



## Mr. John F. Catalano

September 15, 1936 - February 2, 2023

John F. Catalano, 86, of Cortland, N.Y., passed away at home on Feb 2, 2023, after a decade-long battle with Parkinson's disease. Born Sept. 15, 1936, in Brooklyn, John was a Cortland resident since 1967.

After graduating from Fort Hamilton High School at age 16, John received his bachelor's degree in psychology from New York University in 1957 and his masters in experimental psychology from Brooklyn College in 1960 and went on to complete his Ph.D. in experimental psychology from Yeshiva University in 1967. While in grad school, he worked as a human-factors psychologist at Sperry Gyroscope Co. and the U.S. Naval Training Device Center on Long Island.

John taught general science, biology, and math in the New York City School System and was then a professor of psychology at SUNY Cortland from 1967 through 1999. He also chaired the Department of Psychology at SUNY Cortland from 1984 to 1993. He often expressed his love for teaching and his students, many of who went on to graduate school and successful careers in the field.

Active well into his 70s, John was a longtime tennis player and fitness enthusiast who took up golf and pickleball after his retirement. He also enjoyed boating, especially at Dorchester Park in Whitney Point, where he often took his canoe, Sunfish sailboat, or kayak to spend hours on the water. (He later donated his Sunfish and a canoe to SUNY Cortland's Outdoor Education Center at Raquette Lake in the Adirondacks.)

He also loved music and spent many hours listening to his collection of songs on his iPad as well as attending concerts with his family around Central New York. He also traveled widely, taking his family on trips all over New York State, to Florida and California, on summer camping trips to Cape Cod, and to Canada, Bermuda, and the Bahamas. Later in life, he took cruises to Alaska and the Caribbean and also traveled abroad to Italy, Ireland, England, and several other countries.

John is survived by his wife of 21 years, Ruth, and his two sons, James (Sara) Catalano and Robert (Lisa) Catalano; a stepdaughter, Holly (John) Carroll; a sister-in-law, Rose Guastella; grandchildren Daulton Sheldon, Monique Kenny, and Jacob Carroll; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Elenna, to whom he was married for nearly 38 years and who passed in 1997, and stepson Paul Sheldon, who passed in 2021.

His family sends love and a heartfelt thank you to caregiver Helen Clark and her team, who allowed John to remain safe and comfortable at home for the past 3.5 years, and to Hospicare of Cortland County, who provided aid and support in recent weeks.

A Celebration of Life will take place at 3-6 p.m. Saturday, February 11, at Rose Hall in downtown Cortland.

Contributions in John's memory in lieu of flowers may be made to The American Parkinson Disease Assoc., P.O. Box 61420, Staten Island, N.Y. 10306; or the SPCA of Tompkins County, 1640 Hanshaw Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

Arrangements are under the direction of Riccardi Funeral Home, Cortland, N.Y. Condolences may also be sent by visiting [www.riccardifuneralhome.com](http://www.riccardifuneralhome.com).

# Tribute Wall

BR

“ I’m sorry for your loss. John was my adviser at Cortland when I attended. I always found him to be kind, knowledgeable and a good friend. He had a very positive impact on my life and I regret not contacting him sooner. I would have liked to share my later life experiences with him and further our friendship. He will be missed.

**Brian Reeves** - February 28, 2023 at 07:23 PM

BD

“ So sorry to hear of John’s passing. My husband was just saying what a great skater John was when they were kids. John was lucky to have Ruth in his life for so many years. We enjoyed seeing you both so many years ago here in Florida. Condolences to the family.

**Bernadette Dubuss** - February 18, 2023 at 06:03 PM

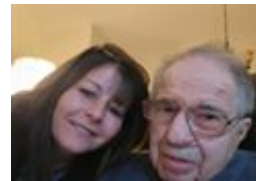
DD

“ I was pleased and fortunate to know John while playing pickle-ball. I really enjoyed his sense of humor and pleasant demeanor. He was obviously well educated and articulate, but was extremely humble at all times. He was just an absolute joy to be around.  
*Don Dobesh*

**Don Dobesh** - February 08, 2023 at 07:25 PM



“ 68 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



**Riccardi Funeral Home** - February 08, 2023 at 04:24 PM