



George G. Helopoulos

July 13, 1921 - February 1, 2014

George Gus Helopoulos, born July 13, 1921, in Kankakee, died Saturday (Feb. 1, 2014) at Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee.

George was the first born of Gust and Acrivy Helopoulos, Greek immigrants to America who were charter members of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Kankakee.

George was best known as the owner of George's Shoes, for many years on Court Street, across from St. Mary's Hospital. He established the business in 1951, concentrating on shoe repair. His father had a shoe repair business for 47 years on East Avenue in Kankakee and his father before him had made and repaired shoes in Greece. Eventually, George progressed to more new shoe sales and sold the business to his son, Dino. He, in turn, moved the shoe store to Bourbonnais when St. Mary's Hospital acquired the property on Court Street. Dino has now converted the store to Red Wing Shoe Store in Bourbonnais. He operates it with his son, Mike, the fifth generation Helopoulos in the shoe business.

George was married to Shirley Ruth Buchanek, of Parsons, Kan., in 1953. They were lifelong partners in George's Shoes and had five children.

George was a lifelong member of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in

Kankakee, at one time serving as president of the Church Council. He served his country in the 96th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army, participating in the U.S. Invasion of Leyte Gulf in the Philippines during World War II and was honorably discharged at the end of the war, having achieved the rank of sergeant. George was, for many years, a member of local chapters of the American Legion, the BPOE (the Elks club), and the AHEPA (the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association). He loved food and family, especially food with family. George was a familiar fisherman of the Kankakee River where he was often known locally as "Mr. Walleye." He played a mean game of checkers into his final year.

George was preceded in death by his much-beloved wife, Shirley; brother, Spero (of Kankakee); sister, Alex (Zerites); daughter, Kathy (Forgey, of Chesterton, Ind.); and his grandson, Dan (Forgey, of Chesterton, Ind.).

He is survived by his son, Chris (and wife, Terry), of Largo, Fla.; daughter, Jenny (and husband, Craig Goselin), of Lake Oswego, Ore.; son, Dino (and wife, Cheryl), of Bonfield; and his son, Andy (and partner Eddie Anthony), of Los Angeles, Calif. George is also survived by one sister, Jennie Lenard, of Joliet; 11 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren; and by many extended family members.

Visitation for George Helopoulos will be from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 9, at the Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Bourbonnais, followed by a brief prayer service conducted by Father William Conjelko. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Monday at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Kankakee. Mr. Helopoulos will be interred immediately after at Mound Grove Gardens of Memory, Kankakee, next to his beloved wife of 47 years, Shirley. Memorials may be made to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church.

Memorials may be made to the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

Cemetery Details

Mound Grove Gardens Cemetery

1000 N. Greenwood
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 933-6726

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 9. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Bourbonnais - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.
295 Main St., NW
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Funeral Service

FEB 10. 10:00 AM (CT)

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church
296 N. Washington
Kankakee, IL 60901
Annunciation Greek Orthodox Chur

Tribute Wall

CH

“ It is going to be hard not to just automatically turn to Miller Care Center to go and see George. I will miss him. He was a good father-in-law. Any time I would do something for him, he would always tell me over and over how much he appreciated it. He always seemed to have a zest for life. He did love food and going out to eat. He liked checking out every new restaurant that opened. I liked many of his old fashioned ways. Not so much all the stuff he kept in his basement, thinking it might come in handy some day. But, when I think back when all of us gathered together cleaning out his house on N. Fifth, we all had some good laughs dressing up in his "retro" clothes. That brought the family together for some fun times. He was always concerned that he looked good. He would be glad to know that in the end, he still looked good. Dino is going to miss playing checkers with the "Checker King." I will miss you George.

Cheryl Helopoulos - February 12, 2014 at 10:45 AM

CW

“ Just wanting to express our heartfelt sympathies to the entire Helopoulos family on the loss of George. While we never had the pleasure of meeting him , we really enjoyed all the stories about him that my niece Devon shared about him. What a wonderful man who was able to live a long life, filled with the love of family. No matter the length of years our loved ones have , saying that final goodbye is always so hard. Our prayers will be with you today, tomorrow, and in the days ahead.

Love, Greg, Cheryl, and Nick Wheeler

cheryl wheeler - February 09, 2014 at 12:12 PM

JF

“ Ken, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, all of the Helopoulos family, I am so sorry for the loss, of your loved one.....George was a man of integrity, love, caring, sharing, and he will be missed by all....
Jean, (mother of Ken)

Jean Forgey - February 07, 2014 at 11:38 AM

 Bill
Korstick

“ Andy & family- sorry to hear of your loss!
Losing a parent is one of the hardest things to bear in life
From Bill Korstick (former Kankakeean) & Clemente Ladrado (Andy's neighbors in LA)

Bill Korstick - February 05, 2014 at 05:48 PM

AB

“ I only had the pleasure of meeting "Grandpa" a few times, but I always had a great time with him when I was around him. The first time I actually met him was when Lisa and I flew back to Chicago to visit her family.

George was nice enough to let me sleep on the couch in his home. We were pretty tired from traveling that day so Lisa went to bed in the spare room and I fell asleep on the couch. I remember waking up around 2am...and to my surprise George was still up watching TV while eating a box of chocolates! I was able to stay awake for another hour or so (most likely from all of the chocolates we were eating) to watch TV with him before we both decided it was pretty late.

The next day Aunt Kathy took all of us to VIP's, which was apparently one of George's favorite places to eat. He knew all of the waitresses there and they all seemed to pay him a lot of special attention! Both Lisa and I were pretty full, but George insisted that we hit the ice cream shop down the road, so we all did. After finishing his pistachio and pineapple ice cream he said he wanted another one. Both Lisa and I started laughing and I completely thought he was joking....but he wasn't laughing! He really did want to get another one! He tried to get Lisa to get him one, but she told him Aunt Kathy would be back in a few minutes to pick us up as she ran a few errands in the area.

During my trip there I had a great time visiting and getting to know him and the family. We were able to watch part of a Cubs game together and talk a little sports.

He made me feel very welcome like I was part of the family on my visit.

I appreciate the time I was able to spend with him and wish we lived closer so I could have gotten to know him better.

Andy Bleser (Husband of Lisa Goselin)

Andy Bleser - February 05, 2014 at 12:15 PM

JG

“ 0 file added to the tribute wall

Jenny Goselin - February 05, 2014 at 11:15 AM

JG

“ 1 file added to the album Helopoulos Family Pictures



Jenny Goselin - February 05, 2014 at 11:02 AM

JK

“ *I have great, enduring memories of our time spent with the Helopoulos Family. It was an exotic trip for us to travel from the south side to Kankakee, staying with George and Shirley, attending the County Fair. Somewhere there's a picture of me and my brother Jim with The Cisco Kid and Poncho, taken at the Fair. George was an incredibly kind and gentle person, with a great smile. Everytime I meet someone from Kankakee, I ask if they knew Uncle George and the shoe store. Almost invariably there would be acknowledgement of the store, often accompanied with a story. We've really lost a great man. To the family, my and Joan's deepest sympathies.*

Joe Kallas

Joe Kallas - February 05, 2014 at 10:20 AM

MA

*I thought of you with love today
but that is nothing new
I thought about you yesterday
and days before that too
I think of you in silence
and often speak your name
All I have are memories
and your picture in a frame
Your memory is my keepsake
with which I'll never part
God has you in his keeping
I have you in my heart*

*I will miss your terrific hugs,
Maria*

Maria - February 05, 2014 at 08:12 PM