



Ross R. Jelinek

February 24, 1946 - August 30, 2019

Ross R. Jelinek, 73, of Collegeville passed away on Friday August 30, 2019. Born on February 24, 1946 in Chicago, Illinois, he was the son of the late Raymond & Ruth (Kobza) Jelinek, and the loving companion of Jane Lock of Limerick. He is survived by son Aaron, daughters Bethany and Cari, and granddaughters Grace, Ayla and Ainsley. His larger family included Kayte, Ken and Stephanie Lock, and he was Grampy Ross to Madelyn, Emma and Kole. He also leaves behind his brother Jeffrey and nephew Kyle, his wife Becky, his niece and nephew, and many more family members in Illinois and California.

Ross was both a simple and complex man. He started life in Bensenville, Illinois, in the heart of a large, close-knit family. He moved to Upper Merion late in elementary school, and attended the University of Michigan, eventually graduating from the University of Buffalo with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. An engineer to his core, he could not help but design, tinker, build and repair—almost anything. In his career, he did everything from drawing corrections in his first job at Philadelphia Gear Corporation in King of Prussia to early robotics work with Litton Industries in Buffalo, New York. He held five patents, including one for a golf-swing practice device. His inventions were both practical and complex, including a “Soap Sock” which would provide a chance for soap shards to be serviceable until they dissolved with use, to a “double-tap” gun design, which he chose never

to pursue because of its deadly capacity.

Passionate about cars, he developed a unique suspension that would have allowed race cars to corner tighter and faster. But as great an engineer as he was, he was less of a marketer and businessman. Nonetheless, he couldn't help himself—even in a restaurant, given a fork with a misaligned tine, he had to fix it. Maybe because he loved, as he put it, “shiny metal things.” And those who knew him would save odd, serviceable bits for him to use in his assorted projects and repairs—random springs, wires, discarded parts. It was all useful to him.

And while he enjoyed engineering with metal, occasionally he also found great pleasure in working with wood. Crafting gun stocks was a challenge, in proportion, balance and finishing. He was particularly proud of one stock, hand rubbed by him in a rich finish of coat after coat of Tru oil.

In his life, Ross was almost as curious about people as machines. Within that complicated mind, he was always trying to figure out life in all its aspects. He was a keen and deep observer of everything that went on around him, and frequently saw through to a truth that others had missed. Other times people left him confused and bewildered, and so he questioned persistently and in detail until he understood.

A man of hidden depth, he had spent his life working hard to gain understanding of himself and his history, eventually making peace with a past that was rarely easy. He was incapable of lying, and always sought the truth. He prized fairness and compassion, and struggled to understand how people could be petty, mean, or cruel to one another. Politics had become an increasing concern, and while he was able to separate politics from principle, the current political climate was painful to him. He kept a worn copy of the United States Constitution close by for reference. He was counting on it

staying intact and guiding us forward.

Day-to-day he found great pleasure in his retirement work with John Kennedy Ford in Phoenixville. He was a driver, a job that was so characteristically Ross. There was no prestige in it—he was always a deeply humble man, and prestige never mattered to him. Working at the dealership simply gave him a chance to drive, almost anything and he almost didn't care where. A car or truck, a hybrid or transit van, he got to drive it, and with that curious mind, to keep up with what was new and innovative in the automotive world.

And if he was driving, anyone who knew him knew he preferred to avoid the city and shunned the four lanes. Instead, he would always opt for the long way, the local roads and the twistier, the better. Being on the road was his happy place.

He was a Ford man through and through, though he loved almost any kind of performance car. In his lifetime had particularly loved and been loved by a 1966 Corvette Stingray, a big black Thunderbird turbo, and a sweet little Miata which he owned for many years. His last car was a Honda Accord, chosen because it was both fun to drive and because also gave easier access to his beloved Jane, so they could go everywhere together as they got older.

Ross's stated responsibility in his job as a driver was to ferry cars to and from assorted dealerships, sometimes even travelling out of state. But, so like Ross, he elevated the work to something more. He didn't just deliver cars. He assessed each car as he drove and invariably returned with a report on each one, how it drove, how it rode, and what condition the body was in. He pointed out details that may have been missed or hidden, the rattles and flaws that could have cost his dealership. He was always an observer, an engineer, and even more, a protector.

And he was a fierce protector until the day he died. In the middle of a sunny, hot Friday at the end of August, he was bringing back a brand-new big white Ford F-150 along one of the busiest parts of Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia. It is an area well known for frequent horrific accidents because of the speed of the drivers and congestion of the area. He was headed south, toward home, though there was still a long way to go. Surrounded by all those jockeying cars and the challenge of the overcrowded road, he must have realized something was wrong. At the last he was protecting those around him and protecting his truck. He was able to use his skill and whatever strength remaining to guide that truck to the side of the road, up onto a narrow median strip and put it into park before he let go.

There was so much more to Ross. He was about as passionate about golf as he was about cars, though with his work at the dealership he regretted not having more time to “hit golfs.” He was a member of the Single Action Shooting Society, known there as Dead-Eye Pike, friend to The Ernesto Kid, his brother Jeff. He loved space and our space program. He loved the stars. Oftentimes he would stop dead and point to the sky, directing your gaze to a particular star or conjunction in the heavens. He noticed clouds and cloud formations, and quietly observed the beauty in every season.

There are so many more details that could be shared about Ross. After all, he was both a simple and complex man. But those would just be the details of his life. It was the core of his life, the love he gave, that was the truth of him.

His greatest legacy was how he loved—fiercely, unwaveringly, persistently, relentlessly, steadfast and sweet. He never asked for anything. All he wanted was a simple life, to be good and to do good. To love and be loved. And in the end, he succeeded spectacularly, more than he ever would have dreamed. His passing is a lesson in love that will only grow, and the world is a better

place for having had him in it.

Family and friends are invited to call on Monday September 9, 2019 from 6:00PM-8:00M at the Cattermole -Klotzbach Funeral Home, 600 Washington St. Royersford PA 19468. Funeral services for Ross will follow on Tuesday, September 10th. That day there will be a calling hour from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM, with services at 11:00AM at the funeral home. Condolences may be left by visiting www.KlotzbachFuneralHomes.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **9**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Cattermole - Klotzbach Funeral Home
600 Washington Street
Royersford, PA 19468
(610) 948-7330
<https://CattermoleKlotzbachFuneralHome.com/>

Visitation

SEP **10**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Cattermole - Klotzbach Funeral Home
600 Washington Street
Royersford, PA 19468

Memorial Service

SEP **10**. 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

Cattermole - Klotzbach Funeral Home
600 Washington Street
Royersford, PA 19468
(610) 948-7330
<https://CattermoleKlotzbachFuneralHome.com/>

Tribute Wall

TC

“ I will always remember your smiling face and the big hugs you gave me when we saw each other. You were a devoted, loving companion for my friend, Jane and she was so very luck to have had you by her side for so many years. I will miss you.



Theresa Cutler - September 10, 2019 at 04:19 AM



“ Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Ross R. Jelinek.



September 06, 2019 at 08:59 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Ross R. Jelinek.



September 06, 2019 at 08:38 PM