



Leonirez Hernandez

March 12, 1940 - November 17, 2016

Leo Hernandez age 76, left this world peacefully on November 17, 2016. He resided in Aurora, Illinois since 1955. He was diagnosed with glioblastoma on 3-12-16 (his birthday). At the time, his brain tumor was described as extensive and aggressive but his resolve, inner strength, sense of humor, positive attitude, his family and the prayers of his many, many friends helped him battle for over eight months. His orneriness may have had a little to do with it as well.

Leo was born in a migrant camp in Rocky Ford, Colorado to Roberto and Ruth Hernandez. Migrant workers move with the crops so he always stated that he had the equivalent of a sixth grade education. Armed with that, common sense and fifteen short years of life experience, he and some friends picked up and left the migrant lifestyle to drive to Aurora, Illinois. In Aurora he met the love of his life, Betty. In 1958, on November 8th, he and Betty were married. Nine months later, their son Richard (Rick) was born. During the Kennedy administration Leo enrolled in a welding class that was being offered through the federal government. He took those skills to Caterpillar (where he was known in the end as "Leo the Painter") and started his 30 year career. In 1964, he and Betty had their second child, Jodi. Jodi was the apple of his eye and he cherished all of her Daddy/Daughter dances from grade school through high school.

Leo was determined to give his family a life better than the one that he had. He often held a second job so that he could put both of his children through St. Joseph Catholic School. He put his daughter through Aurora Central and one of the highlights of his life was seeing Jodi graduate from Western Illinois University. He did all of this while Betty stayed home and raised the children.

In the 1980's, on a whim, he decided to get his GED. His GREATEST joy from that time was the birth of his grandson Keith Hernandez. They were inseparable.

In 1993, with 30 years of service, Leo retired from Caterpillar. After "retirement" he and Betty worked side by side painting home interiors. He spent his spare time in his workshop woodworking. He loved to work with oak and was very creative. He never seemed to be alone in his shop as his many friends and children from the neighborhood always seemed to congregate there. He always made sure that he had the summers free so that he could spend them with Keith and his buddies at the family pool. Even after Keith went away to college he ALWAYS had children at the pool.

Leo was a loyal Union representative of UAW Local 145 for a great many years. He was a member of the Phoenix Club and the St. George Social Club where he had many caring friends. He was a HILLMEN fanatic and followed any sport that Keith participated in, or that Rick coached. His love for children was so great that he was instrumental in the creation of the Breakfast of Champions Academic program at St. Joseph School and he couldn't wait for the quarterly grades to come out. Leo was a volunteer usher at St. Joes, and a member of the St. Joes Building & Grounds committee. He also donated hundreds of his woodcrafts to the parish and to the students. In fact, the processional crucifix at St. Joseph Church is one of his handiworks.

Leo was preceded in death by his parents, his father-in-law and friend

Senobio Nila, his brothers Leodoro, David, Phillip, Louis and his great grand-dog Murdoc (oh, how he loved that dog!).

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Betty (Nila) Hernandez, his son Richard (Sharon) and daughter Jodi, his grandson Keith (Amanda) Hernandez, sisters Eva and Lucy and his brothers Pedro, Lawrence, Robert, Fred and numerous brother and sister-in-law's, nieces and nephews.

The Hernandez family would like to extend our thanks to the Rush Copley ICU staff, Dr. Ruban and staff, the Rush Copley Cancer Care staff, the ALC Physical Therapists, the Rush Copley Rehabilitation nurses and staff and the Season's Hospice & Palliative Care nurses & staff. Most importantly, thank you to Leo's personal cancer medical team, Dr. Zhang, Dr. Meschi and Dr. Milani for their patience and outstanding care. We always knew that he was in the BEST of hands.

Memorial Visitation will be held Saturday, November 26, 2016 from 10:00 AM until 12:00 PM at the DALEIDEN MORTUARY, 220 North Lake Street, Aurora, Illinois 60506. (630) 631-5500. Interment will be private.

Please visit our interactive website at www.daleidenmortuary.com where you may sign the guest book or leave condolences for Leo's family.

Cemetery Details

Private

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

NOV **26**. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Daleiden Mortuary
220 N. Lake Street
Aurora, IL 60506
(630) 631-5500
daleidenmortuary@gmail.com
<https://www.daleidenmortuary.com>

Tribute Wall

RB

“ So sorry to hear about Leo. We knew him from our time at Cat. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you.

Rex and Sharon Brown - December 04, 2016 at 02:40 PM

DJ

“ My heartfelt condolences to all of Leo's family. I will always fondly remember as I was motoring around Cat of seeing Leo and Les always with a smile on their face. If anything stayed in one spot too long they made sure it had paint on it and I was always concerned they might paint me if I didn't keep moving. I will include Leo in my prayers as he was not only a painter but also a great friend.

Don Jungels - November 30, 2016 at 12:06 AM

DS

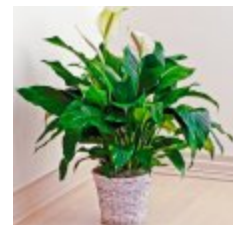
“ Diane Sanchez purchased the Healing Tears - Lavender and White for the family of Leonirez Hernandez.



Diane Sanchez - November 21, 2016 at 05:13 PM

TK

“ The Rico Family; Ed, Carol and Kathy purchased the Floor Plant for Sympathy for the family of Leonirez Hernandez.



The Rico Family; Ed, Carol and Kathy - November 21, 2016 at 10:43 AM

BD

“ Rick , Sharon and the Hernandez family, please accept our condolences on the passing of Leo. We will be out of town for the visitation and funeral, however our thoughts and prayers will be with you. Kathy and Brian Dolan

Brian Dolan - November 19, 2016 at 06:41 AM

RL

“ My heartfelt condolences to Rick, Sharon and Keith. I've read Leonirez's story which explains in part why you are all such great people. Sounds like he was a really good man and his impact on the community will be missed. Sincerely, Rick Lukens.

Rick Lukens - November 18, 2016 at 02:04 PM

NC

“ Mr. Leo was one of the first men that I met during my first summer at St. Joseph School, 2011. He was a strong looking man. He had a firm handshake, a distinguished face and a humbleness about him. All of these were obvious indicators of his authority, his hardworking attitude and his wisdom he gathered over a lifetime. I felt as though I was looking at my own father~~ Mr. Leo had me standing up straight as if I heard him say "Put your shoulders back, stand up straight!" The memory makes me smile. But I also remember thinking to myself, "This man has changed lives of others." There were softer parts to Mr. Leo... charisma and a loving nature. And now his son, Rick, shares that hardworking attitude as he tirelessly spends time helping young men and women be the best they can be. Who came first? Mr. Leo did and now his son carries it forward with true loyalty and honor. The passing of Mr. Leo is sad event. Our prayers are with the family and friends. God bless everyone.

*St. Joseph Catholic School
Hillmen
Nancy Coughlin, Principal*

nancy coughlin - November 18, 2016 at 12:10 PM

EN

“ Emily Nila lit a candle in memory of Leonirez Hernandez



Emily Nila - November 17, 2016 at 08:03 PM



“ *Blue & White Sympathy Standing Spray was purchased for the family of Leonirez Hernandez.*



November 17, 2016 at 05:48 PM