



JEFFERSON "JEFF" NEFF

September 10, 1944 - January 30, 2025

On January 30, 2025, Jefferson Neff (Jeff) passed away suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 80, after living a full and healthy life. He was born on September 10, 1944, in Jonesville, VA, while his father was serving in the US Army during WWII as a master mechanic working on airplane engines. When Jeff was ten years old, he and his family moved to Middletown, where he attended Wilson Elementary, Roosevelt Jr High, and Middletown High School. During his school years, Jeff was an excellent student and athlete, but also enjoyed participating in school plays and musicals. He graduated from high school in 1962 and then attended DePauw University. In 1966, he graduated from Miami University with a bachelor's degree in physics. He and his high school sweetheart, Katherine Gould (Kathy), were married in 1967. Shortly thereafter, he was recruited into the nuclear fusion program in the U.S. Dept. of Energy (DOE), and was sent to the University of Florida to pursue a master's program for DOE. Jeff, Kathy and their children moved to different states through the years as he accepted different positions with DOE all over the country, including the following states: Maryland, DC, Florida, Virginia, Idaho, Texas, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Ohio. In 1995, Jeff retired from DOE after which he worked for several private contractors to the DOE including: Weston, Inc., Stoller, and EG&G, among others. His wife was finally able to persuade him to retire from full-time employment at the age of 70. After that, and until the time of his death, he consulted part-time from his home in Middletown, OH while he continued his interests in cars, investment

strategies, IT technologies, music, physics and sports. He also organized and enjoyed a yearly family vacation to Hilton Head Island with Kathy and his children and grandchildren. During the last ten years of his life, Jeff continued to volunteer for the AARP tax return assistance program in Middletown, which fulfilled both his desire to help people as well as his fascination with problem solving and mathematics. Although he spent a large amount of time working in his field of interest, he was also extremely involved with his family. Jeff and Kathy were married for 57 years and they got to enjoy a lot of time together in the years after Jeff retired. Jeff was very close with his adult children as well as his grandchildren, mother, siblings, nieces, nephews, cousins and other extended family. He attended many graduations, funerals, birthdays, weddings, athletic events, and musical recitals while keeping in touch with everyone, giving advice when asked, lending a hand when needed and visiting as often as he could. In addition to his family, Jeff was relied upon and loved by numerous friends who knew him as a level-headed, smart, funny, open minded and caring person. His death is a great loss for many, including his church family at Ascension Episcopal Church in Middletown, Ohio, where he and his wife have been members since 1998. Jeff was preceded in death by his parents, Jefferson O. Neff, Sr and Virginia James Neff, his brother William C. Neff and his in-laws Robert H. Gould and Martha Katherine Plinke Gould. He is survived by his wife, Katherine Gould Neff; his daughter Tobi Virginia Neff Athanas (Constantine) and Tobi's children Sophia Katherine Athanas, Chloe Elizabeth Athanas, and Theodore Constantine Athanas; and his son Robert Jefferson Neff, Sr, and Rob's children Hannah Joy Neff and Robert Jefferson Neff, Jr. Jeff is also survived by his sister, Sandra Neff Dietz (Doug) and her daughters Wendra Katherine Williams Mathew (Bijay) and their two children Drew and Shreeya Mathew; and Deandra Dawn Williams Cornett (Tom) and her son Hayden Rieck Cornett. Jeff is also survived by Kathy's sister, Elizabeth Gould-Leger. In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests that you donate to the charity of your choice in Jeff's name. Services private at the convenience of the family. Arrangements by Herr-Riggs Funeral

Home, 210 S. Main St., Middletown, Ohio. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.herr-riggs.com

Tribute Wall

TT

“ Dear Kathy, I am so sorry to learn of Jeff's passing. Jeff hired me into federal service in 1983 as a branch chief, and trusted me to manage my branch and play a key role in the Radioactive Waste Disposal Program. He guided me as I learned how to navigate with Headquarters, and I enjoyed the Christmas parties and the many tennis matches we played in Columbus. He was a most valuable asset to the department, and I treasure my more than five years working with and for him. Ted Taylor

Theodore Taylor - September 10, 2025 at 04:23 PM

WM

“ Dear Kathy, I just this morning learned of Jeff's passing so apologies for the late note. He and I worked together for over 45 years and I always admired his strong values and leadership. Even if we hadn't seen each other in a while, he would flash that charming smile, extend this hand, and pick up our conversation as if it was yesterday. Please accept my deepest condolences for your loss, he was a truly exceptional friend and colleague.

Bill Madia

William Madia - March 03, 2025 at 10:28 AM

TI

“ I woke up this morning in California and for some unknown reason thought about Jeff whom I hadn't seen in many years. I went online and was saddened to hear that he had passed away. Like several others, I met Jeff in 1968 as an AEC intern. He was smart, wise, unpretentious, level headed, with a great sense of humor and a wry smile. He was always a pleasure to be with and I'm sure that remained throughout his life. My deep sympathies.

Tom Isaacs

Tom Isaacs - February 28, 2025 at 10:47 AM

LD

“ Dear Kathy,
I am so sorry to hear about the passing of Jeff. He was a long time friend. We had many good times at Middletown high school and Miami University. We also spent time during the summer months.

*Yours,
Lee Dennis*

Lee Dennis - February 21, 2025 at 12:32 PM

BB

“ Kathy, Toby and Robert,
I was really sad to hear from Dick Blaney that Jeff passed away so suddenly - what shock it must have been for the three of you. Jeff was an amazing friend for a long time starting shortly after I joined the AEC Nuclear Reactor Intern program in 1968 and continuing for about 4 decades until we drifted apart when I retired from DOE. We carpoled together down I 270 from Middletown/Braddock Heights to the AEC/DOE in Germantown, during which we had wonderful conversations about life and faith in addition to the details of our shared work responsibilities in the Radioactive Waste Management Program. I look forward to seeing him again when we meet in the "Great Beyond."
Peace and Grace,
Bill Bennett

Bill Bennett - February 12, 2025 at 08:27 PM

TA

Thank you, Bill. I remember you from those days in Middletown/Braddock. Losing dad has been so painful. We appreciate your thoughts!

Tobi Neff Athanas - February 14, 2025 at 03:21 PM

LA

“ I have so many fond memories of Jeff when we worked together at the Legacy Management project. He was such a kind man that took the time to talk to his employees. May you rest in peace Jeff.
Heaven gained another angel.

Lorraine Alvarez - February 12, 2025 at 08:09 AM

RL

“ Kathy, Tobi and Rob, so sorry to hear of Jeff's passing. Jeff was a good person, good mentor, and had excellent sense of humor and always gracious to me no matter what the situation might be.

I had the honor of working for Jeff in the Radioactive Waste Program during the 1980's. He was my mentor and guided me to reshape my career and its hard to imagine a more competent and caring Leader. Though he is gone and is with God -he remains alive in our hearts.

Ram Lahoti - February 11, 2025 at 09:59 PM

DB

“ Kathy, I was so very sorry to hear of Jeff's passing. Jeff was a terrific person and I will always remember his wonderful sense of humor and how gracious he was no matter what the circumstances.
Dick Blaney

Dick Blaney - February 11, 2025 at 06:19 PM

BW

“ *I had the honor of being Jeff's Deputy in the Radioactive Waste Program during the 1980's. It was hard to imagine a more competent and caring Leader. Jeff brought out the best in people. While we mourn his passing - he remains alive in our hearts.*

Bob Wunderlich

Bob Wunderlich - February 10, 2025 at 03:09 PM

DD

“ BACK IN 1967, MY WIFE AND I HELPED JEFF & KATHY MOVE FROM WDC TO GAINSVILLE FLORIDA SO THAT JEFF COULD BEGIN GRAD SCHOOL. WHILE WE WERE THERE, JEFF SECRETLY PUT A FLORIDA DECAL ON MY REAR WINDSHIELD, WHICH I HAD TO LOOK AT FOR YEARS AFTERWARDS WHEN SCRAPING MY WINDOWS IN THE WINTER. THAT WAS THE TYPE OF SUBTLE HUMOR JEFF POSSESSED. HE WAS MY FRIEND, AND I MISS HIM. DICK DAVIS

DICK DAVIS - February 07, 2025 at 11:29 AM

JP

To Jeff's family I worked for Jeff as his admin at the Stoller Corp at one time. He was a wonderful boss, very funny and caring, I have very fond memories of him. I extend my compassion, sympathy and prayers to you.

Joanna Perschelli

joAnna Perschelli - February 12, 2025 at 02:49 PM

PG

I had the privilege and honor to provide legal advice to Jeff & his dedicated staff in 1987. After the program was defunded and all of us moved elsewhere with our careers, Jeff contacted me 20 years later for lunch. Every few weeks we had lunch in Chinatown and the Wharf. Jeff was always interested in proposal development, cradle-to-grave contracting and bid protests, so I invited him to join me at the monthly ABA Public Contract Law suction meetings on bid protests. Jeff loved it and savored every minute. Jeff was also a superb basketball player & athlete. Jeff had a brilliant mind and a comprehensive knowledge of all United States Department of Energy programs. I really miss him. Respectfully, Paul Gervas.

Paul Gervas - February 14, 2025 at 10:36 AM

RS

I had the priviledge of working for Jeff when he managed the high-level radioactive waste program at the Columbus, Ohio office during 1984. I enjoyed playing tennis with him. Very positive, friendly, and uplifting personality. We will miss him. God bless his noble soul.

Raj Sharma - February 22, 2025 at 08:38 PM