



## Gerald A. "Jerry" Ritthaler

December 5, 1941 - February 22, 2013

Top of the Pops – How Cool was That?

Gerald A. "Jerry" Ritthaler, age 71 of Alpharetta, passed away Feb 22, 2013. Jerry, aka "Pops," to his three sons, family, and countless friends, lived life with boundless enthusiasm. He was known to start conversations with a family member, close friend, or perfect stranger (soon to be a friend) by telling them about the best food he's ever had in this life, the greatest game or play he's ever seen, the nicest person he's ever met, or something very simple to the rest of us that simply amazed him. Pops would end the story with the declaration, "How cool is that?" It sounded like a question, but it was more of a statement about his zest for life and optimism. His enthusiasm was contagious and brought a smile or a laugh to everyone who came into his life, each and every day.

Born on December 5, 1941 to Jaconda and Philip Ritthaler in Sacramento, CA, Jerry was destined to make friends and make a strong 1st impression from the day he was born. He grew up in the Sacramento area and attended college at Santa Clara University where he earned a Bachelor's and Master's Degree. After college, he had a successful business career in sales at General Foods, Sunshine Biscuits, and Kroger.

Jerry's Bay area roots were an early indicator of one of his great loves in life – sports. From the time he could yell and listen to a game on the radio, he developed a great passion for sports, and this passion never wavered for a second. He cheered early and often for the Raiders and Athletics because of

his strong California ties, and he never stopped cheering for his beloved Oakland teams, but he added many teams in Georgia to his shirt and hat collection when he moved to Georgia in 1979. Once his three boys – Mike, Mark, and Matt – attended and graduated from the University of Georgia, he was destined to be a life-long Dawgs fan. Pops also had enough spirit in his heart to add the Falcons to his list of football teams he pulled for. Sundays in the fall were never dull with Jerry around, and he always had the game on and a rooting interest in the outcome no matter who was playing.

One of Jerry's other great sports loves was baseball. He started out an Oakland A's fan while in the Bay Area, but after moving to Georgia, he quickly adopted the Atlanta Braves as his favorite team. Pops was always ready to head to the ballpark and watch his beloved Braves with anyone who would go with him. No matter how many times they broke his heart in October, he was ready again the following spring, enthusiastic and full of optimism. When he was not in Atlanta, he was always looking for a good deal on some tickets so he could catch the local team and enjoy a few cold ones at the ball park. Pops also brought this love for baseball to his family. He coached his sons in little league baseball in Scotts Valley, CA, teaching them the fundamentals and never missing a game, but more than anything he taught them a love for baseball, sports, and competition. Pops kept the family baseball tradition and love of sports alive with his grandchildren, attending Matthew's baseball and hockey games, Katie's softball and gymnastics, Daniel's baseball and basketball, and Evan's baseball games. He was a fan of his sports teams and an even bigger fan of his boys and grandchildren.

Later in his life, Jerry had the good fortune to meet Marilou, who became his wife in 2011. They enjoyed a loving and devoted marriage for 2 ½ all too short years, but they filled that time up with passion, laughter, and a great appreciation for the opportunity to find true love late in life. Jerry and Marilou shared their devotion to their Catholic Faith and attended church and bible study regularly together. The marriage of Jerry and Marilou also allowed two families to meet each other and become one as Mike and Daniel, Mark and

Mary Beth along with Katie and Matthew, and Matt and Kim were able to meet Michelle and Scott Whitehead and their children Erin and Evan to create a new and loving family. Jerry's gift of bringing people together will never be forgotten.

Pops was a father figure to many of his sons' close friends in the Dunwoody, GA area. Now and forever, all of those who were fortunate enough to meet Pops will remember him for his stories. He never bragged about himself, but he never stopped telling proud stories about his sister Phyllis and her husband Scott, the good people he met through his charitable work, the love he had for the choir at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Historic Sweet Auburn, and whomever he was going to meet tomorrow. Jerry had an opinion on everything and it was almost always a positive, kind, and hopeful one. Pops will be greatly missed but never forgotten. If the question is, "How cool was that man?" The answer is "The Coolest of them All." We will hear his joyful voice in our heads for the rest of our lives.

When Pops passes thru the gates of heaven, a crowd will welcome him. Some will have known him well, others simply heard he was coming, and then he will get back to work checking on his earth bound family and friends.

Jerry is survived by his wife, Marilou Ritthaler, of Alpharetta; sons, Mike Ritthaler, of San Rafael, CA, Mark (wife, Mary Beth) Ritthaler, of Atlanta, Matt (wife, Kim) Ritthaler, of San Francisco, CA, step-daughter, Michelle (husband, Scott) Whitehead, of Cumming; grandchildren, Katie Ritthaler, Matthew Ritthaler, Daniel Ritthaler, Erin Whitehead, and Evan Whitehead; sister, Phyllis (husband, Scott) Keilholtz, Sacramento, CA and Nephew Erik Keilholtz (wife, Melanie and daughter, Amalia) of Vallejo, CA.

The family will receive friends Tuesday evening 6:00 - 8:00 PM at the funeral home. A funeral mass will be held Wednesday, February 27, at 11:00 AM in Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church with a burial following at Macedonia

Memorial Park in Canton, GA at 3:30 PM.

#### CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Family and Friends are welcome to Celebrate the Life of Jerry Ritthaler at the house of Mark and Mary Beth Ritthaler on Wednesday, Feb. 27th starting at 7 pm.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB **26**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Northside Chapel Funeral Directors and Crematory  
12050 Crabapple Road  
Roswell, GA

## Service

FEB **27**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church  
25 Boulevard NE  
Atlanta, GA

# Tribute Wall



“ Gerald A. "Jerry" Ritthaler

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October 08, 2022 at 11:37 AM



“ Jerry and I go back to Sunshine days in SF - I was fortunate enough to have worked with Jerry for just 2 years in SF but had the pleasure of continuing our friendship ever since. Our last visit was in October and I was able to meet Marilou over a great southern bbq...he did enjoy food.  
He was kind enough to give me one of his stained glass pieces..an Indian design that will always hang over our front door.##imported-begin##Robin Allin, Jr.##imported-end##

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March 01, 2013 at 05:42 PM



“ It was never more apparent this week to see Mike, Mark, and Matt and how much their father influenced them and is present physically, characteristically, and emotionally in each one of them.

We are very blessed to have Jerry's family in our lives and forever grateful to Jerry.

Marilou and family- we are so very sad and so sorry for your loss.

Phyllis and Scott- we are going to miss your brother so much and are so thankful you are in our lives.

Mike and Daniel, Mark, Mary Beth, Katie, and Matthew, Matt and Kim- We love you to moon and back and we have memories and laughter and tears that last beyond a lifetime. Debbie is so thankful to have joined you this week to honor the best brother-in-law anyone could ask for.

Jerry- Your "Little Debbie" wishes she could get you a beer. Love you.##imported-begin##Steve, Debbie and Julie Soto##imported-end##

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March 01, 2013 at 12:07 PM



“ Go and be with GOD.. We will miss you...##imported-begin##Gary & Linda Strouth##imported-end##

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February 26, 2013 at 08:45 PM



“ Sorry about your lost. He will be truely miss. Call me if you nedd anything.##imported-begin##Victery & Renea Tutson##imported-end##

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February 26, 2013 at 08:57 AM



“ We are so very sad. We know Jerry is being greeted and received in heaven just as he welcomed others into a room, with a hug, kiss and warm words of delight at your presence. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all as you celebrate Jerry's life and positive influence on others.##imported-begin##Dan and Chris Cullen##imported-end##

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February 26, 2013 at 08:37 AM



“ I'm saddened at this passing of a good fellow well met. One took note of Jerry when he entered the room, he made a difference and one was drawn to him. You simply liked him; you liked his enthusiasm and his sincerity and you felt welcome and it didn't matter how long it had been since last in his company. It was always nice to see him. Too soon gone but surely long and warmly remembered and missed by all who knew and loved him.##imported-begin##Barry Moyer##imported-end##

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February 26, 2013 at 06:32 AM



“ Pops,  
keep laughing up in Heaven and make sure St. Peter goes on a beer run. You were a great figure and an even better friend. Love ya,  
Scott##imported-begin##Scott Whitehead##imported-end##

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February 26, 2013 at 12:33 AM



“ Mark, So sorry to hear about your dad. I know you did all you could for him at his time of need and you will never regret the times you spent with him. My condolences to you and your family. With sympathy, Diane###imported-begin###Diane Maxfield###imported-end##

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February 25, 2013 at 07:00 PM



“ It's very sad to hear of Jerry's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jerry and his family. I was with Jerry at Sunshine Biscuits and can say he was the best boss I ever worked for. He was open, honest, motivating, driven, and at the same time, a close friend. Although I haven't seen Jerry in some time, his fond memories will last forever.###imported-begin###Art & Karen Laib###imported-end##

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February 25, 2013 at 02:49 PM



“ Our thoughts and prayers go out to the entire Ritthaler Family.###imported-begin###The Loverde Family###imported-end##

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February 25, 2013 at 01:07 PM



“ I will miss Jerry's stirring opinions and spirited conversations with Hal during his volunteer shift at NFCC. He was never one to shy away from current issues. I am glad I had the opportunity to know him. Many blessings to his family and friends.###imported-begin###Eden Purdy###imported-end##

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February 25, 2013 at 10:52 AM



“ During our time as volunteers at NFCC,  
Jerry has become a dear friend and a member of my "extended  
family"  
We all love him as we love each other.  
Thursday afternoons will be a chalange for us for a while.  
Our hearts and and our "hugs" go with him as he journeys back to  
the LORD"###imported-begin###Mel Isabella###imported-end##

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February 24, 2013 at 08:57 PM



“ We are so glad to have known Jerry. We had a great time at Jerry  
and Marilou's wedding and we are fortunate to have spent the  
weekend on Tybee Island with Jerry, Marilou and the Whitehead  
family. Jerry has a great family and we offer our condolences to all.  
We will keep all in our prayers.###imported-begin###Frank and Anne  
Kikta###imported-end##

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February 24, 2013 at 05:34 PM



“ In Loving Memory of Jerry. A great friend who welcomed me and my  
family into his. We'll miss his unwavering personality, positive  
attitude, and always cheerful conversation. His spirit lives on with  
his sons and family. See you at the tables "Old Man"

Love

John, Ashley and Jonathan Burke###imported-begin###John Burke &  
Family###imported-end##

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February 23, 2013 at 07:20 PM



“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with Mark and his family.##imported-begin##Chris Thompson & Family##imported-end##*

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February 22, 2013 at 06:42 PM