



Joseph "Joe" Mascolo

August 17, 1924 - March 31, 2026

Joseph "Joe" Mascolo, Hartford street tough, minor league baseball player, decorated WWII Navy veteran, aeronautical engineer, and a sometimes irascible patriarch, died March 31, 2026. He was 101 years old.

Joe was born August 17, 1924 on his grandmother's kitchen table at her home on Zion St. (behind the rocks), Hartford, Connecticut. His parents were immigrants from a village outside of Naples, Italy who settled in Hartford after the first World War. His father, Joseph Mascolo, was a barber in Hartford, and his mother Jenny Coiro Mascolo, worked at Royal Typewriter Company. He was predeceased by his sister, Lillian Mascolo Siembab. Joe attended Hartford schools and is a 1942 graduate of Hartford Public High School.

Turned loose on the streets of Hartford during the Great Depression, Joe had to learn to fight and did. In a lot of ways, he fought his entire life.

At the age of eight years, his Aunt Ann Corio (Coiro), the famous "Queen of Burlesque", took him to his first major league baseball game. Joe was enthralled. When she told him that pro players get paid to play, his life changed and his entire focus became baseball. He practiced incessantly on the sand lots throughout Hartford.

At fifteen years of age, Joe played second base for the Hartford American

Legion Team that won the state championship in 1940. As captain of the Hartford High School team, he played shortstop. The team won the Connecticut State Championships in 1941 and 1942. Sixty-three years later, Joe was inducted into the Hartford Public High School Sports Hall of Fame.

Though only five feet seven, on a good day, Joe's outstanding play drew scouts and tryout invitations from the New York Giants and the St. Louis Cardinals. Both teams offered him minor league contracts.

Joe signed the Cardinal's contract after the team's legendary scout, and dean of all Major League scouts, Charles 'Pop' Kelchner, told him that due to his young age, he would start in AA baseball, but based on his skills he would likely be promoted to AAA by the end of the season, and the majors within two years.

On opening day, playing shortstop and leading off for the New Orleans Pelicans, Joe went four for four, stole one base, and turned three double plays with no errors. The sky seemed the limit. He was drafted into the war six weeks later.

Joe selected the Navy and played second base for his boot camp team. When the eight weeks of training ended, he was asked to remain at camp and play ball, but he proudly chose sea duty.

Joe was assigned to the U.S.S. Baltimore, CA-68, a new heavy cruiser. He saw combat at Makin Atoll, the Mariana Islands, Wake Island and the invasion of Saipan. He was awarded the Asiatic Pacific Theater Medal with four bronze battle stars, the American Theater Medal and the Victory Medal. Shortly after Saipan was taken, he tested into the V-12 Navy College Training Program and was one of 12 crew members selected.

Joe attended Cornell University where he majored in mechanical and aeronautical engineering and resumed his love for baseball. As captain of the varsity baseball team his sophomore year, he led the Ivy League with a .388 batting average.

At war's end, and on his first day home, Joe was called back to the Cardinal's farm team. He turned them down to pursue a career in engineering. He continued to play local ball in various leagues in Hartford and California until 1952.

Joe worked in the aerospace industry for companies in Connecticut and California for the next 40 years. He was involved in the design and performance of components and systems used by the Navy, Army and Air Force relating to guidance systems for missiles and fuel systems for gas turbine engines.

In 1950, at a Catholic Graduates Club dance in Hartford, Joe met his future wife, Josephine DeGrandi. Joe always said that asking Josephine to marry him was the best decision of his life. They married in 1956 and settled in West Hartford where they were rarely apart for 62 years. She gave him the kind of life he always dreamed of as a child but never had. Together they raised four children, and despite his athletic talent skipping a generation, he was still extremely proud of them. In his retirement, he traveled the world with his wife and doted on their five grandchildren.

After putting his bat and glove down, Joe channeled his athletic prowess into learning golf. He became a scratch player and won many tournaments at various clubs including Rockledge Golf Club and Wampanoag Country Club of West Hartford. He finally retired his clubs and bag at the age of 90.

Joe was a long-time parishioner of the Church of St. Timothy in West Hartford, where he served as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. He was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Knights of Columbus. He was a founding member of the Rockledge Golf Course Men's Club and a past member of the Wampanoag Country Club.

Joe was predeceased by Josephine in 2018. He leaves behind his four children, Joseph J. Mascolo of Phoenix, AZ, Judith M. Mascolo, MD and her husband Thao V. Le of West Hartford, Elizabeth M. Sullivan and her husband Mark of Bozeman, MT and Rosanne M. Mascolo of West Hartford; five grandchildren, Connor J. Sullivan and his wife Mariafe of Bozeman, MT, Bridger L. Sullivan and his fiancée Henna Devine of Bozeman, MT, Allegra Rose T. Beresznewicz and her husband Casey of Medford, MA, Gianna Maria T. Le of New York City, and Christina Anne H. Le of West Hartford; two great grandchildren, Chiara M. Sullivan of Bozeman, MT and Wally T. Beresznewicz of Medford, MA.

His was a life well lived.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at the Church of St. Timothy in West Hartford on Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 10 am. In memory of Joe, donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or to a charity of one's choice.

The family thanks all his wonderful caregivers from Dynamic Touch Home Care, his VA Home Health Care team and his Masonicare Hospice Care team. They provided attentive care, love and support to Joe in his final years which made it possible for him to die at home. We will forever be grateful.

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

APR 7. 10:00 AM (ET)

Church of St. Timothy
1116 North Main St
West Hartford, CT 06117
(860) 233-5131

Tribute Wall

CN

“ *To my real Italian godfather....may you rest in peace
With my condolences to the family.
Carole Bonadies Nelson
Indio, California*

carole bonadies nelson - April 07 at 01:44 PM

KL

“ *To the Mascolo Family - our sincere condolences to a man with an
amazing legacy, an absolutely beautiful obituary. Those Corio genes
are truly amazing. We will keep him in our prayers.*

Kim (DeIMastro) & Joseph Lamari

Kim (DeIMastro) Lamari - April 04 at 06:07 PM

PK

“ *My sincere condolences to all. I will keep him in my prayers. Pat
(Bonadies) Kowalski*

Pat Kowalski - April 04 at 03:18 PM



“ *Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for
the family of Joseph "Joe" Mascolo.*



April 03 at 10:46 AM

DD

“ *May the soul of Joseph Mascolo, Through the Mercy of God, Rest in Peace, and may Perpetual Light shine upon his soul and on all the Souls of the Faithful Departed.*

I met his son, Joey, through Joey's friendship with Steve Donnelly who was captain of the 1969 Basketball team.

David Dowd - April 02 at 02:26 PM

KD

Joe (Sonny) was my first cousin as his mother and mine (Helen) were sisters. I extend to all the Mascolo family my deepest condolences and prayers on your loss.

Kathryn Bonadies DeIMastro

Kathryn DeIMastro - April 04 at 09:18 PM