



Lawrence J. Laychak

April 4, 1949 - October 8, 2017

Lawrence J. Laychak, 68, of North Huntingdon, died Sunday October 8, 2017. He was born April 4, 1949 in McKeesport, a son of the late Joseph and Irene (Vislay) Laychak. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh and was a retired physics teacher for Woodland Hills High School. He was a member of St. Agnes Catholic Church, North Huntingdon and loved all outdoor activities especially fishing, hunting, trapping, and golfing with a special group of friends who called themselves the "good guys". Larry was an army veteran of the Vietnam conflict. He is survived by his loving wife of forty years Kathleen M. (O'Hara) Laychak; his children Mary Elizabeth Laychak and her husband Andrew Odell of Hawaii and Jayne Overturf and her husband Ryan of Boston, MA; his grandson Wesley Lawrence Overturf; and a brother Gerald Laychak of West Mifflin; also sisters and brothers in law; nieces and nephews. Friends will be received from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at the William Snyder Funeral Home Inc., 521 Main Street, Irwin, 724-863-1200. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Wednesday in St. Agnes Catholic Church. Interment with military honors will follow in Holy Trinity Cemetery, West Mifflin. In lieu of flowers a contribution can be made to Interfaith Wellness Ministry c/o Sr. Loretta Spotila, P.O. Box 582, Irvine, KY 40336. For online condolences visit www.snyderfuneralservices.com.

Cemetery Details

Holt Trinity Cemetery

529 Grant Ave Ext.
West Mifflin, PA 15122

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 10. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

William Snyder Funeral Home, Inc.
521 Main Street
Irwin, PA 15642
(724) 863-1200
<https://williamsnyderfuneralhome.com/>

Visitation

OCT 10. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

William Snyder Funeral Home, Inc.
521 Main Street
Irwin, PA 15642
(724) 863-1200
<https://williamsnyderfuneralhome.com/>

Service

OCT 11. 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM (ET)

St. Agnes Church
11400 St. Agnes Lane
North Huntingdon, PA

Tribute Wall



“ *Lawrence J. Laychak*

October 07, 2023 at 10:37 AM



“ *Lawrence J. Laychak*

August 23, 2022 at 04:00 PM

JF

“ I was a student of Mr. Laychak’s for 2 years back in high school (2003-2005). He was my Physics and AP Physics teacher, and he was one of my favorites and most inspirational teachers I’ve ever had.

Mr. Laychak made learning complex things easy, fun, and practical. It was never a dull moment in his classroom as he swung bowling balls from the ceiling to demonstrate gravity and momentum, trying to get the bowling ball to swing as close to his face as possible without hitting it. He would put his yard stick out the window during a thunderstorm and ask that mother nature strike him down with her awesome power, laugh and cackle, then rush to the chalkboard and work out the equations with all of us to show how much electricity would strike him and explain that it’s not the voltage but the amps that’ll kill you.

He drank from a coffee mug that hadn’t been washed in over a decade and was pretty proud of that fact. He explained that it saved him money on having to buy coffee because when he’d pour water in, it would become coffee because of all of the stains on the inside of his mug.

He would yell about bombing Nazis when he worked on projectiles, and would even take his lesson out in the hallway challenging any Nazis to show their faces in his hallways and face the wrath of his students’ bombs that we were calculating would need to be launched at such-and-such an angle with such-and-such velocity to hit those “bastards.”

Mr. Laychak made learning so much fun, and he always had great wisdom to share as well.

After my junior year, I opted for an easier senior year and decided to take Astronomy instead of AP Physics because it was known throughout my peers that Astronomy was a relatively easy class.

The first day back for my senior year I walked past Mr. Laychak’s room and he asked when I would be attending his AP Physics class this year. I informed him of my decision to be lazy and go for the easy A. He looked directly into my eyes and asked if that was really what I wanted, or did I want to challenge myself and learn some cool stuff my last year of high school. He said that he would let me

enter his class without a problem if I changed my mind. I went to my first Astronomy class later that day and when a student wouldn't stop making jokes about the teacher's tie of the solar system and kept asking "But where's Uranus?" I knew Mr. Laychak was right. I went to my counselor and switched into his AP Physics class that next morning.

AP Physics is difficult, and at the time I was really great at Math and thought I would go to college to be a math teacher. I got my first real C in his class. Distraught after getting my report card, I approached Mr. Laychak and asked him privately if I had made a mistake taking this class, if there was something else I can do to boost my grade. He looked at me and then the report card and said, "Jas, did you learn something?" To that I said, "Yes." And then he replied, "Then it doesn't matter what letter or number shows up there. As long as you learn something, that's all that matters. Would you rather get an A and learn absolutely nothing, or would you rather bust your butt and earn a C because you learned so much?"

Needless to say, I left our talk holding my head up high and, to this day, I pass along those words to any kids I come across that worry about making and getting certain grades as if it is the end-all-be-all. I am a children's librarian for a public library out in the suburbs of Philadelphia, but I also teach after school STEM classes with elementary and middle school kids. You better believe I channel Mr. Laychak when I can. It is hard to match his passion with his knowledge, his sternness but with a big heart, and his energy that could only be topped by his brilliance. The man truly encompassed everything you could ever want in a teacher and mentor. My deepest sympathies to the family and dear friends of Mr. Laychak.

Jason Fialkovich - October 20, 2017 at 01:41 PM

JU

“ Thoughts and prayers from Kellie Surmacz and Julie and Kevin McNamara.

Julie - October 14, 2017 at 07:55 AM



“ Dear Kathy, Mary Beth, Jayne and family: So sorry to hear this sad news. Larry really was one of the good guys and we really enjoyed talking with him at family gatherings at Phyllis and John's. He sure had some great stories and made a lasting impact on so many lives He will be greatly missed . May God bless you all. Karl and Sheila Burgunder

Karl Burgunder - October 12, 2017 at 09:19 PM



“ So very sorry for your loss. Mr. Laychak is my all time favorite teacher and the only reason I got through my college physics class. His love of the subject & unconventional way of teaching it sunk in with students & made everyone love the science at least in that moment if not more. His love for his students, family & life will be missed by all. Even those that still think of him fondly years after graduating. My class is celebrating 25 years this year & I am sure his name will come up in memories at the reunion next month.

Brett McCrory - October 12, 2017 at 06:39 PM

RI

“ Kathy,

I will always have a special place in my heart for Larry. He called me coach and I called him the same after we were thrown into teaching assignments neither of us felt comfortable teaching. We helped each other out and got through it. He always had a smile on his face and looked at the positive side of things. Also enjoyed our time together hunting as well.

So sorry we did not make the service as we are in Hilton Head for a month. I think of you and your family during this difficult time with sadness. Larry was a great guy and will be missed.

With our sympathy and love,

Ken and Ruth Inglese

ruth inglese - October 12, 2017 at 12:14 PM

BH

“ My deepest sympathies, dear Mary Beth and Andrew, Jayne and Ryan, and Kathy. I only had the opportunity to speak to Larry a few times, but the time I remember most is the first time, at St. Agnes Church Social Hall. He was all big smiles, and struck me immediately as someone full of fun and very sharp. I had the sense that he was holding back a few quips that day! As he didn't know me, he was probably trying to be on his best behavior, but I saw amusement flickering in his eyes many times! I had no idea he taught physics to high schoolers, but now that I know I could definitely see it! Sharp, quick, witty - all the skills necessary to keep teenagers engaged - especially during physics! I wish we wouldn't have lived so far away, and I could have gotten to know my Godson's father-in-law so much better. I know he and all of you went through so much as he tried to fight for the life that he loved. He was so full of life. Now he is sharing his gifts with the angels in Heaven, and I can just see that big smile on his face and the sparkle in his eyes. God Bless you all, and just remember the good times. His spirit lives on in each of you, and the many students he touched over the years. He's not gone, just away for awhile, and the next time you see him he'll be whole and healthy, his same smiling self. My family and I offer you our prayers and deepest sympathies.
Barbara and Craig Huber and Family

Barbara Huber - October 12, 2017 at 11:04 AM

CC

“ Mr. Laychak's influence on how I think about many things can't be understated. In 11th grade I was trying to make the decision to study science or art in college. I went the art route, but Mr. Laychak helped steer me that way. He made physics so engaging and so connected and infused with life, that I knew I could take physics (and science in general) into art with me. I also knew I could have taken art into science as well - and that was a great comfort. You will be missed Laych!

Chris Craychee - October 11, 2017 at 09:33 AM

DL

“ *Mr. Laychak was the best teacher I had in high school. Probably the best teacher I've ever had. I remember being legitimately excited to attend physics class every day and I still remember a lot of his jokes and stories.*

He was also the most influential teacher I ever had. I can say with certainty I would not have pursued a Physics degree had I never met him, so I owe him a huge debt of gratitude for where that's led me.

I know he had a huge impact on many of us. I've talked to a bunch of high school friends over the last few days and we're all saddened by the loss. The world lost a great teacher and a great man. To the entire Laychak family, I'm terribly sorry for your loss.

Dave Lishego - October 10, 2017 at 10:14 PM



“ *61 files added to the album Life Tributes*



William Snyder Funeral Home - October 10, 2017 at 12:05 PM



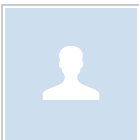
“ If you went to Churchill or Woodland Hills High School and began reminiscing with friends about the good old days, Mr Laychak's name would always come up. From building catapults in the parking lot to rolling bowling balls down the hallway, everyone has a story about the crazy things Mr Laychak did or said (don't fall in any holes!)
It was the one class that you looked forward to every day. Even his tests were interesting and amusing! Hell, "Mr Laychak" is the answer to my online password question of "who was your favorite High School teacher" and I know I'm not the only one.
It is an understatement to say that Mr Laychak was a great teacher, he was so much more than that to me. He was an inspiration, a friend, a role model and a place of joy. When I think of him, his wry smile is always present. It will be missed.
Farewell Mr Laychak and from the very, very bottom of my heart, thank you.

Dan Talbert - October 10, 2017 at 11:34 AM



“ Thoughts and Prayers for you family, may you be welcomed home! A wonderful teacher, a good man, it was a pleasure to work with you.
The students and teachers will forever keep your memory alive, your positive influence lives on....

Micci Hutterer - October 10, 2017 at 10:45 AM



“ Grande Gourmet Fruit Basket was purchased for the family of Lawrence J. Laychak.



October 10, 2017 at 02:36 AM



“ I’m so sorry Kathy, I can’t imagine what you are going through. May you find comfort in memories and strength in each other’s love throughout this difficult time.

Sincerely. Peggy Campbell

Peggy Campbell - October 10, 2017 at 02:16 AM



“ *Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Lawrence J. Laychak.*



October 09, 2017 at 09:51 PM



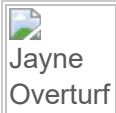
“ *Mr. Laychak is the reason I got a degree in Engineering and am an Air Force Officer. He was my 11th grade Physics and 12th grade AP Physics teacher from 2001-2002. He had a passion for teaching Physics that I can say was unrivaled. I know multiple students would agree Mr Laychak is the reason for our success today. I will miss him and always remember his accomplishments as a teacher and Army Vet. Thanks Mr Laychak for pushing me to my potential and making me who I am today! You will live on through your students forever.*

Justin Deifel - October 09, 2017 at 08:58 PM

CS

“ Kathy, Mary Beth, Jayne and families, I have no secret words to make the pain go away. I cannot even begin to imagine what you all are going through. I know God has welcomed Larry with open arms and he will watch over all of you and remain in yours hearts forever. I am so glad you all were able to spend so much time with him over the last year. I only met him a few times but feel I know all of you through Kathy. I know how much he loved his family. He was an amazing man of many talents, always learning, always working. You all are very blessed to have him in your lives. He touched many lives. My thoughts and prayers are with you all.
Cindy S.

Cindy Schatzman - October 09, 2017 at 08:07 PM



Thanks Cindy, your words are so comforting for us.

Jayne Overturf - October 09, 2017 at 08:30 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Lawrence J. Laychak.

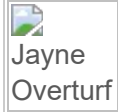


October 09, 2017 at 07:54 PM

DB

“ Please accept my condolences on the loss of your husband and father. Many tears will be shed during your loss but they will be prayers sent up to him in heaven when you cant speak. Darlene Bakota Neighbor of the Myers.

Darlene Bakota - October 09, 2017 at 07:00 PM



Jayne
Overturf

Thanks so much Darlene, we greatly appreciate your words.

Jayne Overturf - October 09, 2017 at 08:31 PM

KJ

“ *It is an understatement to say Mr. Laychak made coming to school each day an exciting experience. I remember him running around the classroom demonstrating principles of physics. I remember him threatening to use the claw to scratch the blackboard if we were inattentive and I remember his jokes which I suppose are inappropriate for a funeral, but to this day help me remember the difference between a sadist and a masochist. One of the things that really sticks in my mind was when he talked about his wife who worked as a nurse at night and how they were always on the go sharing the responsibilities of bringing up the kids and he talked about how important it was to have time together. Thank you for lending us Larry, he was quite remarkable.*
Kathe Ellison James, Adelaide Australia

Kathe James - October 09, 2017 at 05:51 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Lawrence J. Laychak.*



October 09, 2017 at 04:41 PM

MV

“ My first cousin, my next door neighbor, my friend. We were all like brothers growing up, my 3 brothers and Larry & Jerry right next door. Gone way too soon. A great sense of humor who loved his family heritage, and more important who loved life, living it to the fullest and above all, loved his beautiful wife Kathy and his "girls", Mary Beth and Jane. May God be with you Kathy as you move forward in life. Cling to the memories and cling to your faith, HE will see you through. Cousin, Mike Vislay

Mike Vislay - October 09, 2017 at 03:28 PM

MP

“ I took physics from Larry his first year at Churchill High School. He made the course accessible, enjoyable and even inspirational. A hard thing to accomplish when teaching physics to a room full of teenagers. The success I had in his course inspired me to continue my studies in physics. I received my PhD in Physics in 1988 and since 1989, I have been a research physicist at Argonne National Laboratory outside of Chicago. Had I not had the good fortune to have Larry as my first teacher in physics, I am not certain I would have taken the path that I did. I am sure I am only one of many who Larry inspired in his chosen profession - Teacher. My deepest sympathy to his family on his passing,
Michael Carpenter, CAHS class of '78.

mpcarp19 - October 09, 2017 at 03:00 PM

JA

“ My deepest condolences to your family. He was a great teacher and always a smiling, happy man. I enjoyed his class very much. I pray for comfort for your family.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Johnson Axtell
Norco, CA

Jennifer Johnson Axtell - October 09, 2017 at 02:51 PM



“ *Mary, Tim, Colin, Sona & Kevin purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Lawrence J. Laychak.*

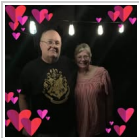


Mary, Tim, Colin, Sona & Kevin - October 09, 2017 at 02:12 PM



“ *Larry was what you called a true friend! He was always an important part of my family. We watched our kids grow up together - from birthday parties and mountain fires to our yearly gatherings and now weddings and grandchildren. He was an honest friend always willing to help out when he could. He will be in my thoughts and greatly missed.*
Rick Myers

Rick Myers - October 09, 2017 at 02:12 PM



“ *You have my sincere condolences. My brother, Ed, or my sister, Milly, graduated from Holy Trinity School with Larry. I graduated with Gerald. You have my sincere condolences. May he rest in peace.*
Tina Estochin Hull

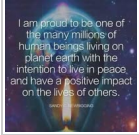
Tina Hull - October 09, 2017 at 01:23 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Lawrence J. Laychak.*



October 09, 2017 at 12:38 PM



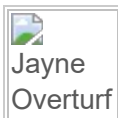
“ Dear Mrs. Laychak and all family and friends,
Thank you for sharing Mr. Laychak with us(his students) . He was my favorite teacher and I learned more from him than any other teacher in my life. His kindness and humor and vibrant love of the sciences made the class a joy to attend ... His history lessons of the exploits of the Mongol Hordes and Ghengis Khan that he started each class off with and that usually led into the day's lesson, were so much fun and actually I am now also a big fan of Ghengis and the Horde. He truly made the difference in my life and I am certain many other students lives as well.... I regret not making a concerted effort to return to Churchill High School and tell him how grateful I was for everything. If you are familiar with the movie "To Sir with Love " about a teacher who changes for the better the lives of his students ... Mr. Laychak was that kind of teacher . He changed mine. I really loved him and I am grateful for all that he taught me about myself and about life . You all have my deepest sympathies . You are not alone in your grief.
Tina (Jeznach) Hill Class Of 1981 Churchill Area High School (now Woodland Hills High)

Tina Hill - October 09, 2017 at 12:14 PM



So beautifully said and oh so true. Thank you for your words. Class of 1984.

Mark Pease - October 09, 2017 at 04:34 PM



Thanks for your kind words, our family is extremely touched by your sentiments.

Jayne Laychak Overturf

Jayne Overturf - October 09, 2017 at 05:02 PM

KF

“ Kenny Barnard and Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Lawrence J. Laychak.



Kenny Barnard and Family - October 09, 2017 at 11:29 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Lawrence J. Laychak.



October 09, 2017 at 09:10 AM



“ Lily and Rose Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Lawrence J. Laychak.



October 08, 2017 at 09:14 PM

MF

“ My lifelong buddy. Larry was there for me from the time he taught me to tie my shoes in first grade thru life's many events. We had numerous adventures together and he always made me laugh with his unique humor. I loved him like a brother and will miss him very much. Helene and I extend our deepest sympathy and love to Kathy, Mary Beth, Jayne and families. Mike (Ferq) Ferchak.

Mike Ferchak - October 08, 2017 at 08:47 PM