



Philip O'Keefe

February 14, 2018

He is survived by his wife of 18 years, Leslie E. (Dakers) O'Keefe; a son and daughter in law, Sean and Vivian O'Keefe of Sedona, Arizona; his daughter and son in law Stacey and Richard Reiling of Nahant; his brother Robert O'Keefe of RI; his sister Ursula O'Keefe of Beverly; a stepson, Mark Liebert and his wife Darlene of Leominster; his stepdaughter Stacey Liebert Jimenez and her husband Eduardo of Lawrenceville, GA; eleven grandchildren, Riley O'Keefe, James "JP" Reiling, Colin Reiling, Michael Reiling, Justin Liebert, Anthony Mastroberti, Joshua Liebert, Shawna Liebert, Amanda Ondrof, Abigael Jimenez, Lukas Jimenez and a great grandson, Owen D'Ambroise.

He was also survived by nephew Michael, nieces Robin and Helen and their families.

Phil was born in Swampscott, May 13, 1942, a son of Charles and Ursula (Ellis) O'Keefe and attended St. John The Evangelist Elementary School and Swampscott High School.

From 1961 - 1965 Phil served his country in the United States Air Force and was deployed to Vietnam. Upon his completion of military service he attended Salem State College attaining Masters degrees in Education and History.

He happily taught in the Ayer School System for 30 plus years retiring in June

2002. While in Ayer he coached the track team and was a chaperon for the ski club.

In his retirement he enjoyed traveling, golfing, racketball, walking, reading, sporting events but most of all being with family and friends.

Tribute Wall

DG

“ I was recently telling my teenage son about Mr. O'Keefe, my favorite world history teacher. Somehow I'd gotten the erroneous "news" that he had passed away about 30 years ago -- so I am both sad to see his obituary now, and happy that he actually had many more years! His classes were fascinating, memorable, delightful, and left me with a lifelong interest in history. He was also just the sweetest guy, and it always made me happy that he seemed to have a soft spot for one of my brothers, who shared his first name. Rest in peace, Mr. O'Keefe. I'm sure you left a spark in many a young heart and mind.

Diane (Shultz) Gardner - April 03, 2018 at 02:57 PM

DC

“ Sad to here of Phil's passing, a great coach, fond memories of him and I

Dave Coke - April 02, 2018 at 08:00 AM

JH

“ Sorry for your loss. He was a wonderful man.
Condolences from the Ernst family

Joan Howard - March 23, 2018 at 08:33 AM

CY

“ Amazing man..gave sooo much ..always enjoyed his class and the look he would give over the rims if his glasses. He gave himself completely to his students..always had a joke ..a smile..a wise crack. Good man. Heaven just got a prize.

Cynthia - March 10, 2018 at 08:06 PM

CC

“ It's been a while but I have lots of wonderful memories of being next door neighbors, except for your dog Peaches who hated me. Your nickname of Cara Bara always made me smile. To Sean and Stacy, I'm very sorry for the loss of your dad. He was a special man and the memories of growing up next to you are so fond. He took me in like another kid, trips to the drive in, bike rides to Roux's and just playing in the woods. I'm sure you have endless memories of your dad to make you smile.

Cara Downey Castaner - February 25, 2018 at 07:32 AM

DD

“ phil i enjoyed working with you for thirty plus years .you were a dedicacated educator and a good friend

donald deamer - February 25, 2018 at 07:06 AM

RO

“ RIP baby brother, you have been through a lot over the last few years. You perserved through it with great strength. Your wife, Leslie was there beside you at every step along the the way. To Stacey and Sean, these are the tough times that most everyone goes through. Until we meet again Phil, God Bless

Robert OKeefe - February 23, 2018 at 12:03 PM

HP

“ *My Uncle Phil-A Man who was a huge part of my childhood. As a young man in his twenty's he took me every where. Camping with the Hapgoods, swimming and constant outdoor adventures. Throughout my life always there, interested in my goals and encouraging me forward. He was extremely generous and hysterical to listen to.
I feel blessed and lucky to have had such stellar Uncle. Thanks for the fond memories.
I will miss you*

Helen Papele - February 23, 2018 at 08:55 AM

RM

“ *I was very fortunate to have Phil as my uncle. He was always so interested in every part of my life. I thank him for his service to our country. He was a walking history book and reading all the below comments from his former students is a testament to his love of teaching. He always took an interest in my three boys growing up in their school work and sporting activities. My condolences to Leslie Stacey and Sean, he will truly be missed.*

Robin Mclaughlin - February 21, 2018 at 04:23 PM

MC

“ A man I remember well. Very best teacher I had at Ayer High School. (And that includes my mother, Isabel Chesak, my German teacher!) But I think I still have my crowded notes from his World History class -somewhere. Pages crammed with tiny print, my handwriting jammed into his mimeographed outline. Always a very colorful lecture that brought the story to life. I recall Phil referring to the Middle Ages as "500 years without a bath!" So he skipped it, as a waste of time. Or his lurid details on Michelangelo's personal hygiene problems, when (and if) Mike's boots ever came off... It was the kind of color that would keep a 15 year old in his seat until the last bell. Wall to wall. Freshman year I had that class G period, the last bell of the day would ring, but Phil would go right on talking, keeping us in a sort of history lock down, lecturing tails as everyone else in school was hitting the lockers, to get the heck out of there.

He was also my cross-country coach. Coach O'Keefe would trail us in an olive colored Chevy Nova during training. We ran, he drove, and smoked cigarettes as he drove: barking from the car to "open-up the pace" on a five-10 mile run. Intellectually and physically most of Ayer High School, outside of that, was pretty drab and rusty.

Sincerely, Mark D. Chesak
AHS Class of 80.

Mark Chesak - February 19, 2018 at 09:04 PM

PP

“ Sorry to learn of Phil's passing. I enjoyed teaching with him at Ayer High School. He will be remembered fondly. Prayers for the family.

Pat Pinder - February 19, 2018 at 01:16 PM

DI

“ *Mr O'Keefe, no one is better than you. What a pleasure it was to have you as a teacher. You will be missed by many.*

RIP

Class of 76

Donna Iovinelli - February 19, 2018 at 01:08 PM

MO

“ *I was a lucky Nephew to have you as my Uncle. Phil was more like a big brother to me growing up. We had so much fun together playing Golf and Ping Pong. I will miss my Uncle Philly he always had us laughing!*

Michael O'Keefe - February 19, 2018 at 12:20 PM

TQ

“ *You will be missed our dear friend. We have so many fond memories of you and your entire family. You will always be in our thoughts.*

Condolences to Leslie, Stacey, Sean, and their families.

Tom and Betty Quigley - February 19, 2018 at 07:38 AM

AS

“ *Loved him! Always made me smile in class. I have 7 siblings and he taught us all. I know I speak for all of them when I say we have great memories. God bless❤️ Annmarie Sabatino(Callahan)*

Annmarie sabatino - February 19, 2018 at 04:19 AM

O'

“ *Mr. O'Keefe is one of those people who becomes woven into the fabric of the lives of everyone he encountered. Thinking of him I can't help but smile. I feel truly blessed to have had him as a teacher and friend. RIP Mr. O'Keefe*

Olivia Tennessee AHS '75 - February 18, 2018 at 02:03 PM

BN

“ *Sorry to hear about your loss. My prayers and heart go out to your family.*

Bob Neu - February 17, 2018 at 03:17 PM

JR

“ *One of my favorite teachers. Class of '75*

Jeff ritter - February 17, 2018 at 02:03 PM

JP

“ *One of the best history teachers ever. He always made class fun. My deepest condolences to the entire O'Keefe family. RIP, Mr. O'Keefe*

Jennifer Priddy - February 17, 2018 at 08:26 AM

DD

“ *Condolences to Leslie, Stacey, Sean & the entire O'Keefe Clan. RIP to a special friend. You will be missed.*

Dave & Diane Dolan - February 17, 2018 at 07:21 AM

R'

“ *My Favorite! You were an engaging teacher, a cool advisor, a kind friend and mentor. Boy, did you have jokes! Thank you for daring to care as you helped to shape so many young lives! Family, I pray strength, peace, and love for the journey. God Bless*

Renita (Davis) Shadwick AHS '75 - February 17, 2018 at 07:02 AM

BK

“ *Mr O"keefe, We the class of 75 AHS, were fortunate to have you as our class advisor. I still remember our cross country team practices, and your positive outlook. RIP, and thank you for your service!*

Bob Kidder - February 16, 2018 at 06:39 PM

CA

“ *I was but one of the many lucky ones that was touched by Mr O'keefe. A favorite teacher who I shall never forget. So kind, funny, but especially engaging, which made learning fun!!
RIP Phil, and thank you sir for your service to our country and our class of 1975!*

Cathy (Harris) Altobelli - February 16, 2018 at 05:17 PM

JS

“ *Mr. O'Keefe was a great man, teacher and friend. RIP Mr. O'Keefe and thank you for your service.*

John & Agnes Shanahan - February 16, 2018 at 05:03 PM

PT

“ Lots of love and many prayers.

Gonna miss to miss those golf clubs flying.

Fly on, dear friend! You will be dearly missed.

You were very special ... a treasure to all!

Patti and Brian Thorsen - February 16, 2018 at 04:24 PM

DG

“ Phil, you took the Class of "75" under your wing when you first arrived at Ayer Jr/Sr. High in 1969. You were our teacher, our advisor, and our friend. You will always hold a special place in our hearts.

I'll miss you Sport Shoes.

Debbie Constantine Gendron - February 16, 2018 at 04:05 PM

WB

“ What a great teacher and person. You will be missed by many. Thank you for all that you did for myself and so many others.

William brady - February 16, 2018 at 03:33 PM

TP

“ Thoughts and prayers to your family, Phil. You were one of my favorite teachers and could always keep us interested in class. A great story teller and joker, you will be missed. RIP. Trish

Trish Sullivan Peters - February 16, 2018 at 02:45 PM

BH

“ *Sending love and deepest sympathy for your loss. Prayers for comfort and companionship throughout these difficult days.*

Bev

Beverly Harmon - February 16, 2018 at 01:15 PM

DW

“ *My heartfelt sympathies to Phil's family!! Sadly I will be out of town during Phil's services but please know my thoughts and prayers will be with his family and friends! Phil was one of the good guys for sure and will be missed by many! God Speed my friend and teacher!*

Dot Coalter Wicks - February 16, 2018 at 12:04 PM

PC

“ *To the O'Keefe Fanmily*

My deepest condolences on Phil's passing, He was a wonderful man and a great teacher. I knew him for many years while on the Ayer School Committee. He led with a fantastic example of his love of learning and his students. He has influenced many lives over the years.

God Speed.

Pat

Patricia Casavecchia - February 16, 2018 at 11:36 AM

CF

“ *I'm so sorry to hear of Mr. O'Keefe's passing. He was my favorite teacher; he knew how to engage students and to keep us interested in learning. He was friendly to all of us and always had a smile on his face. Rest in peace, Phil. You left a positive impression on so many of us who went through the Ayer school system.*

Cindy (Guthrie) Fischer - February 16, 2018 at 11:19 AM

PW

“ *Farewell Phil. We had good times over the years.....you were a great guy.....R.I.P.*

Phine and Donnie Wallace - February 16, 2018 at 10:31 AM