



Joseph B. Ruth III

September 16, 1955 - January 14, 2024

TOWNSEND: Joseph B. Ruth, III, 68, of Townsend, formerly of Ashburnham, died Sunday, January 14, 2024 at Brigham & Women's Hospital, Boston following a lengthy illness.

Joe was born in Ipswich, September 16, 1955, a son of the late Joseph B. and Mary Isabel (Grimes) Ruth and grew up in Gloucester and later in Ashburnham. He has resided in Townsend for over thirty five years.

Joe was a 1973 graduate of Oakmont Regional High School in Ashburnham and continued his education at Mount Wachusett Community College before receiving his Bachelors Degree from North Adams State College. He went on to receive a Masters in Business Administration from Western New England University in Springfield.

For fifteen years Joe served as a Senior Vice President at Rollstone Bank & Trust in Fitchburg, retiring in 2020. Prior to that he had worked in a similar capacity at TD Bank and Safety Fund National Bank, also in Fitchburg.

Joe's favorite pastime and hobby was everything Baseball. Much of the free time in his life included playing, coaching, watching and talking about baseball. For over 45 years he played and served as the General Manager and coach of the Lunenburg Phillies. Most recently he

served as the President of the Central New England Baseball Association and as an assistant coach to the North Middlesex Regional High School Baseball Team.

Besides coaching, he spent much of his free time babysitting and enjoying his grandchildren, who adored him. He was a member of St. John's Church in Townsend.

He leaves his wife of 44 years, Mary Jane (Croll) Ruth; two sons, Andrew J. Ruth and his wife Meghan, Christopher J. Ruth and his wife Kacie both of Lunenburg; his daughter, Caitlin M. Silva and husband Michael of Fitchburg; his brother, James A. Ruth of Gardner; three sisters, Eileen C. Cusick of Springfield, Mary Ellen Cancellieri of Gardner, Kathleen M. Jackson of Templeton and two grandchildren, Quinn Silva and Noah Ruth.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated 10 AM Friday, January 19, 2024 at St. John's Church, 1 School Street, Townsend. Interment will follow at Riverside Cemetery, West Townsend.

Joe's family will receive relatives and friends at calling hours 4-7PM Thursday, January 18, 2024 at the Anderson Funeral Home, 250 Main Street (Rte. 119) Townsend Center. www.andersonfuneral.com.

In lieu of flowers, Memorial contributions may be made to North Middlesex Regional School Athletic Booster Scholarship Foundation, PO Box 34, Townsend, MA 01469.

Cemetery Details

Riverside

Dudley Road
West Townsend, MA 01474

Previous Events

Calling Hours

JAN 18. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Anderson Funeral Home - Townsend
250 Main Street ~ Route 119
Townsend, MA 01469
(978) 597-2692

Mass of Christian Burial

JAN 19. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. John the Evangelist Church
1 School Street
Townsend, MA 01469

Tribute Wall

JW

“ It has been a year since the devastating news of Joe’s passing. I still find it hard to believe.

I first met Joe in the Spring of ’85 during baseball tryouts at Fitchburg State in their old “gymnasium”. He was talking to Coach Dick Ballou and motioning to me from across the floor. Dressed in nice slacks, shoes, and sporting a tie, I honestly thought he was one of the Deans and worried I was being placed on academic probation. I was introduced (relieved) and chatted about how he had just formed a new team in Lunenburg, and asked if I’d be willing to play “Summer” ball with the Phillies. I felt privileged and graciously accepted. This was the start of a 39-year friendship.

I played the next 2 seasons with the Phillies before moving out of the area lacing up with the old “Chelmsford Merchants” skippered by the late Harry J. Ayotte. We routinely played the Phillies and it was always great to catch up with Joe about the team and antics from my old team mates. After 5 more seasons, a growing family, and other career commitments, I hung up my spikes. Fast-forward 8 years and our family had since moved to Townsend, just around the corner from the Ruth’s. We would occasionally bump into each other and talk about nothing but, Baseball. Amazingly, he could still play a mean second base! On one sunny Sunday morning at St. Johns, Joe was heading to service through the parking lot and I amusingly floated the idea of making a comeback at the ripe old age of 38. Needless to say, I don’t think he took me seriously but didn’t discourage me from trying. For the next 17 seasons I donned the Phillies uniform as a player, assistant coach, website manager, and the rare times he missed a game. And Joe continued to play into his early 60’s! Incredible. There are few who can wear the badge of “Player/Coach” with honor – and he did.

During this 17-year stretch, we spent many seasons from early indoor tryouts/spring training to wrapping up the season at the annual team rewards ceremony. I had the opportunity to play with his son Andy too – not many Fathers can boast about executing a

double play with their Son. For those who played on the Phillies, it was a long, 13-week season. Sometimes due to rainouts, 7 games in 7 days. And Joe loved it. I used to call him a "Crazy Baseball Nut". He would look at me, say nothing and just return a big smile. This man had so much energy and despite 8 years my elder, never seemed to tire. His commitment to the game, the players, and the league was immeasurable. I've been with my wife Kelly for 40 years. Every year she would sarcastically joke that #2 (Joe) was my summertime husband. And Mary Jane, as Joe would always confess to me, "is an absolute Saint to put up with me." I never disagreed.

Joe had an encyclopedic memory when it came to the Phillies. He could remember our opponent, the field, who was pitching, the inning, score, who was on base, umpires, and the batter's count on every consequential play for the last 40 seasons. And there was never a shortage of stories. He loved to talk about the myriad of stories!

There were many road trips after a practice, or to and from games where we had some personal time to share what's going on in our lives outside of baseball. Often, it would be discussing recent family events. Joe loved his family. We had a lot in common – being the only 2 baby boomers on the team. Over the last 2 years, and I had since retired from the team, his joy was the grandchildren. He was so proud.

I could go on and on about my good friend, but I'll probably exceed some character limit when posting.

Joe, you are sorely missed, you will always be missed, and I am so grateful to have known you.

RIP, and God Bless.

Your friend, Joel

Joel Wetherell - January 14, 2025 at 01:15 PM

SK

“Candle lit by Steven Koroskenyi on January 19th, 2024

Joe, It was a pleasure knowing you and a privilege to be known by you as one of the Phillies pioneers. Knowing that I was a member of the Pepperell Jets, the forerunner of the Phillies, you gave me a chance to try out one more time at the age of 36, and I made the club, which was a bucket list item for me.

We talked baseball, family, faith, and life through the years from time to time. Your commitment to the team was as deep as my commitment to the church. Our commitments kept us both busy and dedicated. Part of my job is to make sure people get right with God. To those who read this, I can tell you that Joe had a strong faith in God, and once I learned that, I never worried about that again. Joe, your absence will be felt down at Marshall Park, and in the hearts of the hundreds of quality baseball players who had the privilege of playing for you on the Phillies.

I wanted to be there for the funeral, but an emergency at the church prevented me from leaving the building.

I am wearing my Phillies hat today in your honor, and I look forward to meeting up with you for some “around the horn” over in glory. Rest in peace, Joe. You loved your family and carried the burden for the Phillies so faithfully.

To Joe’s wife and family, may I say a humble thank you for letting Joe live the dream. Without you, he couldn’t have done it. I am deeply saddened with the news of Joe’s passing. I will think of him often.

If there is ever anything I can do for you, please let me know.

*-Pastor Steve Koroskenyi
SS, C, CF*

*Christian Life Center
Downtown Leominster*



steve koroskenyi - April 12, 2024 at 01:51 AM

DS

“ Joe was my friend for over 25 years. He was there for me during some of the toughest times in my life. That's the definition of a true friend. He never turned his back on you or walked away for any reason.

I loved our conversations about anything baseball, especially the hidden ball trick (he still tried to convince me it was the best play in baseball lol)...he loved the Red Sox, the TV show 24, and his family. He was so proud of his children.

I know I will have a huge void in my heart when I watch Red Sox games... :-)

He was a loving husband to Mary Jane, a father, a grandfather, and friend to so many.

I will miss you Joe...thank you for always being there for me! 🥹🥹
🥹

Dave Smith - January 24, 2024 at 04:35 PM

HB

“ So many fond memories of playing ball with Joe for Shattick Oil. RIP my friend 🙏

Harry Bosselman - January 20, 2024 at 10:12 AM

SW

“ We are deeply saddened by the news of Joe’s passing. He was truly a kind, fun generous and giving man. Gone way too soon. We have wonderful memories from those Phillies days. Sending you all prayers for comfort

Sharon and Brian Wholey - January 20, 2024 at 06:57 AM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Joseph B. Ruth III.



January 18, 2024 at 11:57 AM

LF

“ Love Erin Hart and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph B. Ruth III.

Love Erin Hart and family - January 18, 2024 at 11:57 AM

TC

“ My thoughts and prayers are with all of you at this time. Joe was a Great Coach, player and friend. Had so many great memories playing for the Phillies. The one that we always talked about, besides winning the league, was the time Joe and his family was away and we turned his yard into a nine hole golf course, with flag sticks we stole from Monoosnoc Golf course. Get times!! We will miss ya Coach!! Rest in Peace
Tim Cuddahy

Tim Cuddahy - January 18, 2024 at 10:11 AM

OC

“ Owen C. purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Joseph B. Ruth III.



Owen C. - January 17, 2024 at 10:59 PM

EC

“ Eileen C. purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Joseph B. Ruth III.



Eileen C. - January 17, 2024 at 10:53 PM



“ Fairest of All was purchased for the family of Joseph B. Ruth III.



January 17, 2024 at 09:18 PM

CL

“ Cousins: Ann, Denise, Lisa, planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph B. Ruth III.

Cousins: Ann, Denise, Lisa, - January 17, 2024 at 09:18 PM

DP

“ I am so sorry for this loss, I pray that God can comfort all friends and family. I'm a neighbor of Kathy, his sister, and I send my condolences to everyone.

Dana

Dana Padilha - January 17, 2024 at 09:13 PM

LH

“ Joe is my cousin...only three weeks older. And though we did not grow up in the same state and barely knew each other, when I finally met and spent a little time with him it was so easy and fun and comfortable, as if we had known each other all along. That is because of what an amazing guy he is. Caring, funny, engaging. He called me often just to chat even if he was feeling poorly. I always felt so honored and blessed by those calls. I know the world was a much better place because of him and he was a hero to many. My heart goes out to the entirety of his amazing family who must feel devastated by his passing. May an image of his release from suffering blanket you with peace.

Lisa Hansen - January 17, 2024 at 09:04 PM

PM

“ *Mary Jane and family,*

My heartfelt condolences on your loss. It seems surreal to me that Joe is gone. I worked with him at Rollstone Bank, in the office next to him. We had a lot of fun over the years. When you spend so much of your life at work, it makes your workday more enjoyable to have fellow colleagues who enjoy a laugh. And besides baseball, I can attest that he also had a great love for his family, his dogs and practical jokes, in particular April Fools Day (month)! I have included several pictures. May the many wonderful memories of him sustain you through this difficult time. He will be greatly missed.

*Sincerely,
Paula Murphy*



paula murphy - January 17, 2024 at 08:37 PM

KC

“ *Dear Mary Jane & Family,
Keeping all of you in my thoughts and prayers 🙏
I'm sure Joe and Gary are having a great time discussing all things
baseball!*

❤️ Kathy Caouette

kathryn caouette - January 17, 2024 at 11:35 AM

SI

“ Jim ,
Deepest condolences to you and your family for your loss.
Wishing you peace and comfort at this time of sorrow.
We are thinking of you and your family and sending caring thoughts
your way to support you through this.

Your friends at
Superior Interiors
Hooksett,NH

SUPERIOR INTERIORS - January 17, 2024 at 09:18 AM

SW

Our deepest condolences! So very sorry. What a loss. Joe was a great
guy and glad we have wonderful memories of the Phillies years.
Sending prayers. Brian and Sharon Wholey

Sharon and Brian Wholey - January 19, 2024 at 03:12 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of
Joseph B. Ruth III.



January 17, 2024 at 07:26 AM

MZ

“ Mike Zafirovski planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph B. Ruth III.

Mike Zafirovski - January 17, 2024 at 07:26 AM

PM

“ Joe will be missed by so many. We are so grateful for his friendship during the past 15 years. May you find peace in knowing he is breathing freely with our Lord Jesus Christ. May you continue to feel his love through your wonderful memories. God Bless, with Love, Al and Pam Mariano

Pamela Mariano - January 16, 2024 at 11:27 PM

KP

“ Was blessed to share some great years with Joe. Never met anyone with his zest and energy for life..He was a true chip off the block...Col. Ruth..

Kerry Painter - January 16, 2024 at 10:35 PM

RF

“ We are very sorry to read of Joe's passing. Mary Jane and family you are in our thoughts and prayers.

Ron and Sue Funaiolo - January 16, 2024 at 07:04 PM

MC

“ Joe was a class act. The years I played for the Phillies were some of my best playing baseball. Thank you, Joe. Prays and condolences to his family, and his baseball family.

Mark D Conlon - January 16, 2024 at 06:51 PM

LK

“ Umpired baseball games in which Joe was involved in some capacity for the past 30+ years. Always a gentleman & always put his players first. The Massachusetts baseball community has lost a good one!

*Lennie Kasprzak
Central MA. Baseball Umpires Assoc.*

Lennie Kasprzak - January 16, 2024 at 05:38 PM

JO

“ John Anderson added a comment to their request:
So sorry for your loss Played hockey with Joe for all star sports (I was the goalie), and we had great times together on and off the ice. Joe is on the field of dreams and the rink R.IP. my friend 🙏🏒🏈📖

john - January 16, 2024 at 01:58 PM



“ Joe was a GIANT in the world of baseball. I will always appreciate the time and effort he put into the Phillies organization and beyond. Sending love and light. Our sincere condolences, Kurt and Jennifer Kublbeck

Kurt Kublbeck - January 16, 2024 at 01:19 PM

BR

“ Steve Santucci added a comment to their request:
MJ and kids, we are so very sorry to hear about Joe. I had been in contact with him up to a few weeks ago. I know how much he loved you guys and never stopped talking about you all. Joe was always my biggest supporter when I played for him and when I moved on. He would call or drop in to see how I was doing on a fairly regular basis. In recent years, he would call to check in on how Steph and my kids were doing which to me was so very kind. That was the kind of person he was and you all should be so proud of his legacy and what he did for baseball in our area. He was more than a coach he was a friend to so many of us who had the pleasure of laying for him. I will miss our conversations, but remember all the good times we had. I only played for the Phillies a year and a half, but I had more fun and more great stories than I can remember. That is how I will remember Joe!
May God bless you all and if there is anything I can do, please let me know
Steve and Stephanie Santucci

brian - January 16, 2024 at 01:06 PM

KP

“ This is absolutely heartbreaking news. Life long friends and sports enthusiasts, Joe and his family welcomed me into their home as one of their own. My deepest condolences to the entire family and wife Mary Jane. I don't know how to contact any of you, but rest assured you're all in my prayers. Love all of you. Sincerely, Kevin (Bernie) Parent.

kevin parent - January 16, 2024 at 01:02 PM

MN

“ *My sincere condolences to Joe’s family. We’ve known each other through summer baseball for several decades, and it was always a pleasure being on the same field. RIP Joe.*

Mike Noeth - January 16, 2024 at 10:33 AM

FV

“ *From all of us at Versatile purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Joseph B. Ruth III.*



From all of us at Versatile - January 16, 2024 at 08:50 AM

FV

“ *From all of us at Versatile planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph B. Ruth III.*

From all of us at Versatile - January 16, 2024 at 08:50 AM

BC

“ *We had a great time as members of our hockey team with great memories and strong bond that made us all brothers in arms. Your great sense of humor and competitive spirit helped us go undefeated for 47 games in a very talented league! Your smile, quick wit and soul will be missed by all who knew you.*



Bill Campagna - January 16, 2024 at 07:13 AM

TW

“ Joe, my heart is broken as I’ve just now learned of the all mighty Father calling you home to Heaven, he must have big plans for you to have taken you from all of us this early.

Jane, Andrew, Chris and Kate, I’m so very sorry for the pain and sorrow you are all feeling with the passing of your Husband and Dad. He was without a doubt the most honest, loyal, dependable, honorable and caring man, coach, and friend I’ve ever had!

Thanks for all the memories Joe, time for you to rest in Peace now,

Terry Woodward

Terry Woodward - January 15, 2024 at 10:05 PM