Evans Nordby
FUNERAL HOMES



Jerome "Jerry" Witalka

June 4, 1943 - August 23, 2019

It is with great sadness that the family of Jerome John Witalka announces his passing, on Friday, August 23, 2019, at the age of 76 years.

Jerry grew up in Peru, Illinois, and graduated from LaSalle/Peru High School in 1961. He earned a scholarship to attend Northwestern University, and graduated with a degree in electrical engineering in 1965, though to hear him tell it, his greatest feat was taking the court in an intramural basketball game on crutches so his team would have the required 5 players.

He moved to Minnesota to work at Sperry Univac/Unisys, where he designed computers and worked on some of the earliest mainframe systems, including those in the Houston control room that NASA used for the moon landing. He was also awarded a patent for system architecture, but Jerry was most proud of the 4 children he raised with his wife, Anne, and the 3 grandchildren who followed. He was the definition of a devoted father. He coached all of his kids in several sports, including teaching himself the game of soccer so that he could be a coach for their youth teams. Be it soccer or softball or basketball or baseball, if one of Jerry’s kids was playing, he was either on the bench or in the stands. He also loved to play golf and transmitted that passion to his boys. After 50 years of hooks, slices, deep-divots and close calls, Jerry hit his first and only hole-in-one in 2018,

while playing with his son, Rich.

He will be remembered for his humility and dedication to his wife and family, but also for his wry wit. A teller of silly stories, and a lover of puns, he was quick to illicit an eye-roll and a giggle in equal measure. He became known at his children's elementary school for how the city of their highschool was named—by 2 Italian explorers who found "Anoka tree" on the banks of the Mississippi.

Jerry was also a member of the Brooklyn Center Parks and Recreation board, and loved to spend time outdoors. He would run or walk around Palmer Lake park every day, from the sweltering humidity in August to the ice and snow of February mornings in Minnesota. For many years he was accompanied daily by his dog, Shadow. After Shadow died, the walks continued, and he would bring treats for other dogs he encountered along the way.

Jerry will be deeply missed.

Jerry will be lovingly remembered by his children, Richard (Pamela), Catherine (Christopher), James (Patricia), and Peter (Charlee), and by his three grandchildren Kimberly, David and Sarah Witalka, as well as his sister, Barbara Krolak, of Peru, IL.

He is preceeded in death by his wife, Anne (2017), 2 brothers (Richard and Raymond) and 2 sisters (Dorothy and Mary).

A Memorial service will be held at Evans-Nordby Funeral Homes, 6000 Brooklyn Blvd in Brooklyn Center, MN 55429 on Saturday, August 31 2019 at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, the donations may be made in Jerry's name to Minnesota's Community Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP).

Memorial Service

Saturday, August 31st 11 AM

Evans-Nordby Funeral Home, 6000 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center, MN

Driving Directions