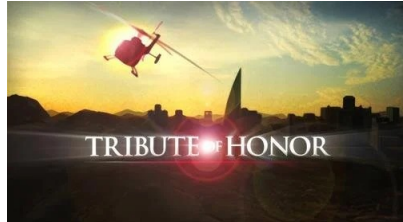
FEB **23**. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

St Thomas Church
6135 Amboy Rd
Staten Island, NY 10309

Tribute Wall



“ *John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals Inc. created a Tribute Video in memory of Paul J. McPolin*



John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals Inc. - February 22, 2024 at 11:25 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Paul J. McPolin.*



February 23, 2024 at 08:32 AM



“ *Love Roseann and Terry planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.*

Love Roseann and Terry - February 23, 2024 at 08:32 AM



“ *My sincere condolences to Ray and the whole McPolin family on the loss of your treasured Patriarch. May he rest in eternal peace in the paradise we are all promised. Sincerely - Barbara Pandolfi D'Amora*

Barbara Pandolfi D'Amora - February 22, 2024 at 11:33 PM

DG

“ Some people leave behind pixie dust, when they travel on. You’re left with moments and memories, laughter and good deeds. Paul, in his humility and intention, left life a bit sweeter. Big heart, kind spirit. I feel blessed to have witnessed a rare love, in the one that he shared with Evangeline and to have memories of time well-spent with them. As a couple, they inspired and invited us to all love a bit deeper, bolder and wider. What a remarkable and loving legacy and family Paul leaves behind.

With much love, Deborah Della Genco

Deborah Della Genco - February 22, 2024 at 07:30 PM

PD

“ Patrick D. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.

Patrick D. - February 22, 2024 at 11:53 AM



“ 96 files added to the album Life Tributes



John Vincent Scalia Home for Funerals Inc. - February 22, 2024 at 11:21 AM

RF

“ Rob and Michelle Goldman and Family purchased the Dreams From the Heart Bouquet for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



Rob and Michelle Goldman and Family - February 22, 2024 at 09:27 AM

RF

“ Rob and Michelle Goldman and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.

Rob and Michelle Goldman and Family - February 22, 2024 at 09:27 AM

MF

“ Meyerson family purchased the Simply Elegant S pathiphyllum for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



Meyerson family - February 21, 2024 at 06:50 PM

OR

“ Orlando, Maria and America Rivera purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



Orlando, Maria and America Rivera - February 21, 2024 at 02:24 PM

OR

“ Orlando, Maria and America Rivera planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.

Orlando, Maria and America Rivera - February 21, 2024 at 02:24 PM

GM

“ Greg's Burford BD Team -- A, C, P, J & M purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



Greg's Burford BD Team -- A, C, P, J & M - February 21, 2024 at 12:09 PM

GM

“ Greg's Burford BD Team -- A, C, P, J & M planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.

Greg's Burford BD Team -- A, C, P, J & M - February 21, 2024 at 12:09 PM

KM

“ Kathleen M. purchased the A Full Life for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



Kathleen M. - February 20, 2024 at 08:43 PM

BF

“ Brian and Tracy Gallagher and family purchased the Love's Journey for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



Brian and Tracy Gallagher and family - February 20, 2024 at 07:32 PM

BF

“ Brian and Tracy Gallagher and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.

Brian and Tracy Gallagher and family - February 20, 2024 at 07:32 PM



“ Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



February 20, 2024 at 07:02 PM

MM

“ Mary M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.

Mary M. - February 20, 2024 at 05:56 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Paul J. McPolin.*



February 20, 2024 at 05:26 PM



“ *Titi Elba, Uncle Louie, Evangeline, Lisa planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.*

Titi Elba, Uncle Louie, Evangeline, Lisa - February 20, 2024 at 05:26 PM



“ *Tito, Rolando, Jennifer, Christian & Ana purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Paul J. McPolin.*



Tito, Rolando, Jennifer, Christian & Ana - February 20, 2024 at 05:07 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Paul J. McPolin.*



February 20, 2024 at 04:52 PM

YC

“ Your friends at Burford Capital planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.

Your friends at Burford Capital - February 20, 2024 at 04:52 PM

JA

“ Joseph and Irene Amitrano purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



Joseph and Irene Amitrano - February 20, 2024 at 04:02 PM

GF

“ Gino Galella & family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



Gino Galella & family - February 20, 2024 at 03:34 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



February 20, 2024 at 02:17 PM

TB

“ The Borsteins planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.

The Borsteins - February 20, 2024 at 02:17 PM

E1

“ Engine 282 & Ladder 148 purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Paul J. McPolin.



Engine 282 & Ladder 148 - February 20, 2024 at 01:51 PM

E1

“ Engine 282 & Ladder 148 planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Paul J. McPolin.

Engine 282 & Ladder 148 - February 20, 2024 at 01:51 PM