

*In Loving  
Memory*



*Visitation*  
ST. JOHN VIANNEY CATHOLIC CHURCH  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2008  
AFTER 5:00PM

*Vigil Service*  
ST. JOHN VIANNEY CATHOLIC CHURCH  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2008  
7:00PM

*Memorials to:*  
SIENA FRANCIS HOUSE  
1702 NICHOLAS STREET | OMAHA, NE 68101  
(402) 341-1821

ST. JOHN VIANNEY CATHOLIC CHURCH  
5815 OAK HILLS DRIVE | OMAHA, NE 68137  
(402) 895-0808

*Mass of Christian Burial*  
ST. JOHN VIANNEY CATHOLIC CHURCH  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2008  
10:00AM

Entrance Hymn—**“Be Not Afraid”** by Dufford

**Opening Prayer**

**Revelations 21:1-7**

Responsorial Psalm—**“You are Near”** by Schulte

**II Corinthians 24**

**Gospel Acclamation**

**Mt. 25:31-40**

Preparation of Gifts—**“Ave Maria”**

**Eucharistic Prayer**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Communion—**“We Will Rise Again”**

Meditation—**“O Danny Boy”**

Recessional—**“On Eagles Wings”** by Joncas

**Pall Bearers**..... Deacons Joseph Choi, John Kronschnabel, Chuck Luczynski,  
Harold Sawtelle, Ralph “Bud” Tarpe and Jerry Steenson

**Celebrant**..... Fr. Pat McCaslin

**Deacon on the Altar**..... Frank Telich

**Musicians**..... Bob Ackley, Arlene Stratman and Theresa DesRosiers

**Lectors**..... Sister Stephanie Matcha and Maurice DesRosiers

**Altar Server**..... Daniele Rooney

**Gift Bearers**..... Maggie Rooney, Tyler Moore, Kyle Moore, Katie Moore  
Elizabeth Kopetzky and Mimka Huckova

*Interment*  
BLAIR CEMETARY | BLAIR, NEBRASKA  
2:30PM

When money was tight and he had no work, Lucien DesRosiers said good-bye to his children, Yvette and Gerald, and wife Florida, who was great with child. They had left the family home in Detroit, returning to Florida's home in Canada, quite literally to survive. It was while they were there, that Joseph Rene was born, October 3, 1928 in Radville, Saskatchewan.

The French word for baby or pretty baby is *petit* or *petou*, which is what he was called and where he got the nickname "Pete." He may have been introduced as Rene, but throughout his life, everyone knew him as Pete, or Peter, Uncle Pete, Grandpa Pete — and to his children, he was Dad.

Once Lucien had secured work and enough money, Florida and her three children were able to return home to Detroit, Michigan where dad was raised. He had a large family, with many brothers and sisters—Yvette and Gerald were older, Rita, Raymond, Maurice, Albert and Mary were younger. The family attended St. Edward's Catholic Church, where Pete received his First Holy Communion on June 7, 1936 and was confirmed a few days later on June 11, 1936.

Pete attended the University of Detroit High School, and then continued on to college where he studied engineering at the University of Detroit. After graduating with a Bachelor of Civil Engineering, he was drafted into the United States Air Force in 1952, serving state-side during the Korean War. He was later discharged from Offutt AFB in 1955 as a First Lieutenant.

### THE PERSISTENT LIEUTENANT

Late in the summer of 1953, Shirley Hunnell was dining at the legion club with some girlfriends when Lt. DesRosiers stopped by their table with a friend of one of her dining companions. Shirley didn't care much for the lieutenant, having set her sights on a colonel or better.

The lieutenant eventually invited her to a party at Carter Lake. Shirley agreed to attend on the condition that *she was his date* and not a just one of the girls. This was their first date. He said he would call the next night, but never did. It was a Saturday and all the men had done their laundry, overflowing the sump pump, so he never got to the phone to call. When he did eventually call again to ask her out, she turned him down saying she had a date with another man from Schuyler, Nebr. *who, when he says he's coming, he comes.*

The lieutenant was persistent and called her again for a date. Throughout the fall and early winter of 1953-54, Pete called periodically for dates, but showed no sign of commitment, so Shirley broke things off. In early 1954, Pete came to see Shirley, ostensibly, to pay her for a baby gift she had purchased and they had given together to a friend. It was then that their relationship resumed.

Believing that the relationship was looking more serious, and knowing that Pete was Catholic, Shirley began studying to convert to Catholicism in 1954—she wanted to be able to accept and live by the religion they would teach their children.

Pete and Shirley attended a holiday party together the winter of 1954-55, where Pete presented her with a little box that rattled—*which rattled her*. Shirley wasn't ready for a ring. Luckily it was earrings.

As the spring progressed, Pete's job prospects were not good in Omaha, so he decided to move back to Detroit. He asked Shirley to move with him. After reviewing several dismal apartments, Shirley decided to move in with Pete's family. By this point, no one had explicitly proposed marriage, but it was generally assumed. Shirley was scared of getting married, but always returned to the same thought—*But he's a good man*. When Pete suggested that they visit a priest, that signaled the decision to marry had been made. The couple was married June 18, 1955. (Shirley never found that colonel to marry, but one did walk her down the aisle to her chosen lieutenant.)

### FAMILY LIFE

The couple moved to Blair, Nebraska in the fall of 1956. In January 1959, construction of the family home was completed. Pete and Shirley moved in with their first born son, Daniel Joseph and were soon joined by their second child, Michele Marie. Over the years, the household grew with additions of more and more children—the goal was to have and raise 12 children. Though they didn't make it to a dozen, the family was further blessed with Elisa Anne, Theresa Marie, Louis Gerard, Barbara Ellen, Gisele Rene (Gigi), Skipper I and II.

Family was important to Pete. He worked long, hard hours—without complaint—in order to provide for his family and enabling Shirley to stay in the home to raise the children. Pete spent time with each and every one of his children—helping with baths and bedtime, reading books, the "funny pages" and Bible stories, playing games and cards. In the summer, he would spend Sunday afternoons at the city pool with the kids and then return home for a dinner of fried chicken. During football season, he would sit in front of the television with the kids and a bowl of popcorn, cheering on the Husker football team. As his daughters matured and took an interest in boys, he was protective and very particular about who they dated, chasing off the ones that didn't get his approval.

Michele's fondest memories of dad were of him always being there for as many important events or activities as he could—graduations, band performances, taking us swimming or to the Shrine circus in Omaha and of his patience as he taught the skill of driving, despite the burned out brakes, hitting poles and other stationary objects—*"Honey, that wall has always been there."*

Barbara recalls favorite memories of winter times when it was snowy and cold outside. We would all gather in the living room, the fire would be going, the TV might be on or not. We'd be playing cards, playing a game or doing a jigsaw puzzle. Mom would make popcorn and cut up apples. Maybe we'd get a root beer or a sip of Dad's beer. Everyone was together and there was a lot of warmth and family sharing.

Lisa remembers working at dad's office when she was a senior in high school as part of the co-op program. Minimum wage and the going rate for co-op students was \$2.25, but Lisa started at \$2.50 and by the end of the year she was paid \$2.75.

Louis remembers spending some quality time with dad at Woodhouse Ford, sitting in all the new pickup trucks, and another time going to P.O. Pears for drinks after Louis graduated from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln with an engineering degree—*like father, like son*.

Gigi had warm memories of dad also. They spent many mornings together, chatting while she sat on the bathroom counter as dad would shave. He would take her along with mom to morning mass, followed by breakfast at The Maple Restaurant in downtown Blair before getting dropped off at school—every morning! In the evenings they would play Gin Rummy and Go Fish. Bedtime was special too—Dad would help with baths, read Bible stories and answer countless questions of what it was like when he was a kid and the mischief he and his brothers found as kids.

When his children grew and moved on in life to marry and start families of their own, he and Shirley were blessed once more with six grandchildren—Daniele, Maggie, Tyler, Kyle, Katie and Elizabeth. He always had a smile and warm embrace for them. He kept them close to his heart, carrying photos of each of them in a small notebook he kept in his pocket. Katie, the fifth grandchild was born just minutes before Pete's birthday, October 2, 1996. Every year after, Katie and Grandpa Pete shared birthday celebrations, blowing out birthday candles together.

### **ENGINEERING, ESTIMATING AND CONSTRUCTION**

For many years, Pete worked for Simon Korshoj in Blair in the construction business. In the mid 1960s, he took a job with Lueder Construction in Omaha until 1975 when he created a partnership with neighbor Jack Chapman to establish his own construction company, Midland General Contracting. He was a good and honest business man, generous too, hiring kids fresh out of college, or men who were without work and just needing a job. With his crew of workers, he built churches, schools, courthouses, jails and libraries in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa communities until the company closed in 1983. At that time, Pete, along with Shirley and youngest daughter Gigi, moved to Springfield, Missouri to open and operate a satellite office for a contractor based in Kansas City. It wasn't long after that, they quickly moved to Kansas City and finally back to the Omaha area in

late 1984. In Omaha, Pete worked for a few contractors before starting his own freelance contracting and consulting business—Midwest Estimating, based in his home. At the same time, he became office manager for a small, father-son, shirt-pocket operation, DC Masonry, which he transformed into a million-dollar company.

### **NINE LIVES**

Dating back to 1983, Pete survived a ruptured aneurysm, the same thing that caused his father's death; a leg amputation, which crippled him, but never slowed him; a subdural hematoma that challenged, but never conquered him; quadruple bypass surgery, strokes, shingles, dementia and the list goes on. And yet, Shirley always told the admitting nurses taking his health history at the hospital that Pete was *"the healthiest of sick men."* He was tormented by health issues that would slow down or halt the life of many, yet he endured, surviving each and every one, without complaint or regret, as if they were his duty, his cross to bear. It is said that cats have nine lives, Dad must have had that many or more.

### **FAITH-LIFE**

Holding his faith near and dear to his heart, he attended mass, often times followed by a time of prayer and saying the rosary—every day of his life, until he physically was not able to get to church. He made a point of passing his faith on to his children, seating them in the front pew at mass each and every Sunday, and volunteering countless hours to teach CCD classes. In 1973, Pete began studies to become a deacon in the Catholic Church. He was ordained in 1976 and served primarily at St. Francis Borgia in Blair and at St. John Vianney in Omaha. As deacon he presided at first communion, confirmation and wedding ceremonies of his children, as well as the baptisms of each of his six grand-children. He lead prayer groups and shared his faith in his daily routine and dealings. He made countless visits to criminals in jail and to the sick in their homes and hospitals. He mentored others as they studied to become deacons too. He diligently read from his Bible and prayed the rosary daily. He was faithful and prayerful, mouthing along the words as Shirley led him in prayer through the last days and hours of his life.

### **WHEN ALL IS SAID...**

At the end of this life's journey, Rene Joseph DesRosiers was

- ... a pretty baby,
- ... a serving officer,
- ... a loving husband,
- ... an attentive father,
- ... a gentle grandfather,
- ... an honorable businessman,
- ... a survivor, a fighter, a patient with patience,
- ... a faithful servant, teacher and counselor,
- ... and so much more!

**FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

BETHANY FUNERAL HOME | LAVISTA, NE