



Laurence R. Gocella

March 3, 1932 - March 16, 2018

Laurence R. Gocella, 86, New Castle, DE, passed away Friday, March 16, 2018, in Christiana Hospital, Newark, DE. He was born on March 8, 1932, in Bradford, PA, a son of the late Louis and Jeanette Herrington Gocella. Larry was educated in the Bradford Area School system, co-captained the 1950 football team and was voted the most valuable player in the annual Northwestern Tier All Star Game. He went on to graduate from Lock Haven University, Lock Haven, PA, lettering in football, gymnastics, swimming, and track. After graduation, he served with the U.S. Army Artillery in Germany where he participated in wrestling and officiating, then became coach at Milford (DE) High School, where his football and wrestling teams had a combined record of 16-1-1 in 1961, and he was selected as an assistant football coach for the annual Blue-Gold Game in 1961. He was inducted into the Delaware Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2001 after an illustrious career as a wrestling coach and official. Larry left Milford in 1962 to serve as Director of Recreation, Health, Physical Education and Athletics in Pottstown, PA. He returned to Delaware's Colonial School District to teach Health and Physical Education at William Penn High School and serve as assistant wrestling coach, where his Junior Varsity teams went undefeated for three years. He officiated scholastic and collegiate wrestling throughout Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania for 27 years. Larry presided over the Delaware Wrestling Officials Association for 13 years, was instrumental in initiating workshops to train novice officials, and helped start the Milford Invitational Wrestling

Tournament in the late 1950's. He received his Master's Degree from Glassboro State College in 1973 and was an adjunct professor at the University of Delaware for 11 years, teaching methods and materials courses for future coaches and teachers. He retired from the Colonial School District in 1995 after 31 years and was the Liaison for the Colonial District Transportation Department for 17 years. In addition to his teaching and coaching career, Larry served on the board of the New Castle County School Employees Credit Union as Treasurer and Chief Loan Officer. He was the recipient of a Distinguished Service Award from Lock Haven University in 2009 and a Distinguished Philanthropist Award in 2015 in recognition of his outstanding contributions and service to Lock Haven University. He is survived by several nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Margaret E. Girhiny Gocella in 2007. Friends will be received 4 to 8 P.M. Wednesday, March 21, 2018, in the Ferguson Funeral Home and Crematory, Inc., 700 Broad Avenue, Belle Vernon, 724-929-5300, www.FergusonFuneralHomeAndCrematory.com. A blessing service will be in the funeral home at 10 A.M. Thursday, March 22, 2018, with Rev. Francisco R. Gan officiating. Interment will follow in Belle Vernon Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

Belle Vernon Cemetery

1000 Broad Avenue
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 21. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Ferguson Funeral Home and Crematory, Inc.
700 Broad Avenue
Belle Vernon, PA 15012
(724) 929-5300

Blessing Service

MAR 22. 10:00 AM (ET)

Ferguson Funeral Home and Crematory, Inc.
700 Broad Avenue
Belle Vernon, PA 15012
(724) 929-5300

Tribute Wall

SN

“ *Larry and Margaret were our neighbors for 30 years. They would look out for our boys when they were young and we looked after Larry as he got older.*

Great neighbors become great friends and family.

Scott & Mary Ann Nelson - March 22, 2018 at 08:56 PM

KC

“ *Larry was a pioneer of Delaware wrestling. He was the official's official. Larry was the referee his fellow refs would pay to watch work. He was a great man, a great referee, a great mentor and a great humanitarian.*

Kevin Charles - March 21, 2018 at 04:26 PM

ND

“ *As a member of the 1950's Lock Haven community....."Where enduring friendships flourish"....I am grateful to Larry for his bringing friends together for many years at PennDel. He was a good friend to all and he will be missed.*

Nancy (Brown) Drukenbrod - March 21, 2018 at 03:58 PM

BG

“ Larry was my cousin who grew up on Brennan street where so many of the Gocella-related families lived. As youngsters, we all played games in the street til our parents called us all to go home to go to bed. Ours were not the games that Larry later taught or officiated at. In fact, few of us knew who "won." It was just cool to know you had such an extended "family." On that street, we all watched as a local band paraded down on a holiday. We would all stand outside our homes to watch and celebrate.
I know Larry missed his beloved Margaret very much, and now they are together again. With love and prayers,
Cousin, Barbara Gocella

Barbara Gocella - March 21, 2018 at 01:57 PM

DH

“ Larry touched the lives of a great cross section of people in his lifetime. Family, students, parents, athletes, teachers, school officials and transportation staff. Most everyone knows Mr. Gocella in the community and State of Delaware. His guidance and "coaching" was instrumental in the success of the Colonial School District Transportation Department over the last 17 years that he worked with us. He continued to teach during this time having safety meeting with our staff on student behavior discipline and his passion of educating the our younger students to ride the school bus safely.

A great man who lived a great life! He will be greatly missed!

*Don Hartwig
Colonial Transportation (retired)*

Don Hartwig - March 21, 2018 at 10:48 AM

BR

“ Larry, was a former excellent teacher of mine at Wm. Penn. Later as a colleague and friend, I always enjoyed his great sense of humor and his unique and positive perspective on teaching and life in general. He will be sorely missed.
Bruce Reynolds

Bruce Reynolds - March 21, 2018 at 10:33 AM



“ My dear cousin Larry. May you rest in peace. I am going to miss our interesting phone calls and the laughs we had from the past. I am so glad we just had a good talk. Many hearts are hurting right now. You will be in my daily thoughts and one thing for sure, you will never be forgotten. I love you, cuz
Kaye Meyers
Lower Burrell, Pa

Kaye Meyers - March 20, 2018 at 06:19 PM

JL

“ I want to send my condolences from the Linus family. Mr. Gocella was a teacher of mine at William Penn High School and a good friend of my father. He would meet my father at Arners for breakfast before he passed away in 2014. I will never forget his kindness he showed to my family. Jim Linus Class of 1970

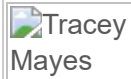
Jim Linus - March 20, 2018 at 04:58 PM



“ Lily and Rose Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Laurence R. Gocella.



March 20, 2018 at 10:00 AM

 Tracey Mayes

“ *Mr Gocella you truly were one of a kind! Many fond memories of you at WP when you always liked to give me a hard time, to your years at Colonial Transportation. You will be missed & memories of you i'll always treasure!*



Tracey Mayes - March 20, 2018 at 09:15 AM

JH

“ *Larry was a mentor and colleague for over 30 years. We shared a classroom and he was the teacher I tried to model myself after. We also shared a passion for wrestling as I was the coach at William Penn and Larry was the top official in the state. He was the best official I've ever seen work. Most importantly Larry is one of the finest men I have ever had the privilege to know. Rest in peace my friend.*

Jack Holloway

Jack Holloway - March 19, 2018 at 10:13 PM



“ *Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for the family of Laurence R. Gocella.*



March 19, 2018 at 09:15 PM

WG

“ Larry was a First Cousin to 20 living Cousins of the Gocella Family. His Brother Domenic lives in Bradford PA with some of his Children and Grandchildren as do many Friends and other Relatives. His Father Louis was my Father's (Alfred w/Louise) Brother and one of 13 children of Dominic and Theresa Gocella Famiglia. His Mother Jeanette was a Dear Friend (Aunt) who we grew up with and in the same neighborhood. (Brennan St., Bradford PA) We visited and communicated over the years, as did all the cousins. We pray for Larry and his Extended Family at this time of sorrow and disbelief. Yet, we know his is 'safely home' with his Family. Please pass on our condolences, prayers and love to the family, May His soul and those of the Faithful departed rest in peace, Amen.

Bill & Donna Gocella; Barbara Gocella; Dolores Kase and Families

William "Gus" and Donna Gocella - March 19, 2018 at 05:31 PM

CW

“ I attended Lock Haven University with Larry and he was my dear friend. Attending LHU Alumni events with Larry always included reminiscing the great times we all had at The Haven! We called each other on our birthdays, mine was on March 7th and Larry's was on March 8th. What a blessing that I was able to wish him Happy Birthday a few days ago. To know Larry was to be his friend.

Larry will be greatly missed!

Connie Whitehill



Connie Whitehill - March 19, 2018 at 04:18 PM

CB

What a great cousin. He always payed attention to me when we would go to Bradford to visit. We spent many hours playing battleship with only paper and pencil. My favorite time was when he would flip me in the air in his Mother's living. He made the visit worth the long car ride. He'll be dearly missed by family and friends.

Cherylann Bryant - March 20, 2018 at 07:01 PM



“ Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Laurence R. Gocella.



March 19, 2018 at 04:05 PM

JM

“ I attended Lock Haven as a classmate of Larry's graduating in 1954. I connected with Larry when he and several grads started the PenDel Alumni Group. Thanks to Larry that group is still viable today. Thanks to Larry the PenDel group has a scholarship program for Lock Haven students and members have donated thousands of dollars to the University. Larry was a good man and he will be missed. Jim Morrell

James E. Morrell - March 19, 2018 at 02:51 PM

KN

“ His service as Penn-Del leader has made a great positive difference to me. It facilitated renewed contact with LHU alumni of years past. May he rest in peace.
Kerwin Nailor, class of '59

Kerwin Nailor - March 19, 2018 at 02:40 PM



“ *With Distinction was purchased for the family of Laurence R. Gocella.*



March 19, 2018 at 12:29 PM



“ *Larry was a friend and mentor. He had such a great sense of humor and just always knew how to make an entire room laugh! He will be forever in my heart ❤️ Dorothy Grabowski colonial transportation*



Dorothy Poore Grabowski - March 19, 2018 at 10:20 AM

J5

*I attended Lock Haven during the time that Larry was there. After graduation many of us went into the service. I connected with Larry when a group of Lock Haven grads started the PenDel Alumni group. Thanks to Larry that group is still active to this day. He was responsible for the setting up a scholarship program for students in PenDel*s name. Larry will be missed. Jim Morrell*

James E. Morrell 54 - March 19, 2018 at 04:05 PM

JC

"We were so proud to have Larry as a close friend. He had such a great memory and would share many funny stories of our college friends through the years. We visited regularly and truly will miss our phone conversations. We have wonderful memories of our car rides to Harrisburg for the PenDel lunches. Larry will always be in our thoughts and memories."

*Janice and Dick Caldwell
Milford, Delaware*

Janice and Dick Caldwell - March 19, 2018 at 10:53 PM

KM

This is such a shock. I just talk with Larry. His mother and my mother where sisters. I remember always going to their home for meatballs and spaghetti. I am going to miss our talks. Larry you will always be in my thoughts. You were a wonderful caring cousin. I love you, Kaye Meyers, Lower Burrell, Pa.

Kaye Meyers - March 20, 2018 at 09:42 AM