



Martin Romeo

February 19, 2021

Martin Romeo, 69, of Woodbridge, VA, passed away at home on Friday, February 19, 2021.

He was born on November 4, 1951 to Salvatore and Catherine Romeo in Patchogue, Long Island, NY.

After completing his BS in Electrical Engineering at MIT and an MS and Engineer's Degree in Electrical Engineering from the Navy Postgraduate School, Martin embarked on a 21-year career for the Navy, serving as a Naval Engineering Duty Officer. He worked on a variety of projects ranging from ships and satellites to computer hardware and other electronic systems. He was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal in 1982 for work on the development of the fax machine and computer systems for the Internet and received the Navy Meritorious Service Medals in 1987 and 1994.

He then went through George Washington University's Teaching Program to become a teacher. For the last 26 years, he served as a physics teacher at Madison High School in Vienna, VA. His teaching motto was, "You are not what you know. You are what you can figure out for yourself." He was deeply devoted to his students and loved his Madison community. Besides being a well-loved and highly engaging physics teacher and sponsor for the chess club, swing club, and ping pong club (among others), he enjoyed orchestrating

the Science Fair, serenading students for their birthdays and singing “Newtonian” Carols (in honor of the birth of Isaac Newton on December 25), speaking at graduation, performing in flash mob dances, and proudly leading the freshmen classes in the Warhawk Fight Song.

Martin was a faithful member of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church (SEAS), where he served as a cantor and sang in the vigil choir for many years. In his free time, he pursued a variety of diverse interests including gardening, ballroom dancing, bowling, table tennis, chess, and playing the accordion. He also enjoyed the science fiction genre and was a huge Star Trek: The Next Generation fan.

Martin is preceded in death by his mother and father, oldest sister, Mary, and his loving wife, Gloria. He is survived by his daughter, Josephine, and his son-in-law, Matthew, as well as his youngest sister, Maureen.

The funeral is scheduled for 11am on Monday, March 1, 2021 at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, 12807 Valleywood Drive, Lake Ridge, VA 22192. For those unable to travel or come to the funeral, the funeral mass will be livestreamed. <https://vimeo.com/event/735661/4aa9bb2e58>

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Warhawk Foundation in his memory.

<https://www.warhawksf.org/>

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAR 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church
12805 Valleywood Drive
Woodbridge, VA 22192

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Romeo was the kindest and most selfless person I have ever met. I am blessed to have met him in person and taken his Physics class. I had the chance to chat with him every once in a while both in Ping Pong Club and while organizing his physics equipment after school, and I had learned so much from him, the way he treats his work, and the way he treats everyone. Mr. Romeo always had a smile on his face, even when he was busy answering students' questions. His enthusiasm for physics, teaching, and ping pong (and many more) is simply unmatched. I will forever be grateful for this memory and may his lovely soul rest in peace. My condolences to his family.*

Lijie Li - January 15, 2023 at 03:18 AM



“ *Martin Romeo*

January 12, 2023 at 12:00 PM



“ *I recently found out that a friend's husband has started teaching physics, and for some reason my first thought was that he needs to teach the "Force = Mass x acceleration" song (to the tune of We Wish You a Merry Christmas). I searched for Mr. Romeo to see if for some reason curious if he was still teaching and if so if he had a link to his songs, etc. I'm so sad to hear of his passing but wanted to share with his friends/family that he has made an impact that continues to live on. -Lori Roberts ('02)*

Lori Roberts - November 15, 2021 at 09:49 AM

MK

“ It was a senior skip day and a junior, all that was left in the classroom was me, Chris, and Mr.Romeo. With no lesson plan and just a relaxing day thought out, we had fun. I grabbed the broomstick in the classroom and filmed a timelapse video of me "flying" on it throughout the classroom. The jumping every second, retakes, adding music, it was hilarious, and Mr.Romeo was there to witness it all and laugh together. That was the first time I heard Mr.Romeo laugh. Not his small chuckles, a genuine laugh. It's such an intimate and loving memory I am so blessed to have. Along with the amazing cookies and sweets with his secret special concoction of 7up and orange juice, Mr. Romeo was always sweet and kind to us. May his sweet soul rest in peace.

Michael Kim - May 21, 2021 at 01:16 AM

NA

“*Mr. Romeo was a wonderful man. His love of teaching and for his students was palpable not only during his lessons, but in the way he engaged with the entire JMHS community. My peers and I only know the school fight song thanks to Mr. Romeo. I had the pleasure of having a locker right outside of Mr. Romeo’s classroom for four years, so I got to enjoy his cheerful showtunes every day. We would often pass each other on our way into the building each morning, and I remember how nice it felt to begin the day seeing a smiling face. As a junior, I remember being so excited when I learned that Mr. Romeo would be my physics teacher. He made physics feel relatable and fun.*

It was impossible not to feel happy around Mr. Romeo. The only way I can describe the effect he had on people is to imagine the feeling you get when you turn on the lights on a Christmas tree. Mr. Romeo was a kind man and was so generous with his time, but I remember being particularly struck by his humility. He was a man who accomplished so many interesting and impressive feats in his lifetime, but he never rubbed that in anyone’s face. I am sad that future Warhawks will not have the opportunity to learn from Mr. Romeo, to hear his happy tunes, and to experience his kindness. My one regret is that I didn’t take the chance to tell him how much his kindness impacted my own life. I am a better person because I knew Mr. Romeo, and I will forever be grateful to him.

Natalie Anderson - March 19, 2021 at 02:13 PM



“ *Mr. Romeo was the kindest, most brilliant teacher I ever had. His warm, upbeat, cheerful spirit was contagious and made physics fun. He sparked a lifelong curiosity in his students and joy for anyone lucky enough to pass by his classroom, hearing him sing his famous jingles through the halls. May his legacy as a public servant, esteemed and adored physics teacher live on forever. My heart goes out to his loved ones.*

Sarah Singer - March 02, 2021 at 06:33 PM

ZF

“ *Mr. Romeo inspired many people, including my sons. We are grateful to have had him in our lives and are sad for those students who will not know him. He will live in our hearts. Our condolences to his family.*

Zgoda family - March 01, 2021 at 09:14 PM

DN

“ *I was a student in Mr. Romeo's Physics class at Madison high school. Martin helped inspire a love of science in me. His famous "college tips" were invaluable advice that I took with me through college and beyond to my PhD in Geology. I also deeply appreciated Mr. Romeo's leadership of the chess club, which I regularly attended. The man was so kind and had a passion for life and service that I will never forget.*

Daniel Nothaft - March 01, 2021 at 07:33 PM

EA

“ When I first came to Madison many years ago, Marty was described to me as a "Renaissance Man." I saw him as quiet man and a very beloved teacher. I got to know Marty better through my son, Nicholas, and his experiences as one of Marty's students. He and his "science buddies" hung out in Marty's room during the Student Assistant Period (SAP), and Nick talked about him and quoted Marty's advice to the students often at home.

If a student confided in me their fear of taking Physics, I advised them to try to get Mr. Romeo for a teacher, as I had heard only great things about him.

Not only did Marty bestow knowledge upon his students, he provided a safe and comfortable place in the building where they were always welcome. Marty's school spirit, intelligence, kindness, and his very presence will stay with us at Madison as a bright, shining, and guiding light.

*Evie Andres, SLP
Madison High School*

Evie Andres - March 01, 2021 at 11:56 AM

MC

“ This year I had the amazing opportunity to team teach with Mr. Romeo for our Physics class. His unique ability to connect with the students, calm classroom demeanor, unbelievable knowledge and quick-witted humor are things that stick out to me and that I will carry on with me throughout my career. Mr. Romeo always made us feel so relaxed (even in a very challenging class) and also made us all feel so welcomed and appreciated. We lost a great man but will carry his memory and spirit with us forever. He is the definition of a true, dedicated Warhawk! God Bless you Mr. Romeo and thank you for everything.

Michael Carluzzo - March 01, 2021 at 11:03 AM

AW

“Marty is just the kindest colleague I have ever known. He has stopped what he is doing many times to lend me magnets, batteries, balloons - any gadget or gizmo I ever needed he would find it for me! He hired me to work at JMHS in 2014 when he was our science department chair and welcomed me with a jar of salsa he canned himself and showed up to school in a very epic Captain Picard star trek costume on my first Halloween. He once hurt his shoulder moving textbooks and to spare the rest of us from ever suffering the same fate he brought in his personal hand truck every school year and sent an annual email titled "Hello Dolly!" to tell everyone he wanted to help them with get their textbooks moved safely. The students loved him - he provided a safe haven to learn and figure out wildly complex physics equations that always adorned his board, or play a game of chess, or see if they could beat an MIT table tennis legend. I am not the only one he warmly welcomed to Madison - kids who never even had him as a teacher recognized him because he taught them the fight song every year and could be found in the mornings singing in the science hallway. Marty will be forever missed by the Madison community, one in which he made a deep and everlasting impact on so many people.

Alli Wiener - March 01, 2021 at 10:59 AM

MG

“I had Mr. Romeo for physics in 1999. I will never forget when he had surgery and sent us video lectures while he recovered. We missed him so much that when he returned my class made matching shirts that had a logo he had hanging in his classroom on the back. As a science teacher myself, he met with a smile at every science in service we attended and never missed an opportunity to ask me to return to JMHS. I will treasure my memories of PT (with a vector on top of course)

Michelle Gilligan - March 01, 2021 at 10:35 AM

MT

“ I first met Marty almost 30 years ago at a Physics teacher meeting, and had the privilege of working with him for the last 5 years at Madison. He was an intelligent, gentle, giving person who never raised his voice (except to sing) or said an unkind word. He has inspired many hundreds of young people to pursue a career in Physics or Engineering and that is his legacy. He truly loved the school and it's community. He will be truly missed.

Matt Thomson - March 01, 2021 at 09:32 AM

VH

“ When I started at Madison in 2000, I was interning with the GW Fairfax Transition to Teaching program, the same program Marty did when he switched careers. Being French and having moved to the country 4 years prior, I knew nothing about American high schools (besides what I had seen in 90210). An administrator in charge of interns at the time gave me a list of teachers to go observe and of course, Marty was at the top.

What I observed was what you don't find in theoretical classes or books; I saw teaching as an art (and a science of course 😊). His interaction with students, his obvious passion for his content, his demeanor, his delivery... Marty exemplified what teaching was to be like. I later attended his after-school Swing Dance Club and the Science Fair, of course. Thanks to Marty, I got to see what American high schools are first hand. Needless to say he left a huge impact on me and my career as a teacher. Yes, he impacted students but I'm not sure the community knows how much he also impacted his peers. He will be sorely missed but his memory definitely lives on!

Valerie Howell

Valerie Howell - March 01, 2021 at 09:03 AM

KN

“ *Papa Tango was my favorite teacher at Madison. He brought a level of enthusiasm and fun to physics that was infectious and ignited a lifetime love of science. He has positively influenced so many students who started high school physics expecting just a normal teacher but instead got a singing, laughing PT Physics Teacher.*

Kevin N - March 01, 2021 at 01:17 AM

KP

“ *Marty was my mentor in my first teaching job - and as with all his teaching responsibilities he undertook that with care. I consider myself as an educator to be shaped principally from his guidance in my early career. In my five years that I worked with him, I knew Marty to be deeply caring, intensely focused on students success and that of his colleagues. He never hesitated to stand up when a problem needed solving, or to assist when someone else was solving it. He loved his career as an educator, and those of us that crossed paths with him are better for it.*

Marty's smile and laugh will be sorely missed.

Kris Pachla - February 28, 2021 at 08:27 PM

RG

“ I knew Marty for 20 years, as we taught together at Madison HS. Yet it was really hard to truly know him - he was a quiet man. In those two decades I rarely got a glimpse of the personal Marty. But on occasion a few of us in the science department would get together for dinner at back-to-school night, holiday grab bags, etc. It was in those few hours that we witnessed a relaxed, less guarded Marty Romeo. We were treated to stories of his Navy days as a submariner and occasionally to him simply laughing uncontrollably. It was special.

I will remember, as well, his beautiful voice. I was fortunate to have a room very close to his, so a few of us were treated to Marty singing a capella outside his classroom before the start of every school day. Whether it was his improvised "Hail to the Redskins" (I know, but that's what they used to be called), show tunes, or holiday numbers, I feel very blessed that I can picture him and hear him singing with a smile.

He was such a giving man. He gave to others in personal, remarkable ways, whether it was his salsa, his concoctions for our annual chili kick-off, or just lending us every conceivable tool that we might need. For me though, he gave me the gift of music, every day. I will always be in debt to him. RIP, Mr. Romeo.

Richard Gongaware - February 28, 2021 at 01:43 PM

MM

“ I only had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Romeo once at Back to School Night and it was just a quick hello walking out to the next class on my sons schedule. After hearing Mr. Romeo speak, I knew immediately that my son was going to LOVE this teacher. They had so much in common already I thought. Sense of humor, demeanor, the love of Science and Star Trek. It's rare to pick up that vibe in such a short meeting but any parent appreciates the feeling of relief and happiness when they know their kid is going to click with their teacher and it's gonna be a great year in that course. And it WAS a great year and my son loved Mr. Romeo's physics class so much that at Thanksgiving he brought him an apple pie. When my second son took physics this year we were delighted that he also was in Mr. Romeo's class. We are so sorry for your loss but want you to know your Dad touched so many kids and my 2 will always remember him. My oldest son has kept and made the recipe for PT (Physics Teacher) Punch he got from your dad to this day. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Mia McInerney - February 27, 2021 at 04:41 PM

JV

“ Joey, I had the pleasure of speaking with your Dad several times while you were my student. In our conversations, it was clear that he was tremendously proud of you. I know he was a great Dad because of the woman you have become, because of all you have accomplished. One of my favorite memories is of the father/daughter dance at your wedding. It was so graceful and beautiful and, as you told me, completely spontaneous and unrehearsed.

Josephine Volzer

Josephine Volzer - February 27, 2021 at 01:40 PM

KM

“ Mr. Romeo was a very kind and caring gentleman who treated me like family anytime I was in his household. I have many fond memories with Mr. Romeo performing in the church choir together, attending his religious youth class, eating at Madigans Grill on weekends, and watching tv/movies in the family room. Mr. Romeo introduced me ice cream and waffles a treat that I have thoroughly enjoyed over my lifetime. He was a wonderful father to my good friend, Joey and an incredible educator at James Madison High School. I will miss him very much.

Kristen McDonough - February 26, 2021 at 08:41 PM

JD

“ Mr. Romeo was a kind and loving “bonus” father to me. I remember with joy all the songs, laughs, chocolate shakes, Mexican dinners, and Star Trek jokes & references we shared. Above all, I’m grateful to him for opening his heart and home to me as if I were truly his daughter/Joey’s sister.

Janice Dean - February 26, 2021 at 06:07 PM

JR

“ Marty was an amazing teacher and role model for all of his students and the entire staff at Madison High School. His gentle nature, his clever teaching methods were an inspiration. He touched so very many lives!

julie Robeson - February 26, 2021 at 04:16 PM