



## Paul A. Baffico

July 18, 1946 - September 19, 2023

Paul A. Baffico, age 77, of Lake Forest, Illinois died suddenly after complications relating to a fall on September 19, 2023.

Born and raised in San Francisco, he graduated from both St. Ignatius High School and the University of San Francisco. After completing ROTC in college, he was inducted into the Army as a second Lieutenant. He proudly served as a communications officer in the 101st Airborne division in Vietnam from 1970-71; garnering multiple awards including the Bronze Star. After being discharged with the rank of first Lieutenant, he went to work for Sears Roebuck where he remained throughout his career, culminating as the President of Automotive, Battery and Tire, and CEO of Western Auto.

After retiring in 1998, he founded Invisible Intellect, a strategic consulting firm, and the Lake County Veterans and Family Services Foundation, which serves innumerable veterans and their families.

Paul devoted his life to service - repairing any object or organization in need, crafting and building furniture, aiding all who crossed his path, and volunteering as a docent at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC every month for over 15 years.

Paul is survived by his former wife, Mary (Groom), his current wife Max (Smith); his siblings, James (Joey) and Cristine (Hans) Reich; his sons,

Jonathan (Tiffani) and Jeffrey (Brigid); and 4 grandchildren, Ella, Logan, Hailey and Michaelene; as well as a multitude of nieces, nephews and cousins.

A Memorial Service will be held at 4 PM on Monday, October 2, 2023 in the John and Nancy Hughes Theater of Gorton Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest. The service will be livestreamed at <https://www.youtube.com/live/mAl35Sck-IY>. A reception will follow at Gorton in the Stuart Community Room until 6 PM.

\*\* OVERFLOW PARKING for the service has been organized and is available in the City of Lake Forest parking lot located on the corner of Deerpath & McKinley Roads & in the lot across the street just west of the Gorton Center.

Paul will be interred with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia at a future date.

For information – Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake Forest, 847-234-9649 or [www.RTfunerals.com](http://www.RTfunerals.com).

Memorial contributions in Paul's memory may be made to the Lake County Veterans and Family Services Foundation at <https://www.lcvetsfoundation.org/>.

# Cemetery Details

## Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington , VA 22211

<https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/#/>

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

OCT 2. 4:00 PM (CT)

John and Nancy Hughes Theater at Gorton Center  
400 East Illinois Road  
Lake Forest, IL 60045

# Tribute Wall



“ *Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Home created a Memorial Service Livestream in memory of Paul A. Baffico*



**Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake Forest** - September 26, 2023 at 07:14 PM

FS

*We here at the Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House will be forever grateful to Paul for his generous service at chair of our Board of Directors during the late 1990's. His astute leadership and generous spirit helped us move forward during a challenging time. More recently, Paul helped us initiate the Coming Home Retreats for Military Veterans and last spring came and spoke to our veterans sharing his inspirational insights. May he rest in peace having served so many so well for so long!*

**Fr Michael Sparough, SJ** - September 27, 2023 at 01:50 PM

SH

*I was so fortunate to get to know Paul over the last several years. We first met when he was speaking at a Veteran Court graduation about the importance of supporting our veterans, and I've learned so much from him over the years. His dedication to helping veterans and his willingness to tell his story certainly saved lives and it has been an honor to know him and be his friend. My husband and I enjoyed going on Vespa rides with Paul and I know how much he was looking forward to growing old with Max in their beautiful new home. I will miss his friendship, sense of humor, and his incredible capacity to do more for others. Max and family, we are thinking of you - thank you for sharing Paul with us. Love, Sandy Hart*

**Sandra Hart** - October 02, 2023 at 11:39 AM

RF

“ Paul and I were on the same Board of Directors 20 years or so again. He was a great guy, very astute. I also knew of him in the auto parts aftermarket where he was well respected.

*I had a fun relationship with him. He was one of the best.*

*Ronald Friedman*

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**ronald friedman** - November 30, 2023 at 10:30 AM

AP

“ I was saddened to have just now learned of the passing of Paul (Nov. 2023).

*While we never met in person, I first learned of his service and continued extreme dedication and patriotism when our local ABC, Ch. 7 in Chicago did a special report on Paul just before Veterans Day in 2019. I sent Paul a package with some enclosures as a small token of gratitude for, at the time, his "139th consecutive month" volunteering as a docent at the Vietnam Wall. Paul graciously sent me back a return letter indicating that he would make a special effort to specifically stop at Panel 12E, L68 on behalf of my brother, Edward Joseph PIANTKOWSKI, KIA 13 Nov 66, Army, 196th LIB, Republic of Vietnam.*

*Paul will remain a part of my daily prayers. Rest in Peace fine Sir. May our good God now invite Paul into His Kingdom for his ultimate, "Welcome Home."*



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**AI PIANTKOWSKI** - November 04, 2023 at 02:30 PM

EG

“ I just learned of Paul's passing and wanted to extend my condolences. I went to S.I. and USF with Paul, graduating in the same class, 1964 & 1968.

*I watched the video of Paul's service including the beginning where Paul talked about his reluctance about having to go to Vietnam. He said something that really puzzled and bewildered me. He said he was the only one of his contemporaries, those he graduated with, to have served in the military and served in Vietnam.*

*Much to the contrary, I also served in ROTC and in the military in Vietnam 1969-70, attaining the same rank of 1st Lieutenant. I entered the active duty Army to serve my obligatory ROTC 2 years service one week after graduation from USF. So I don't know what Paul was referring to.*

*I pray that Paul is at peace. I also pray that his family and loved ones are at peace with Paul's memory.*

*Ed G.*

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**Edward M. Gazzano** - October 12, 2023 at 12:17 AM

MR

“ I met Paul when I went to learn about LCVFS and how AbbVie Veterans Employee Resource Group could partner with this organization. That meeting resulted in a long-term partnership with LCVFS over the past 7 years. His leadership - outstanding. His ability to connect people - unfathomable. His personality - remarkable. Paul - unforgettable. My condolences and prayers are offered to the family.



Michelle Raine-Shepherd - October 04, 2023 at 12:21 PM

MW

“ I had the pleasure of working with LCVFS and Paul over the years with the Abbvie Veterans Group. He was a great man and was very dedicated to the community. He will be missed.

Marc White - October 01, 2023 at 09:42 PM

PD

“ Once and always a fellow Screaming Eagle!



Phillip DeRuntz - September 27, 2023 at 12:30 PM