



## Joseph Leroy Gagalski

July 18, 1934 - June 7, 2020

Joseph Leroy Gagalski, also known as Joe, Joe Lee, or Uncle Buddy, passed away at his home in Damascus, MD, on Sunday, June 7, 2020, at the age of 85 of natural causes.

He was born on July 18, 1934, in Rock Hall, to Joseph and Elsie Porter Gagalski, and welcomed as the first son in a family of five sisters; although later joined by two brothers and one more sister.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Charlotte Willson Gagalski; many nieces and nephews; and great- and great-great nieces and nephews, who loved him dearly.

Joe grew up in Rock Hall, attending the Rock Hall Seventh-day Adventist Church School followed by Rock Hall High School. During his childhood, he worked at his father's store, and on Saturday nights, he and Charlotte had their weekend "date" by working behind the counter at the store. He was fortunate to be able to learn a trade by interning as a bricklayer during his high school years.

Drafted into the Army and certified as a non-combatant, he was stationed at Walter Reed Medical Center near Washington, DC. Convincing his high school sweetheart to marry him before she was not quite finished with her

teaching degree at Towson State College, they were married on March 29, 1957. After Charlotte finished her degree, she and Joe's mother, Elsie, journeyed by car in the heat of the summer to Texas where Charlotte's new husband was in basic training, and she joined him there. After moving back to Maryland and being stationed at Walter Reed, Charlotte began her teaching career at Chestertown Elementary School.

After Joe's discharge from the Army they moved to Montgomery County, MD, and he began what was to be his life-long career as a bricklayer and underground masonry. He owned and operated a successful business for many years, eventually retiring in 2004.

The weekend retreat that they built at Huntingfield in Rock Hall was his special place, which he referred to as "paradise." He loved relaxing with the sights and sounds of nature and the Chesapeake Bay; boating, waterskiing, fishing, and spending time with his extended family and friends, who visited "down the shore" almost every weekend in the summer! He enjoyed cooking fried chicken or fish in the huge iron skillet over an outside fireplace (that he custom built), which was served with homemade shortbread. There were no better picnics to be found than the ones that Joe and Charlotte hosted at their home in Huntingfield.

It has been said that Joe never met a stranger. He enjoyed talking to everyone he met and made them feel comfortable and special. After he met you, you were always considered to be his friend.

Because Joe and Charlotte traveled back and forth across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge almost every weekend for so many decades, he often said that they most likely "owned one of those spans on that bridge."

Special memories from the family include Uncle Buddy masquerading as

Santa Claus at Christmastime, attending every graduation, birthday party, wedding, family reunion, and holiday celebration over the years. He and Charlotte always showed their love and support to their family, and hardly every missed an event.

Joe was an active member of the Rock Hall Seventh-day Adventist Church, holding a deacon's position and was a member of the Board. His favorite hymn was "Seeking the Lost", which he and his siblings liked to sing on Sabbath afternoons around the old piano at his parent's home on South Main Street in Rock Hall. He also liked to sing "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Just a Little Talk with Jesus" with his siblings, especially with his brother, Wayne, and his sister, Betty. Betty, passed away just three months prior to Joe's death. The brothers and sisters loved to harmonize, and as the piano player would say, "They would finally get it together on the last chord, which would encourage them to try the song one more time!"

Joe held memberships at the Sgt. Preston Ashley American Legion in Rock Hall and the Polish National Alliance. He was proud of his Polish heritage and always said that his favorite colors were red and white, the colors of the Polish flag.

Joe was predeceased by his parents, as well as his siblings Catherine Gagalski, Helen Hellman, Delores Podgurski, Ruth "Boots" Samuels, Phyllis Brown, Robert Gagalski, Betty Elburn and Wayne Gagalski.

We will await that wonderful day when the Lord will call his name from the grave and he will be able to sing those favorite hymns as he reunites with his family in heaven and the earth made new.

Services will be held on Friday, June 12, 2020, at 1:00 pm, at Fellows,

Helpfenbein and Newnam Funeral Home, Chestertown, MD, where relatives and friends may call from 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm. Interment will be in Wesley Chapel Cemetery following the service.

In lieu of flowers, contributions are welcome at the Rock Hall Seventh-day Adventist Church, P.O. Box 477, Rock Hall, MD 21661, or the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company, P.O. Box 577, Rock Hall, MD 21661.

# Cemetery Details

## Wesley Chapel Cemetery

6179 Rock Hall Road  
Rock Hall, MD

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 12. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Chestertown Location  
130 Speer Road  
Chestertown, MD 21620  
(410) 778-0055  
info@fhfuneralhome.com

## Service

JUN 12. 1:00 PM (ET)

Chestertown Location  
130 Speer Road  
Chestertown, MD 21620  
(410) 778-0055  
info@fhfuneralhome.com

# Tribute Wall



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski*



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - June 12, 2020 at 12:04 PM



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski*



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - June 10, 2020 at 10:34 AM



“ *Joseph Leroy Gagalski*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Joseph Leroy Gagalski*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ Joseph Leroy Gagalski

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ Mrs. Charlotte,  
I am so sorry for your loss.i enjoyed looking at the photos on here.it was so obvious how much you and Mr. Joe loved all the children !.and especially the Christmas holiday!,it was also nice to see the pictures of mr Bobby and Mr Wayne!Mr Joes brothers.they all looked alike. And everyone of them were all so kind.Just really good people ! Rock Hall sure has lost some of our great ones.thank you for sharing your photos with us. I will surely keep you and your family in my prayers for comfort and strength. With love, Betty Ann Glenn

Betty ann glenn - June 12, 2020 at 04:36 AM



“ Charlotte,I'm so sorry to hear about Joe..and remembering times we got together at Wayne and Rosies for a cook out.. Those two made the party..He sure will be missed by many, maybe one day I get to Rock Hall I,ll check if you are in town we,ll get to chat.. God Bless. Betty Walbert Ainsworth.



Betty Walbert Ainsworth - June 11, 2020 at 11:33 PM

RK

“ *Miss Charlotte,  
My deepest sympathy to you at this time. I am  
sure your loss cannot be expressed in a few  
words. Know that many family members and  
friends are thinking of you and keeping you in  
their prayers as I am and my mother.*



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**Ruth Kerr** - June 11, 2020 at 04:34 PM

PG

“ *Charlotte and The Gagalski Family,  
We will always cherish the fond memories we have shared with  
all of you through the years We are surely going to miss Joe and  
his humor. Our annual Class picnic will never be the same. May  
God  
comfort you during this sad time. RIP Joe.  
Pee Wee and Kay Glenn*

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**Pee Wee and Kay Glenn** - June 11, 2020 at 03:08 PM

LD

“ *Lydia Dagenais lit a candle in memory of  
Joseph Leroy Gagalski*



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**Lydia Dagenais** - June 11, 2020 at 12:48 PM

VA

“ 13 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Vickie Anderson - June 11, 2020 at 12:41 PM

MJ

“ Mark & Sandy Joiner lit a candle in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski



Mark & Sandy Joiner - June 11, 2020 at 10:26 AM



“ 3 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - June 11, 2020 at 10:02 AM

CA

“ *Cheryl Anderson lit a candle in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski*



Cheryl Anderson - June 11, 2020 at 09:37 AM



“ *Rest In Peace Buddy. Now all of you are together, what a reunion you are having. We all will miss you , but we have had many good memories . Someday you Wayne and the rest of the family will be waiting for us, ❤️*

Rosie Gagalski - June 10, 2020 at 10:04 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Joseph Leroy Gagalski.*



June 10, 2020 at 09:00 PM

JE

“ *Jim And Mary Ann Edwards sent a virtual gift in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski*



Jim and Mary Ann Edwards - June 10, 2020 at 06:36 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Joseph Leroy Gagalski.*



June 10, 2020 at 12:33 PM



“ *245 files added to the album LifeTributes*



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - June 10, 2020 at 10:28 AM



“ *Donna Hubbard Edwards lit a candle in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski*



Donna Hubbard Edwards - June 09, 2020 at 11:03 PM

VL

“ *Many fond memories of times at “Uncle Joe’s and Aunt Charlotte’s”. Sure Mom & Dad welcomed their old friend with open arms to heaven. Thoughts and love are with all of you! Sam & Vicki Lewis & family*



Vicki Lewis - June 09, 2020 at 09:16 PM

LW

“ *Lisa Williams lit a candle in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski*



Lisa Williams - June 09, 2020 at 08:51 PM

MU

“ *I was deeply saddened to hear about Uncle Buddy’s passing and I am so sorry for the loss of such a special man. I will always treasure my many fond memories of times spent with the Gagalski family. The best fried chicken ever, cooked with love and served with laughter. Sending hugs and prayers for all.*



Marie Usilton - June 09, 2020 at 08:42 PM

LB

“ I did not know Joe, but knew Betty from Dover First SDA church. Although I did not know him, this beautiful obituary makes me feel like I did! What a wonderful man he was! How blessed you are as a family to have all of these memories and I know that all of you look forward to being together again some day. May God comfort you at this time of the loss of Joe and Betty.



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**Linda Bolduc** - June 09, 2020 at 08:19 PM

PT

“ Paul And Dorothy Tolson lit a candle in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski



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**Paul and Dorothy Tolson** - June 09, 2020 at 04:37 PM

BM

“ We will miss Mr joe all the good Times at R.H.S.D.A Church 🏛️



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**Brandon Morris** - June 09, 2020 at 04:14 PM

JH

“ *Joan Hatcherson lit a candle in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski*



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**Joan Hatcherson** - June 09, 2020 at 02:53 PM

GC

“ *Gail Kendall Claggett lit a candle in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski*



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**Gail Kendall Claggett** - June 09, 2020 at 02:46 PM

KB

“ *Kaye Barnes lit a candle in memory of Joseph Leroy Gagalski*



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**Kaye Barnes** - June 09, 2020 at 02:27 PM