# Frank John Caputo

*August 4, 1915 ~ August 9, 2015*

Our beloved father, grandfather and dear friend, Frank John Caputo, known to many as "The Sheik," passed away shortly after his 100th birthday, on Sunday, August 9, 2015 in Holladay, UT. The son of Rosario and Christina Mary Brunino Caputo, Frank was born on August 4, 1915 in Sunnyside, UT. He was the third of 11 children in the family.

In 1923, the Caputos moved to Salt Lake City, UT where they lived in the upstairs quarters of the family owned grocery store. Caputo's Grocery was the heart and soul of the family's existence for the next 57 years, a place remembered fondly for both the wine the father made and the sweaters the mother knitted for her bambini. If there was a clotheshorse in the family, it was Frank, who wore his brand new knickers to Jackson Junior High and instantly became known as "The Sheik," a nickname that stayed with him the rest of his life. But he was far more than just another teenaged dandy. He starred in football, basketball and track at West High, and if you asked him what his fondest memory of those days was, it was not receiving a diploma. It was smearing his football uniform with garlic, a tactic that sent more than one opponent reeling.

The only sport missing from Frank's athletic resume in high school was baseball, which happened to be his best sport. It didn't become part of interscholastic sports in Salt Lake until the 1940's, and by then Frank had already made a name for himself as a first baseman in the Catholic Youth Organization's baseball program, the legendary Utah Industrial League and the Salt Lake Amateur League. In later years he managed a powerhouse team for the Utah Naval Supply Depot in Davis County and coached the American Legion teams from East and Granite high schools, happily chewing tobacco and encouraging his players to "squat low, take squirrel's aim and swing parallel." As much a fan as he was a participant, Frank and his son Kenny traveled to New York for the 1956 World Series and saw all seven games between their beloved Yankees and the Brooklyn Dodgers. When the Yanks' Don Larsen pitched his perfect game, they were standing there watching, right behind the home-plate box seats.

Frank told the story of that great adventure many a night as the back porch of his home on the corner of Eighth East and Kensington Avenue was transformed into what was affectionately known as "The Dugout." There was always cold beer on hand to wash down the pepperoni, cheese and olives that he laid out for a seemingly endless parade of characters from his life in baseball. Though that spread wasn't available during the day, old friends made it a point to stop by anyway if they saw Frank out working on his perfectly maintained yard. One day it would be Blaine Sylvester, an elegant left-handed pitcher, or Eb Berthold, a minor league first baseman turned successful Realtor. The next day Ralph Bowman, an outfielder who played in the minors before turning to coaching, might stop by. Or maybe it would be Pete Radulovich, a hard-nosed catcher who had managed Frank in the Industrial League and always called him "Frankie."

It was a good life, the kind that America was built on as it struggled through the Depression and World War II and into the prosperity that we have known for most of the last 70 years. For Frank, it all began with a job rolling wheels for freight trains at Griffin Wheel. He then went to work for Union Pacific Railroad as a machinist specializing in steam engines. Early in the 1930's he met his future wife, Nellie Mariam VanDerward, at the Coconut Grove Dance Hall and they were later married in Farmington UT and had two children, a son Kenneth Frank and daughter Linda Ann. Along with working at the railroad Frank also worked at his brother-in-law and sister-in-law's greenhouse on weekends and his brother Lee's private club at night. Frank continued working with the railroad for 37 years, until his retirement at the age of 62.

It seemed as though he walked straight from Union Pacific to the Rose Park Golf Course, where he quickly became a regular, playing five days a week and merrily bickering with his kid brother John. Before each round of golf, however, he took the time for another daily ritual, jogging five miles around Liberty Park. Whenever he finally sat down, he especially enjoyed playing Bridge and spending time with his dear friend Bonnie Bowers and her family. Frank's golden years of 38 years truly were golden and he will always be remembered for his big heart, helping others and treating everyone as his own family.

He is survived by his son Kenneth (Helen) Caputo, daughter Linda (Kent) Goldsworthy, four grandsons, Jon Caputo, Joey Caputo, Brett Goldsworthy, Brian Goldsworthy; two great grandchildren, Grace Goldsworthy, Sean Goldsworthy; sisters, Margaret Seeronen, Eileen Tubbs; two cousins, Clarence "Cub" Caputo, Arlene Collins and many nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his wife, parents, five brothers and three sisters.

The family would like to thank the entire community of Sunrise at Holladay for their unconditional love and affection they showed Frank the past three years. He always enjoyed his 2 a.m. sirloin burger, Budlight and the conversations that were had. A special thanks also to Dr. Gary Holland and his wonderful staff.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the local Utah Chapter Alzheimer's Association.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, August 15, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at the Larkin Mortuary, 260 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84111. A viewing will be held from 12:00 , 12:45 p.m. prior to services at the mortuary. Interment will take place at the Salt Lake City Cemetery, 4th Avenue "N" Street, Salt Lake City, UT. Online condolences are welcomed at www.Larkincares.com