

Kerry “Mark” Varisco



A devoted husband, father, Papa, friend, and man of God, Kerry “Mark” Varisco passed suddenly on August 9th, 2023 in his hometown of Baton Rouge, LA. He was 72.

Mark was born in Hammond, LA, on April 12th, 1951, to Audrey and Salvador Varisco. As the oldest of four children in a large Italian family, he grew into a gentle and optimistic man who loved family to the fullest extent possible.

Mark attended Westdale Junior High, where in 7th grade he met Gail Dicharry, the love of his life. They both continued on to Baton Rouge High School, where Mark was Vice President of his class, as well as quarterback, pitcher, and – due to his Italian roots – affectionately called “Pizza” by his classmates. A shy and reserved young man, Mark waited until his senior year of high school to ask Gail out on a date. Once he did, however, the two were inseparable.

Mark’s athleticism and leadership skills earned him a football scholarship at Southeastern Louisiana University, where he was the starting quarterback from 1970 to 1972. He graduated in 1973 with a B.S. in Mathematics and Physics, and later received his Master’s degree in Industrial Engineering from LSU in 1977.

Mark and Gail wed on May 18th, 1973, and began a beautiful marriage that spanned over 50 years. Theirs was a partnership built on trust, friendship, and love. Mark also adored his three sons (Kerry, Kyle, and Ryan) with his whole heart. He lived by the saying “actions speak louder than words” and consistently set an example of what it meant to be a faithful husband, father, brother, and Christian. He considered himself a servant to our Lord and to others, and his altruistic actions throughout his life reflected that.

The year Mark and Gail were married, Mark decided to try coaching a 5th grade

football team, and quickly installed the option offense. With his bride biking to watch him coach his games, his team won the league, and it was here Mark discovered his love for coaching and teaching others.

Mark lived life to the fullest through simple pleasures. He always had a smile on his face, and loved playing games of any kind. He was quick to break out horseshoes, darts, or cornhole games at family gatherings – though he was occasionally known to bend the rules in his favor. He was an avid golfer, even turning a backyard hill into a chipping green (flag and all). From the early days of his childhood on, he loved listening to, watching, and attending LSU games. Mark happily volunteered to coach his sons' teams, no matter the sport — or his familiarity with it. As he once said, "The first soccer game I ever saw, I coached." Mark loved taking daily walks with his wife and traveling the country with her in their RV, which they nicknamed "Miss Daisy." In his later years, Mark's grandchildren fully captured his heart and attention, and they returned the affection to their beloved Papa in kind.

Mark worked at Kaiser Aluminum for twenty years and Marathon Oil for ten. His career included seven years in Equatorial Guinea, Africa, with his wife Gail by his side. While in Africa, Mark excelled at teaching a leadership training program for the local workforce, forming bonds with his pupils that lasted long past his working years. Working in Africa allowed Mark and Gail to travel around the world, visiting the Vatican, Rome, Tuscany, Florence, Israel, Jordan, and South Africa, among other places. Mark retired from Marathon in 2017. He was a member of the Men of Manresa, serving as President of the Board of Directors and as Captain for 15 years.

Mark will be fondly remembered and loved by his wife Gail Dicharry Varisco; his children: Kerry Mark Varisco, Jr., Christopher "Kyle" Varisco (Kelly), and Patrick "Ryan" Varisco (Kate); his grandchildren: Andrew Joseph Varisco, Ann Langford Varisco, Marie Bryson Varisco, and Mitchell Calvin Varisco; his brothers: Salvador Varisco, Jr. (Melanie) and Dwain Paul Varisco (Amy); his sister: Valeri Varisco Anderson; his sister-in-law: Barbara Dicharry Bergeron; and his nieces and nephews: Dwain Paul Varisco, Jr., Daniel "Jack" Varisco, Peyton Matthew Anderson, Hailey Danielle Anderson, Dr. Rhett Leon Bergeron, Mark Christopher Bergeron, and Michelle Bergeron Serret; as well as many other family members and close friends.

Mark was preceded in death by his parents Audrey Lee Varisco and Salvador Varisco, Sr., his brother-in-law Cecil J. Bergeron, and his nephew Jon Gregory Bergeron.

A celebration of life will be held Saturday, August 19th, 2023 at 11 a.m. at St. Jude the Apostle Catholic Church, 9150 Highland Road, Baton Rouge, LA with Father Trey Nelson officiating. Visitation will precede the memorial from 9 - 11 a.m. A reception will immediately follow at the home of Ryan and Kate Varisco. In lieu of flowers, his family requests donations be sent to the Manresa House of Retreats: