



Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update January 19, 2020



COVID-19 Remembrance Ceremony

Good evening everyone. Thank you Deacon Keith Gibbons and Councilwoman Dawn Mackey for organizing today's event, and to Reverend Mounts, Rabbi Prosnit, Reverend Philips, Reverend Johnson, Reverend Diggers, and Father Randazzo for participating, and to Tristan and Sebastian Wroe for providing the music. Thanks also to Senator Tom Kean, Police Chief Battiloro, and the members of the Town Council who have joined us today. But most of all, thanks to all the members of the Westfield community who are joining us virtually via Facebook Live to come together and honor the lives of our friends and neighbors lost to COVID-19.

The very fact that we cannot all gather together in person to remember those who died is of course both heartbreaking and an ongoing painful reminder of how life has changed during the pandemic. A year ago, pandemic life as we know it, with its isolation, social distancing, and mask wearing, was literally unimaginable. And so was losing 49 of our neighbors, and, as of today, more than 400,000 fellow Americans, and over two million citizens around the globe, all in the span of ten months. These are truly staggering numbers. And with every life lost, there are heartbroken family members, friends, colleagues, and communities devastated by loss, exacerbated by the inability to gather together and mourn and grieve their loved ones together.

We gather today to hold the 49 neighbors we lost to COVID in our hearts. Thank you to the family members who provided the Town with information about the following residents so that it could be shared in remembrance with the entire community. This information, along with photos provided, can be found at www.westfieldnj.gov/covid19remembranceceremony.



Irene Carlucci (April 14, 2020)

Irene was 75 years old and is greatly missed by her family, especially her grandchildren.



Blanche Chaskin (April 2020)

Blanche's daughter Debbie self-published a book this year called *Animals Went to School* and dedicated the book to her mother's memory. She created it to help with the grieving process and to forever remember those on the front lines. She shared information about her mom in the book's introduction where she wrote "She was a New York City kindergarten teacher. My mother died of COVID-19 during the lockdown of 2020. This book is dedicated to her and all the loved ones lost during that time, as well as to the teachers, nurses, and others who dedicated themselves to serving their family and community."



Richard Dressler (May 4, 2020)



William Glenn Gandy (May 6, 2020)

William and his wife Susan moved to Westfield in 1985 and raised their children in the home where Susan grew up on Austin Street. He was a highly decorated Marine including the Silver Star, Bronze Star with Combat V, and three Purple Hearts awarded for his service in Vietnam. He coached his son in PAL football and was a loving father and husband. His ashes will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery at a future date.



Nicholas J. Gismondi (April 17, 2020)

Nick and his wife Mary Jane were married for 37 years and raised their three boys in Westfield as part of a tight knit group of neighbors on Fairacres Avenue. Nick was an active member of St. Helen's Parish and the President of Little League baseball for years where he also served as a coach. His legacy lives on in his many former players who were the beneficiaries of his leadership, and his impact is forever enshrined in Westfield as a member of the Booster Hall of Fame.



Chang Lee (April 25, 2020)

Chang died just a few days shy of his 95th birthday, and shared 94 years of unconditional love, laughter, and amazing memories with family and friends. Chang and his wife Florence were married in 1955, and spent many of their years raising their family in New Jersey, where Chang started a children's Chinese language program and cultural awareness group. Chang and Florence shared many travel adventures throughout their 65 years of marriage. Along with traveling, Chang loved to watch sports and was a patron of the arts. He had a heart of gold, a zest for life and a generous spirit of caring for everyone.



O. Douglas Manning (May 14, 2020)

Douglas lived on Willow Grove Rd for more than 40 years right before his death at Hope Hospice Center. He was 84 years old.



Elma Munster (April 2020)

Elma passed away in April at Sunrise in Westfield due to COVID. She is greatly missed by her family, the Cassidys (Karen, Mark, Patrick and Sarah) and the Munsters (John, Aileen, Nick and Katie).



Katherine Orefice (April 2, 2020)

Katherine Orefice, born November 22, 1933 in White Plains, New York, passed away on April 2 and is now reunited with her husband, Eugene. Kay is survived by many loving family members, including her three children, Gigi, Stephan, and Eugene. She was passionate about travel, her children's education, and spoiling her eight grandchildren. Kay will be missed for her quick wit, charitable spirit, and her enduring love for her family.



Rose Ricciardi (April 16, 2020)

Rose passed away at Overlook Hospital alone in the COVID ward. She would have been 92 on May 3. Rose was a spirited person who loved her family deeply. Her witty comebacks and her stories are dearly missed.

Sadly, health officials have warned that there will be many more COVID deaths in the coming weeks and months as the pandemic continues to rage through our country. As a community, we must continue to do our part to ensure that no other families suffer a similar loss to those we remember today.

We still have so much work to do, but I could not be more proud of this community and its ongoing efforts to look out for each other and demonstrate the profound kindness and generosity of spirit that are the very hallmarks of Westfield.

To those families who are grieving the loss of a loved one to this pandemic, on behalf of the Westfield community, I extend our heartfelt condolences. We continue to pray for those who are sick, and for the heroic front line workers who continue to care for so many under impossible circumstances. You are all in our thoughts as we find our way forward together.