



Dr. Eugene Joseph Westlake

December 12, 2019

Dr. Eugene J. Westlake, 85, a resident of Oradell for 51 years, departed this life peacefully at home among members of his immediate family on December 12, 2019. Predeceased by his wife, Phyllis, Gene, a man of deep-rooted faith, longfully anticipated reuniting with her in eternal bliss. Together from their high-school days at Good Council in Newark, their marriage brought forth a loving family of eight children, 26 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren: Eugene and Tammi Westlake, Mark and Liz Westlake, Gary and Maria Westlake, Cindy and Brian Sherlock, Elisa and Dean Karch, Suzanne Westlake and Jay King, Marilyn and Brian Nichols, Matthew and Heather Westlake. Gene graduated with a B.A. and M.A. from Seton Hall University and a PhD from Fordham University. He began his teaching career in Belleville, NJ, subsequent to which he was offered a contract in 1962 by the Northern Valley Regional High School Board of Education. Throughout his successful tenure of 40 years, he was an English teacher, Guidance counselor, Assistant Principal, Principal, and ultimately Superintendent. Whatever the position he fulfilled, he always earned the respect and admiration of his colleagues, students, and community by just being the outstanding person he was: genuine, humble, caring. Gene was active in many professional organizations. He was the Bergen County representative to the New Jersey Interscholastic Association. Their charged responsibility was to establish rules and regulations governing school athletic activities and to adjudicate proposed grievances. Gene also served on the Oradell Board of Education and was re-elected as recently as last month. He was currently serving as President of the Friends of River Dell (FORD) which provides funds for student facilities and scholarships. He served on the Parish Council at St. Joseph's Church in Oradell and was currently serving on the Parish Council of St. Peter's Church in River Edge. Recognizing the extent of his communal contributions, he was awarded the YMCA Bergen County Person of the Year in 1998. Unstinting of his time and talent in his younger days, he also coached Girls Softball, Boys Little League and Babe Ruth Baseball, all of which reflected his sense of civic responsibility to the community. Upon retirement, he also was an interim superintendent at River Dell Regional High School, Paramus High School, and Tenafly High School. Visiting hours will be held on Tuesday, December 17th, from 3-8pm, at St. Peter's Catholic Church, 445 5th Ave., River Edge, NJ 07661. A funeral mass will be celebrated on

Wednesday, December 18th, at 11am at St. Peter's Catholic Church. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Peter's Church.

Events

DEC **Visitation** 03:00PM - 08:00PM

17

St. Peter the Apostle RCC

431 5th Avenue, River Edge, NJ, US

DEC **Funeral Mass** 11:00AM - 12:00PM

18

St. Peter the Apostle RCC

431 5th Avenue, River Edge, NJ, US

Comments



“ I remember Doc as a very nice, kind, fair man. I was sent to the Principal's office once, he simply listened to my version of what had happened, and dismissed me. Case closed! A classy man who enjoyed working with the youth and future of America! God Bless you Doc! May a spirit of peace and comfort be with his family and friends who will be missing him most.

Class of 1977

Patty McSorley Drewes

Patty - January 06, 2020 at 03:53 AM



“ I shared the best years of my young adult life at NVRHS Demarest with "DOC" Westlake. What a great man, coach and mentor. I will never forget his humor, his consoling shoulder, his gentle but firm kick in the butt to get things done in life, and his caring and loving friendship to all the students at Demarest. As the school's Student Council President in 1976, I had the great opportunity to interact daily with Doc Westlake and will never forget him for his kindness at the High School. The class of 1976 and I am sure many others will agree that we will miss this incredible man. May you Rest in Peace DOC and for those survived know what an impact he made in my life and others.

Colonel (Retired) Paul Oettinger

Class of 1976

Paul Oettinger - December 18, 2019 at 11:42 AM



“ My thoughts and prayers to the Westlake family. We are forever indebted to Dr. Westlake for his sacrifice, commitment, and service to NVRHS Demarest. God Bless.

Joe Yiu - Class of 1996

Joe Yiu - December 18, 2019 at 10:31 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. Eugene Joseph Westlake.



December 18, 2019 at 10:28 AM



“ Gene shared his life with many in education, sports and family. He was a man who supported girls sports in the early days as evidenced by he and Phyllis (his wife) having a team breakfast for his daughter’s field hockey team prior to counties This was in the very “early” days when female athletics was still trying to be accepted. I will Always have a place in my heart for this very special man who supported me as a coach, teacher and administrator. Those who knew him well knew his love and mentions of Leo Buscaglia in his many speeches and meetings. He was a true BEACON of light to all

Mary Ann Pieshala - December 17, 2019 at 10:29 PM



“ Gene was a gentle and kind man--and he WAS Northern Valley. When he hired me in 1985 everyone called the school Happy Valley and in many ways that was due to Gene's character, values, good humor, and bearing. His passing is a great loss, but the number of lives he touched for the better, and his legacy are a lasting testament to his very special qualities.
Alexandra Drazniowsky

Alexandra Drazniowsky - December 16, 2019 at 08:55 PM



“ Dr Westlake was a wonderful man . I’m a graduate of Northern Valley class of 73. His kindness changed my life . I will always remember him with fond memories . Rest In Peace . You made such a difference in so many lives . Laurie zullo Totoro

laurie totoro - December 15, 2019 at 11:37 PM



“ For those of us who were fortunate enough to walk the halls of Northern Valley with Gene knew what a special person he was. To call him a friend and to share one's life with him in regard to work, family and life in general was to appreciate the goals and aspirations of a genuine individual. For him, loving God, loving your family and striving to do your best was what life was all about. Again for those who were fortunate to be his colleagues, a large chapter in the book of life has closed for us. To his family, we say sorry for your loss, and ours, and may the memories sustain you.
Sending Lots of love to a great family, Jim McDonnell

Jim McDonnell - December 15, 2019 at 04:12 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



meryl earl - December 15, 2019 at 12:37 PM



“ I met Gene at Tenafly Public Schools working for him as his Administrative Assistant. He was so kind and became a friend. He was very knowledgeable and many other superintendents looked to him for advice and counsel. I knew of him by his wonderful reputation before I met him. His love of his wife Phyllis and his family was evident. Working with Gene was a highlight of my working career. I am very saddened to learn of his passing. Peg Mondello

Peg Mondello - December 15, 2019 at 12:14 PM



“ One in a million. My thoughts and prayers to his wonderful loving family. Sending hugs.
With Love, Brenda Canal

Brenda Canal - December 15, 2019 at 11:54 AM



“ So sad to hear the news of Dr. Westlake's passing. I was a graduate of the class of 1974 at NVRHS. Years later I ran into him and Phyliss here on Cape Cod. And a couple of years after that sold them a house here. They always took the time to look me up and visit at my Cafe where we shared many laughs and stories. He was a special man and shared his life with many of us students. He and Phyliss had an incredible life together. RIP
Kimberlee Poosikian

Kimberlee Poosikian - December 15, 2019 at 08:33 AM



“ Dr. Westlake was principal at NVRHS, while I attended from 1971-1975. I will always remember him as a kind, fair and overall lovely gentleman. My deepest sympathies to his family and friends.
Lois (Upchurch) Lang

Lois Lang - December 15, 2019 at 08:26 AM



“ A truly wonderful man who is remembered fondly by so many. Knowing he's resting in peace with his wife brings comfort. Condolences to his family, who he treasured.
Trish Leary Joyce (NVRHS class of 1973)

Patricia Joyce - December 15, 2019 at 06:10 AM



“ I met Gene when he was the Superintendent in Tenafly. He was a compassionate professional, mentor and friend.

Lorraine Schlarman - December 15, 2019 at 12:28 AM



“ Such a remarkable man to have imprinted on so many lives over the years! I attended NVRHS Demarest from 1970-1974 and I rarely saw him without a smile! May he continue to live on in the hearts of all the lives he touched.
Mary Ellen Cook-Renwick

Mary Cook-Renwick - December 14, 2019 at 08:10 PM



“ Dr. Westlake was a caring and wonderful man and an outstanding educator. He worked tirelessly to make the Northern Valley Regional High School district a district of excellence and always freely gave of his time and sage advice to help others. A devoted family man, his love for his wife and entire family were always most evident. We will miss our mentor and friend. Rest In Peace, Pat and Vince Raupers

Patricia Raupers - December 14, 2019 at 03:22 PM