Joseph Ignac Vucko

It is said that a life well lived is reflected by who is with you when you pass and lives on in the impact you had on others. Joe was the ultimate cheerleader, consummate host and devoted to his family & friends. In his final hours, the 6th floor elevator doors of Victoria General Hospital opened to 20 of Joe's family and closest friends sharing stories, laughter, and tears. When Joe passed on May 6th, 2023, age 67, he was surrounded by the family he loved and who loved him so dearly.

Born June 11, 1955 in Port Arthur, Ontario. Joe was the second child of Mary (Prsa) and Ignatius Vucko. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Barbara. His children, Kyle (Amelia), and Tanya (Reid). His grandchildren Maya and Jackson. His siblings Mary (Joe), Andy (Lorena), Helen (Greg) and Frank (Monica).

Throughout his life, Joe was always an active man. A starting guard for Sir John A MacDonald collegiate "Black Scots" basketball team, taking them to provincials his senior year. He also loved canoeing and outdoor activities. Once in BC, he made a habit of hiking, playing league basketball, and later golf.

Early jobs in kitchens developed his love for food, cooking and sharing that love with others. This led to a degree in hotel & restaurant administration. After college he was hired by Wendy's Restaurants to work in Canada's first store. He quickly rose up the ranks, and started opening Wendy's across Canada.

It was in Winnipeg, while in town for a Wendy's store opening that he met the love of his life (at first sight), Barbara. They married a few short months later.

Over the next 8 years, Barb and Joe would travel coast to coast opening restaurants. That adventure took them to Vancouver Island where Joe & Barb similarly found love at

first sight. The snow-capped mountains on a sunny spring day as they drove into town immediately cemented their decision to move to Victoria.

Joe would go on to become the first Wendy's franchisee in Canada, eventually opening 8 stores. Joe was a hands-on leader, who could be seen working the second grill on a busy lunch rush. A cheerleader for his team, he got tremendous satisfaction seeing someone in his store get promoted and thrive after working with him.

Despite being recognized multiple times as one of Wendy's top franchisees and leaders, when asked 'what do you do?', Joe would simply reply "I'm a burger flipper".

He later went on to fulfill a childhood dream of owning a pizza restaurant (upwards of 14) when he became a Little Caesars Pizza franchisee.

As much as he enjoyed his work, his family was always his priority. His son Kyle came in 1985, followed by Tanya in 1989. Weekday evenings were filled with pick up basketball or beach-combing for crabs. Weekends always involved a family hike or bike ride. Family vacations to Disney World, Hawaii, and Europe created fond memories.

Once his daughter became his business partner, life took on new adventures. More travel. More time with friends. Pick up basketball was eclipsed by golf. In both sports, Joe made a great many friends.

Many of these friends (aka the "morning coffee group") met weekday mornings. Their "no holds barred" discussions of local events were followed by a boisterous game of "birds in the bush" to determine who had to pay for everyone's coffee that day. As Joe would tell it those 30 minutes always put a smile on his face that would last the entire day; unless he lost!

In 2015 Joe's family grew when Kyle married Amelia and again

in 2019 when Tanya married Reid. Joe loved his new daughter and son, but nothing could compare to the love he had for his grandchildren. In 2019 Joe became a grandfather or “Dedek” to Maya and in 2021 to Jackson. He was devoted to them. And that devotion was mutual – Dedek was known for his pancake breakfasts, foam milk and fast track to chocolate and ice cream.

Joe had a welcoming personality, and one of his favourite things was to host his many friends and family at his home. Whether it was Barb and Joe’s annual cocktail party or a Sunday dinner, one thing was certain, the food would be fantastic and your wine glass would never be empty.

Joe had his medical challenges. Kidney failure led to a successful kidney transplant from his brother Andy in 2007 for which he was eternally grateful and a prostate cancer diagnosis in 2013. But Joe never wanted to be defined by his illness. He lived fully, with optimism, joy and positivity.

Joe was a great man. A good son, supportive brother, loving husband, devoted father, adoring grandfather and a true friend to many.

Those that knew and loved him were lucky. Joe, we love you, you will be missed.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, June 4, 2023, 2:00 pm -5:00 pm in the Sequoia Centre at McCall Gardens, 4665 Falaise Drive, Victoria, BC.

In lieu of flowers, we kindly request a donation be made to the Victoria Hospital Foundation supporting kidney care in memory of Joe. Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens
www.mccallgardens.com