



## John "Jay" Duddy

October 13, 2024

John Patrick Duddy, known to all as Jay, a master plumber who approached his craft and his love of friends and family with the same passion and commitment, died October 13, 2024. He was 64.

Born April 2, 1960 to John and Barbara Duddy, Jay was the oldest of four with three younger sisters. He was a natural and accomplished athlete, playing football and baseball at Pequannock Township High School and then football at Ramapo College. He remained a competitive and passionate sportsman and sports fan his entire life. That competitiveness shaped his personal life as well — he could even turn reciting lyrics from an Elton John album into a competition. He loved boating, being out on the water, fishing, going to the beach, attending all the local sports team events and concert going.

Jay could be larger than life and low key at the same time, a practical joker who could also cut friends in half with a subtle quip. Spending time with Jay meant lively conversations about sports, food, movies, and many genres of music, and he usually left companions with sore cheeks from laughing and smiling so much.

Growing up, Jay had a joy and fearlessness that led to legendary pranks and antics with childhood friends, not all of which can be repeated. He maintained that irreverence and joy his entire life. When it came to his work, though, as his coworkers affirm, he was uncompromising about his craftsmanship and the safety of the teams of plumbers who worked with him. He was happy to share his expertise with family whenever needed.

Jay was a consummate Jersey guy, sometimes jumping in his truck and driving to the shore at a moment's notice, maybe to spend a day at the beach or go fishing, maybe to see a show at the Stone Pony. But he was also part of some of the most important and iconic construction projects across the river through UA Local 1. He took tremendous pride in his chosen craft, supervising hundreds of journeymen and training countless apprentices. The Second Avenue Subway Project, the 96th Street Station Project, and the East Side Access Tunnel Project are just a few of the major projects that listed Jay Duddy as foreman.

If you have driven in Manhattan, made your way through or over a New York tunnel or bridge, ridden the NYC subway system, been a patient requiring oxygen or sedation in a New York City hospital, or sat in a seat in Yankee Stadium, you have felt Jay Duddy's work.

Maybe the most important project of his professional life was supervising construction of the memorial pools and the museum at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum. Jay did not take a vacation for three years, sometimes eating meals alone in the empty pool, sometimes sleeping in his truck, leading teams that worked nearly nonstop with a sense of reverence that few could fathom. The project was recognized as one of the largest and most innovative fountain projects ever conceived, pumping 18,000 gallons of water a minute through enough pipe to run the length of Manhattan.

"Any other job, you can come back and do repairs and get it right," he told a newspaper reporter at the time. "Not this job. It has to be right the very first time."

When it was tested the first time, it worked flawlessly.

One 9/11 anniversary, while still working on the project, Jay was one of the volunteers reciting the names of victims, taking great pains to pronounce the names correctly in order to honor the victims and their families.

There were numerous stories of little gestures he made for others -- "Angel deeds," as his sister Lisa described them -- that Jay never spoke about publicly. Like the coworker who had a heart attack on a job site and was saved

by Jay's administration of CPR. Or like the young child he befriended while he worked in a housing project who was stunned at the gifts Jay bought for his birthday. Or the toddler girl about to walk into oncoming traffic on a Manhattan corner that Jay pulled to safety at the very last second. When a Buzz Light Year actor did not make it to his nephew's birthday party, Jay happily volunteered to step in even though it was a sweltering 95 degrees. All examples of the generous nature of Jay. He walked through the world with an alertness and an eye for service, helpfulness, kindness and humor.

He leaves behind heartbroken family members, parents, Jack and Barbara; sisters Lisa Duddy (Richard Freund) and Kim Gastelu (Christopher); nephews A. Garrett Burton; Alec Freund; nieces Cosette and Hallie Gastelu; his partner, Yvette Fermin; numerous cousins, aunts, friends and colleagues. He was preceded in death by his sister, Melissa Duddy Burton.

On any passing day, in many a place, at any given time, there will be a smile happening at the thought of a moment spent with Jay Duddy. Peace out, Jay. Peace out.

John's family would truly appreciate any donations made in memory of John to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. To make a donation in memory of John Duddy, please click here. ([https://www.stjude.org/donate/donate-to-st-jude.html?express=0&sc\\_icid=ig-df-btn&amount=30&frequency\\_selected=1](https://www.stjude.org/donate/donate-to-st-jude.html?express=0&sc_icid=ig-df-btn&amount=30&frequency_selected=1))

# Previous Events

## Memorial Visitation

OCT **25**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Volk Leber Funeral Home  
268 Kinderkamack Road  
Oradell, NJ 07649  
info@volkleber.com  
<http://volkleberfuneralhome.com>

## Memorial Mass

OCT **26**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Joseph's RCC  
300 Elm Street  
Oradell, NJ 07649

# Tribute Wall



“ Volk Leber Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of John "Jay" Duddy



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**Volk Leber Funeral Home** - October 26, 2024 at 02:17 PM



“ Volk Leber Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of John "Jay" Duddy



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**Volk Leber Funeral Home** - October 25, 2024 at 07:39 PM

FD

“ Jay was like my father and was with me for the most important parts of shaping my life as a kid into a young man. We always had more fun than you could imagine whether it was going to a Yanks game or Patriots/Jets. Growing up, Jay always was with me for every sport I played and every training session I had. He would get home from work waking up at 4:00 am and still have time to throw the football and baseball with me. Jay-Bird was our go-to guy for anything and was not only a large part of my childhood, but my friends as well. Everything everyone has written about Jay is spot on, there are few people left in the world like him. Jay will always be family to me no matter what. I am so glad he got to meet my wife and even though he didn't meet our daughter I was at least able to send him pictures and her birthday, coincidentally, is so close to Jay's that we will always celebrate him with our little girl. Love you Duddy, always will.



Fred DeFrance - October 26, 2024 at 12:53 PM

BH

“ Just a couple of great times with Duddy. Miss you buddy.



Bryan Horowitz - October 26, 2024 at 09:07 AM

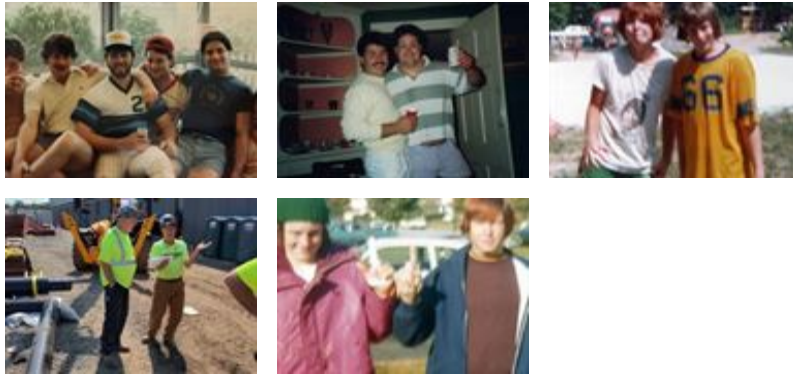
KF

“ So sad to hear of Jay's passing. He was part of our family. We had so many great times in the backyard in Lake Parsippany where he was stepfather to my nephew, Fred. Many baseball games and backyard picnics. Big heart, always telling a story, fun to be around. Have missed you over the years since then and always will think of you when I see ND. You're the ultimate Irishman.

Karen Rusinak Vetrano and family - October 25, 2024 at 02:32 PM



“ 79 files added to the album Life Tributes



Volk Leber Funeral Home - October 25, 2024 at 12:17 PM

GK

“ Lifelong friend who had my back more times than I can remember. Never a dull moment with Jay and always filled with laughter. The world was a much better place with you in it. Rest in Peace my friend.

Gerry Klug - October 25, 2024 at 09:49 AM

SO

“ My deepest condolences to Mr. & Mrs. Duddy, Lisa and Kim for the loss of your beloved son and brother. Jay was like another brother to me during my HS years. He had a big heart and thrived on making everyone laugh, always living life to the fullest! May he rest in peace and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.

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**Sue (McHugh) O'Brien** - October 22, 2024 at 08:15 AM

KF

“ Mr. And Mrs. Duddy, Lisa, Kimmy, and rest of your family. I'm so terribly sorry to hear about JD. I don't have many childhood memories with him and all of you in them. To me he was the big brother I never had, but got to share with you guys. I can hear his laugh, remember the piggy back rides and I know I have pictures of him, and is all together growing up. I was so happy to read of the wonderful life he lived, how special for you all, and so sad to hear of his passing. Thinking of you all, with so much love and the fondest of memories. May God be your comfort and strength. I wish I could be there, but sadly I traveling those days. My thoughts and prayers will be with you!! I love you all!  
Kelly Frye (Broadhurst)

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**Kelly Frye** - October 21, 2024 at 07:50 PM

RS

“ RIP #19 Teammate Ramapo College.....

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**Robert Smith** - October 20, 2024 at 08:17 AM

BG

“ I’m not sure when I met Jay Duddy. JD was my friend since I can remember. We grew together from grade school all the way through high school and beyond. We caused some trouble but it was fun.

Godspeed my old friend . Heaven will be a lot more fun now. Until we meet again.

Brian Gfroehrer

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**Brian Gfroehrer** - October 20, 2024 at 12:05 AM

BG

“ I’m not exactly sure when I met Jay. It seems that he’s been a part of my life for as long as can remember. We were inseparable as children and grew together all the way through high school and beyond. God speed JD. Heaven just got a whole lot more fun. Until we meet again.

Brian Gfroehrer

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**Brian Gfroehrer** - October 19, 2024 at 11:16 PM

RS

“ Memories with Jay (a/k/a Jay Bird) were having too much fun in Lincoln Park. He always made a point of attending our kids’ parties and he definitely had a knack for bringing a smile to my face. Rest easy and know you will be missed dearly. XoXoXoXo The Brick Schleys

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**Robyn Schley** - October 19, 2024 at 09:46 PM

RS

“ RIP #19 Roadrunners

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**Robert Smith** - October 19, 2024 at 08:57 PM

KW

“ *My heartfelt prayers for all the people who were fortunate enough to know Jay. He was a warm hearted jovial man with a generous soul. The world was a better place with his presence. Loved and will be missed by many. I am grateful to have known Jay. May God bless his beautiful soul.*

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**Krista Wagner** - October 18, 2024 at 10:29 PM

SW

*Great guy! Hilarious college friend. RIP! smiles forever!* 🍺💪😄

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**swanny** - October 19, 2024 at 07:52 PM

JC

“ *You we're bigger than life Jay.  
I have loved you for 40 years.  
My heart is broken.  
Heartfelt condolences to Jay's family.  
Now he is with Missy. 💔*

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**Jacqueline Castaneda** - October 18, 2024 at 02:29 PM

KT

“ *For 54 year I have called you my friend. Dud, I love you brother and was blessed to have you in my life. Mr. and Mrs. Duddy, Lisa and Kim, our thoughts and prayers are with you. Ken Tashjy*

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**Ken Tashjy** - October 17, 2024 at 07:21 PM

JB

*Such a beautiful tribute. We are all beyond heartbroken. We (his childhood buddies) were to spend this past weekend with Jay in Boston. Nothing special—just 2 or 3 days of enjoying each other and our fading memories of youth during a simpler time. We gathered in spite of the circumstances and spent every waking moment lost in thoughts about you. Jay. We hope you only knew 1/100th of what you meant to us both collectively and individually. Love and prayers to all of the extended Duddy family. We share in your loss. Love, Barns*

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**Jeff Barna** - October 20, 2024 at 07:05 AM

PB

*Jay, you were a Shining star every visit to the Duddy house with your smile and vibrant personality when I would visit Kim. You had a gift of brightening the day during my teenage years. Thank you.*

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**Patti Bauer** - October 17, 2025 at 06:27 PM