



## Gerald Cardinale

February 20, 2021

One of New Jersey's longest serving legislators, Senator Gerald Cardinale, DDS, passed on Saturday, February 20th after a brief illness. Born in Brooklyn, New York, Cardinale went on to become a respected public servant, successful dentist, and accomplished businessman.

Cardinale attended Brooklyn Prep, graduated with a BS in Chemistry from St. John's University College, and completed his education at the New York University College of Dentistry. Since 1959, Dr. Cardinale practiced dentistry with office in Fort Lee. As a small businessman in the real estate industry, Cardinale built the first multi-floor office building in Fort Lee as well as Cardinale Square, which is now Fort Lee Plaza.

Senator Cardinale's true calling in life though was service to community, and he dedicated his life to civic and social causes.

An active resident of Demarest, New Jersey, he was elected to and served on the Board of Education from 1967 to 1973, including as president in 1969 and 1970. From 1975 to 1978, he served as Mayor of Demarest where he established a senior citizen center in the historic Demarest railroad station, which he was instrumental in preserving.

A former trustee of the Regional Mental Health Center in Dumont, Senator

Cardinale helped establish a program for the frail elderly, which continues to flourish today. As a philanthropist, he contributed to and helped raise funds for the Boy Scouts, the Heart Fund, Bergen County Women Against Rape, Shelter Our Sisters, Save Our Sisters, and the John Harms Center for the Arts. He was active in the ARC of Bergen & Passaic Counties, and was the cofounder of the Bergen County Task Force on Sexual Abuse of Children.

Senator Cardinale served in the State Assembly from 1980 to 1982. During his first year, the casino industry and Byrne administration were rocked by the federal government's ABSCAM investigation. As a freshman assemblyman, Cardinale led the fight for casino reform legislation; he was the prime sponsor of twelve casino reform bills, which were voted into law, keeping the casinos in Atlantic City free of political manipulation and mob influence.

Senator Cardinale was elected to the State Senate in 1981 and was re-elected nine times. He was a ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate Commerce Committee. He was also a member of the State House Commission and the Legislative Oversight Committee. During his lengthy tenure, he served on the Senate Bioethics Committee and the Port Authority In-Lieu-of-Tax-Payment Study Commission. He was a delegate to four Republican National Conventions and was a candidate for governor in 1989.

Senator Cardinale's advocacy for women, children, and the family was the hallmark of his long and distinguished legislative career.

He cosponsored Joan's Law in the late 1990s and subsequently conceived and co-prime sponsored Megan's Law, establishing the model for other state and national laws. In 2001, Senator Cardinale's bill requiring parental consent prior to children being subjected to intrusive surveys in public schools became law. In 2002, the senator won his long battle for parental rights regarding sex

education with the passage of his Stress Abstinence in Sex Education Bill. More recently, Cardinale's bill establishing involuntary commitment to outpatient treatment for persons in need of such treatment was passed into law, benefiting the thousands of individuals and families struggling with psychiatric issues.

Senator Cardinale was recognized for his leadership in sponsoring major tort reform overhauls that included limitations on product liability and punitive damages. His Affidavit of Merit requirement in malpractice suits was one of the first in the nation.

Senator Cardinale sponsored a series of bills which became law enabling small business and affinity groups to obtain health insurance coverage at favorable rates. HMOs must now allow consumers to have their prescriptions filled at the pharmacy of their choice as a result of his legislation. In addition, Senator Cardinale's tax fairness law for Mutual Money Market Funds allowed back office operations of major stock brokers and money managers to relocate in New Jersey without punitive tax regulations. The state now has thousands of jobs that, without this legislation, would not be here.

Senator Cardinale received more than 70 Legislator of the Year or similar awards from state and national groups in recognition of his exemplary service to the people of New Jersey.

Despite his many professional accolades and accomplishments, Dr. Cardinale was most proud of his family. He and his wife Carole (nee Petruzzo) married in 1959 and together raised five children: including Marisa and her partner Linda; Christine; Kara; Gary and his wife Kirsty; and, Nicole. They also have 4 grandchildren, Sebastian, Allegra, Tamara, and Chloe.

Family and friends are invited to visit Tuesday 3-8PM at the Barrett Leber Funeral Home, 148 Dean Dr., Tenafly. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Wednesday at 12:15PM at Mt. Carmel RC Church, Tenafly. Interment to follow at Brookside Cemetery. In lieu of flowers donations in his name to Several Sources Shelters, 300 Airmount Ave, Ramsey, NJ 07446 or to Strengthen Our Sisters, 563 Ringwood Ave Ste 1, Wanaque, NJ, NJ 07465. Visit Gerald's memorial tribute page at [www.barrettfuneralhome.net](http://www.barrettfuneralhome.net).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

FEB **23**. 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Barrett Leber Funeral Home  
148 Dean Dr  
Tenafly, NJ 07670  
(201) 568-8043  
<https://www.barrettleberfuneralhome.com/>

## Funeral Mass

FEB **24**. 12:15 PM (ET)

Mt. Carmel RC Church  
10 County Road  
Tenafly, NJ 07670

# Tribute Wall

BS

“ R.I.P GERRY a job well done a iron horse of bergen county working hard for everything gerry stood for in our state he cared so much about the residents of New Jersey he will me missed it's true he left us and never will be forgotten it's going to be hard shoes to fill in Trenton a New Jersey legend my sympathies to mrs cardinale god bless



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**BILL SAVINO** - March 18, 2021 at 06:52 PM

JC

“ My sincere condolences to Carole and family. Senator Cardinale, my friend and neighbor Gerry will always be remembered as a loving, God fearing man, who was always willing to help anyone. He was as passionate and tenacious as can be when working on the benefits for humanity. Gerry will be sorely missed and always remembered.  
God Bless. Joseph Connolly Councilman and neighbor Demarest, NJ

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**Joseph Connolly** - February 25, 2021 at 07:58 AM

SR

“ Condolences to Carole and the Cardinale family! I am grateful for the time he shared to talk, to teach and to tolerate. Dr. Senator Gerald Cardinale helped to shape my life. His accomplishments in public service are great and will never be forgotten. “Rest in Peace Senator.”  
Sincerely,  
Sandra Ann Robinson – Hackensack

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**Sandra Ann Robinson** - February 24, 2021 at 09:39 AM

MG

“ *Most of you know him as a Senator, business man or a dentist. I knew him as an Uncle. Here is a picture of Uncle Gerry and Aunt Carole at his Mother’s 80th birthday party back in 1990. This is how I know him. Having fun and celebrating with family. Xoxo*



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**Maria (Donino) Goldsmith** - February 24, 2021 at 06:38 AM

SR

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



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**Sandra Ramos** - February 24, 2021 at 01:17 AM

JD

“ *1 file added to the album Tribute Wall*



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**Joseph F. Dolloff** - February 23, 2021 at 06:26 PM

JD

“ Prayers and condolences to my former classmate, Marisa, and the rest of the Cardinale family. Gerald lived a stellar life, helping all of those around him. He will not be forgotten.  
Sincerely, Joseph F. Dolloff, Salem, CT

Joseph F. Dolloff - February 23, 2021 at 06:14 PM

JP

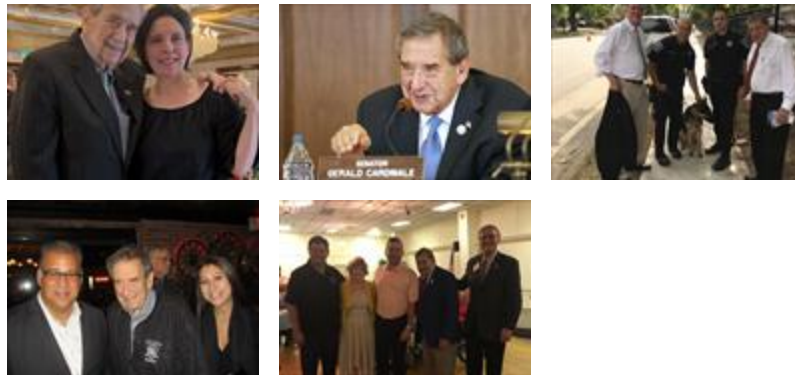
“ My prayers and condolences are with you all.



Joanne Pianghi - February 23, 2021 at 04:56 PM



“ 17 files added to the tribute wall



Judith Fisher - February 23, 2021 at 12:06 PM

AC

“ 1 file added to the album *Tribute Wall*



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**Ann Carletta** - February 23, 2021 at 11:37 AM

PT

“ *Rest in Peace, Senator. You remained true to your convictions and loyal to your constituents. We will miss you.*  
*The Paul Talarico Family, Ramsey*

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**Paul Talarico** - February 23, 2021 at 11:36 AM

DO

“ *I met Senator Cardinale during my campaigns for D36 Assembly and Senate. Clearly he and I both knew that winning in D36 presented a formidable challenge. Never the less, Gerry was always supportive and always made time to share his experiences and to provide support and advice .*

*I have the utmost respect for him. He will surely be missed by all.*

*Donald Diorio.*

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**dondiorio** - February 23, 2021 at 11:13 AM

WK

“ We will miss Gerry at our table every month at the Bergen County Dental Society at Seasons. He was a wonderful colleague and Legislator who contributed so much to our dental profession on the state level. Condolences to all in his family.

*William Kurylo, DMD  
A constituent, colleague and friend*

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**William Kurylo** - February 22, 2021 at 06:12 PM

LF

“ My late husband ERIC FIELDS met his beloved wife Carole decades ago and shared a memorable dinner together. Thus began our close, long-lasting relationship with this couple who have been dedicated to serving the public throughout their lives. I admired Gerry for his patriotism and his desire to pass this critical civic component onto students throughout the state. I worked for Gerry for a while until my other career diminished the time I could spend assisting him. But I gained such a solid respect, and genuine love, for him during that time. My husband dedicated himself to Gerry and his many causes, and we were always so excited to celebrate their family's special days at Season's. We met so many dear and wonderful folks through his association with the county Republican Party and supported them and their races whenever we could.

*Eric and I loved Gerry for the decency, the values, the hard work and dedication he embodied. His word was his bond. We felt honored that both Gerry and Carole considered us close friends, and I shall miss him greatly.*

*My deepest sympathy to Carole and the entire Cardinale family.*



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**Lynne D. Fields** - February 22, 2021 at 04:21 PM

JV

“ Words cannot adequately express the sadness we feel about Senator Cardinale's passing. May the peace that comes from the wonderful memories and love shared comfort Carole and her family now and in the days to come.

*Rest in Peace Senator Cardinale...*

*Ramsey Former Councilman Joe Verdone and Dorothy Verdone.*

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**Joe Verdone** - February 22, 2021 at 12:44 PM

LB

“ My deceased husband Senator Byron Baer and I considered ourselves lucky to be friends with the Senator for many years. Although he was one of the most conservative members of the legislature and Byron one of the most liberal, they developed a long term friendship based on their mutual respect for each other. During the two year period when the Senate was split 20/20 they shared chairmanship of a committee. People thought they wouldn't get anything done but they were wrong. Both men worked well in a bipartisan manner and sheperded lots of good legislation together. Gerry was one of Byron's best friends in the legislature. Gerry was a king brilliant man who cared deeply for his family and the state he represented. He was a icon and a gentleman. I will never forget his kindness to my husband over the many years they served together. He will be missed by many.

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**Linda Baer** - February 21, 2021 at 10:47 PM

DO

“ Geri as I knew him was an amazing man. The O'Prandy and Chiappane family is indebted to his support and guidance. Being Donald O'Prandy's dentist, Geri created the perfect smile, which he was most remembered having, after knocking a front tooth on a chin up bar at the age of 12. Donald followed in his father's William footsteps cleaning the offices, handling any electrical issues for all the properties. Donald even protected the personal residence in Demarest from kids out on mischief night. Upon Donald's passing in 2011, Geri was instrumental in encouraging my brother, William Chiappane to go for his electrical license and business Palisades Electric. William continued to handle any electrical issues that needed attention. Condolences to Geri wife Carol and family. My deepest sympathy! May Geri RIP.

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**Deborah Chiappane O'Prandy** - February 21, 2021 at 10:25 PM

KS

“ Senator Cardinale was a wonderful man and he will be missed by all who knew him. My deepest condolences to his wife, Carol, and family.  
Kathy Safai

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**Katherine B Safai** - February 21, 2021 at 07:19 PM

MR

“ My wife Angela and I send our condolences to Carole and the entire Cardinale family on the passing of a great civil servant. I knew that Hillsdale had a responsive state senator when I called his office over 10 years ago to see if he could help me untangle a Medicaid application that a family member had submitted but which was being held hostage by the Trenton bureaucracy. He and his staff were understanding and helpful in getting that matter resolved. Then, after I won a seat on the Hillsdale Council in 2014, Gerry graciously agreed to administer the oath of office to me. But he also gave me good advice as a new Councilman. He said, "For the first year, do much more listening than speaking; observe everything around you, and always be responsive quickly to residents who need guidance. They will remember you !" Then, in 2017, after I became the mayor, he joked, "I guess you can talk more now!"

*I will miss his guidance, his sharp wit, his devotion to helping others, and his leadership in advocating for responsible government.*

*Gerry, though you have left us to enjoy the everlasting embrace of God in Heaven, you will not be forgotten. You have set a high bar for all elected officials to achieve. Rest in peace, Senator !*

*Mayor John J. Ruocco  
Borough of Hillsdale*

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**Mayor John Ruocco** - February 21, 2021 at 05:50 PM

RP

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Remi Petrillo** - February 21, 2021 at 04:55 PM

JF

“ I have worked for the Honorable Senator Cardinale for 20 years as his Director of Constituent Affairs and Legislative Aid. I will truly miss your words of wisdom friendship and getting the job done approach . I thank you for your public service and kindness to me. Fran and I want to express our sympathies to his wife Carole and the entire family. You will be missed Senator.  
Jack Fornaro



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**Jack Fornaro** - February 21, 2021 at 02:47 PM

PB

“ My name is Patrick Bertollo and I am a volunteer firefighter in Upper Saddle River. I and 2 of my colleagues approached Senator Cardinale a couple of years ago to ask for his assistance to force the NJ State Firefighters Association to stop their support of age discrimination and either raise or abolish the age limit to become a member. He listened attentively to our pleas and sponsored 2 bills to support our effort. The last one, S-1634, passed the senate and is awaiting final approval by the governor. Although the relief Association managed to have the bill altered to still keep out those over the age of 58, Senator Cardinale's action allowed hundreds of firefighters access to benefits that otherwise would have been denied them. Thank you, Senator Cardinale, for you efforts on our behalf.

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**Pat Bertollo** - February 21, 2021 at 08:36 AM

EL

Senator Cardinale and Carole were a joy and fun to be with I attended many functions with them during the years of my county committee days and beyond -Rest in peace Gerry -you will be missed -so sorry Carole 🙏🙏❤️ Beth Lawrence

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**elizabeth lawrence** - February 21, 2021 at 01:26 PM

“My name is Jon Kurpis. I have lived in D39 my entire life and have been fortunate enough to know Senator Cardinale for over 2 decades. Through the years, I would talk with the Senator in-person at events or call him directly to discuss government & politics. I would like to share one of my conversations with Senator Cardinale with you as it exemplifies the type of leader I knew Gerry to be.

Shortly after college, I called Senator Cardinale to discuss the issue of slow internet dialup speed in the area. I was respectful, yet passionate and had all types of questions and ideas. About half way through, Senator Cardinale starts to chuckle and says “Jonathan, you are going to make a terrific politician once you get that piss and vinegar out of your system.”

Realizing I didn’t know what “piss and vinegar” meant, Senator Cardinale went on to explain that “piss and vinegar” is just aggressive enthusiasm and that he had in fact been filled with it when he started off. Still a bit confused, I asked “Why is aggressive enthusiasm a bad thing?”

Senator Cardinale replied “It’s not. It just can keep you from focusing on what really matters. Let me ask you something Jonathan, what do you think was the first thing I did when I was elected to office?”

I said “Well you’ve been around a while Senator so I’d guess the first thing you did was build the pyramids”. Senator Cardinale replied “Don’t be a wise guy. The first thing I did was get a stop sign for a Democrat. Do you know why I did that Jonathan?”

Not waiting for me to answer, Senator Cardinale said “I did it because it was a safety issue and I wanted all the people I represented to know that I was here to help them even if they didn’t vote for me. If you are filled with too much piss and vinegar Jonathan, you can become caught up with things like internet modem speed issues at the expense of local individuals in your

*district who ask for nothing more than to safely cross the street.”*

*After thinking about it a few seconds, I said “OK Senator, but what if I dedicate myself to helping the individual, but I do so with piss and vinegar levels of enthusiasm?”*

*Senator Cardinale responds “Well then you have me beat Jonathan. That’s enough for tonight.”*

*Of all the conversations I had with Senator Cardinale, this one stands out to me because it had an impact on my life. Since that talk, there have been hundreds of times when I reminded myself to look out for people that need help, individuals I represent and the little guy. I have always been committed to come through because deep down I knew Senator Cardinale was proud to get a stop sign for a Democrat and I should therefore take pride in doing whatever it is that’s being asked of me.*

*Rest in Peace Senator Cardinale. You may be gone, but you will never be forgotten.*

*Jon Kurpis*

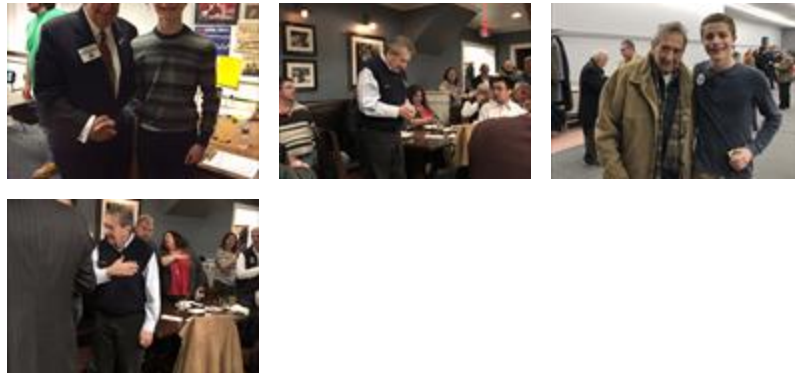
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**Jon Kurpis** - February 21, 2021 at 02:56 AM

MS

“ I first met Senator Cardinale when I was a sophomore at Mahwah High School in 2017, where his campaign was the first I ever volunteered on. He was always very nice and I appreciate how he was inclusive of those much younger than him, and of course, his many decades of public service not just to District 39, but the entire state. He was a staunch Republican and supported our candidates. As a GOP County Committeeman, I learned how important it is to have a strong relationship with your leaders. While I’m disappointed I could never actually vote for him, I know his legacy will live on. My favorite memory would be on election night 2019, I asked him how he felt about Holly and Bob “pulling through,” and he said with a fist bump, “They didn’t pull through. They kicked ass.” He passed away the day after I flew back to campus so I can’t make it next week, but my condolences go out to the Cardinale family.

-Michael Schnoll, Mahwah, NJ



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Michael Schnoll - February 21, 2021 at 01:49 AM

RJ

“ When I served in different capacities in four separate N.J. State Government departments (and in distinct decades), Gerry was routinely accessible, with a smile and additional words of wisdom. My deepest sympathy to the Cardinale family. Prof. R. Alum, Jr.

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Roland A. Alum, Jr. - February 20, 2021 at 10:40 PM

SB

“ *Ed and I will always remember his generous gift of friendship during our time as tenants in one of his buildings in fort lee. 25 years as a landlord. He was always fair and kind. We will remember him. And Carole. We're hugging you now!!!*



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**susan boni** - February 20, 2021 at 10:07 PM

RD

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



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**Robert Di Dio** - February 20, 2021 at 09:43 PM