



Donald J. Bianco

July 10, 1932 - May 3, 2023

Donald J. Bianco, 90, died peacefully on May 3rd surrounded by his family. A force of nature, Don lived a robust life, with many occupations, all reflective of his talents, passions, and skills. He had a loving family and many friends who appreciated and often shared those interests and adventures. He was gregarious, opinionated, with a keen intellect, quick wit and wonderful sense of humor, combined with natural charm and magnetism – he always made an impression and ruled the room!

Born in Brooklyn, New York, he spent his early years in Brooklyn and Great Neck, Long Island. A high school football star for St. Francis Xavier Academy, he was scouted by Notre Dame University to join their 1951 squad. After a football injury, he returned to New York, joined the ROTC, and graduated from Fordham University with a B.S. in Philosophy and Economics. Shortly after graduation in 1955, he married Elaine Herbert. The newlyweds were deployed immediately to Fort Bliss Army Base in El Paso Texas, where he and Elaine started their family. Don served in the Army Reserve until 1963 as a First Lieutenant. After leaving active duty in Texas, he and Elaine returned to New York in 1957 and Don began a long career in the computer industry as a sales leader and executive manager. He started as a sales trainee with IBM, and after several successful years selling some of the earliest computers to skeptical business owners, he moved to RCA to lead their sales efforts first in New Jersey, and then as regional sales manager in their Chicago office. During this meteoric rise, he was honored by the New York Herald Tribune in

1963, with an article that highlighted his unique experience as a “Liberal Arts Computer Salesman”.

Over the years Don and Elaine with their four children moved from New York to New Jersey to Chicago and Los Angeles, and back to New Jersey where Don remained until moving to Naples Florida in 2001. In 1971 He entered Public Service for the State of New Jersey, first as the Director of Information Systems and Public Safety, and eventually founded and directed the statewide Office of Technology and Information Services until his retirement in 1987. He married Joy (Smith) Bianco in 1974, and they had many happy years together until her death in 1988.

Retirement freed Don to pursue his new passion; he enrolled in Rutgers University and earned a Master's in Social Work. After post-graduate training as a marriage and family therapist, he practiced at Catholic Social Services of Southern New Jersey until 2001 and provided pro-bono counseling in private practice and for St. Matthews House in Naples Florida until 2013. From 2013 to 2019 he lived in Guilderland NY with his daughter and her family. They all relocated to Bonita Springs where he lived until his passing.

An ardent and daily friend of Bill W. since 1978, Don embraced Step 12 with vigor. For many years he was a devoted mentor and friend to many on their journey to sobriety and recovery. Don also loved to cook - his big Italian meals were famous. Some of his happiest years were spent on Long Beach Island, NJ where he enthusiastically hosted and fed friends and family who he loved sharing his big open home with.

Don is predeceased by his mother Evelyn Haggerty Bianco who died shortly after his birth; and by his parents Alfred and Margaret Bianco, his first wife Elaine, second wife Joy, his brother Alfred Bianco, son-in-law Jon Gray, and two grandsons Ryan Bianco and Bobby Gray. Survivors include his beloved sister Jane Kelly (Mike) of Naples FL and Westfield, NJ; four children Carol Miller (Dan) of Bonita Springs, Donald J. Bianco Jr. of Miranda, CA, Chris Bianco (Armelle) of Santa Cruz, CA, John Bianco (Mercedes) of Aptos CA; five grandchildren Nathan Bianco, Joel Bianco, Elaine(Lainie) Gray, Jordan

Bianco, and Lea Bianco; two step-grandchildren Dana and Robert Miller; two great-grandchildren Killian and Kenley Miller, his nephew Bob Kelly (Lisa), and niece Judy Pasko; along with his lifelong friend Barry Higgins and his third wife and dear friend Sharon Taylor Davis.

Don was a communicant at St. Leo the Great in Bonita Springs from 2001-2013 and Christ the King in Guilderland NY from 2013-2019.

The family would like to thank the amazing staff at Renaissance at the Terraces who filled his final months with loving care and humor.

The family will receive friends on Monday, May 8, 2023, from 10:00 AM to 11:45 AM at Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home 28300 S. Tamiami Tr., Bonita Springs, FL. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 12:00 Noon at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church. He will be interred at Sarasota National Cemetery at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made in Don's name to St Matthews House in Naples, FL, Hope Hospice in Fort Myers, FL, or to the Alzheimer's Association.

To sign his guest register or to leave online condolences please visit www.ShikanyFuneralHome.com.

Arrangements are being handled by Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home Family Owned and Operated Since 1978.

Cemetery Details

Sarasota National Cemetery

9810 State Road 72
Sarasota, FL 34241

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 8. 10:00 AM - 11:45 AM (ET)

Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home
28300 Tamiami Trail So.
Bonita Springs, FL 34134
(239) 992-4982
bonitafhbill@comcast.net

Mass of Christian Burial

MAY 8. 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Leo the Great Catholic Church
28300 Beaumont Rd.
Bonita Springs, FL 34134

Tribute Wall

AM

“ I loved Don Bianco with all my heart. I first met him at a 12 Step program and learned he had worked for my dad at RCA. He even showed up for my dad’s 80th birthday celebration in Iowa. I grew very close to him and Joy over several years and worked at OTIS, the organization he pioneered for the State of New Jersey. We shared many personal conversations and I learned from his experience. Mostly I appreciated his sincere honesty, his kindness and support. Having just discovered that he’s on a new journey, I felt I needed and wanted to pay my respects, my admiration and my gratitude for his earthly presence. To all of the Bianco family, I send my regards, hoping you’ll realize his influence on me was nothing less than a blessing, one I’ve never forgotten. Sending this with much love, especially to the spirit of Don. 💕💕

Annie McCollister - January 28, 2024 at 05:13 PM



“ Donald J. Bianco

October 09, 2023 at 03:40 AM

DG

“ I'm saddened to learn of Don's passing. In 2010 I met Don and his presence was conspicuous among the community I had returned to. His no nonsense approach with the loving kindness of a teddy bear was exactly what I needed.

I learned the value of the 12th step and try to live up to it every day. In a phrase, you changed my life and I am forever grateful. Thank you my friend, from the bottom of my heart and soul. I am comforted in knowing you are dining at a bountiful table. I look forward to reuniting at that table. Peace.

Dan G. - July 17, 2023 at 10:54 AM



“ 54 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home - May 07, 2023 at 02:47 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of *Donald J. Bianco*.



May 06, 2023 at 11:14 AM



“ *Beautiful Heart Bouquet* was purchased for the family of *Donald J. Bianco*.



May 06, 2023 at 10:52 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Donald J. Bianco.



May 05, 2023 at 09:24 PM



“ Donald, thank God you were visiting Marge that day 26 years ago! I was so happy to Facetime with you just a few weeks ago. You truly bring meaning to the phrase, one of a kind! Love you my friend! ❤️💋--Bonny G

Bonny Gavel - May 05, 2023 at 08:22 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Donald J. Bianco.



May 05, 2023 at 04:34 PM



“ All your friends at AHP purchased the Serene Reflections Bouquet for the family of Donald J. Bianco.



All your friends at AHP - May 05, 2023 at 01:49 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Donald J. Bianco.*



May 05, 2023 at 10:51 AM