



## Jack R. Gennaro



Jack R. Gennaro, 83, of 4711 Ridgeview Court, Wisconsin Rapids, passed away at Saint Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield, on Thursday, March 4, 2010.

Jack was born Aug. 23, 1926, in Rockford, Ill., to Charles Gennaro and Marie (Domkoski) Gennaro. He married Joanne Trapani in 1958. The marriage ended in divorce in 1987. Jack and Diane (Sauter/Polfuss) were married on June 20, 1992.

Jack served his country in the Army during WWII from January 1945 to September 1946. He graduated from Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Ill., in 1949 with a BA in business administration.

Sales permeated all of Jack's working life, from selling typewriters for Remington Rand, to real estate development in Rockford to selling linens and laces to department stores over a three-state area to selling garden supplies to hardware stores over a 14-state area. Jack's love of radio and TV sales began in 1953 at WREX in Rockford, Ill. This led him to WFRV-TV in Green Bay in 1957. He began as sales manager but quickly moved up to general manager. Four years later, he moved back into radio as the general manager of WOBT in Rhinelander. He often said he preferred radio as it was a much more creative medium.

In 1964, Jack made his final career move as general manager of WFHR/WWRW Radio in Wisconsin Rapids, until his retirement in 1990. During this time, he was also the general manager of the Wisconsin Network which was a group of 40 radio stations that broadcast the University of Wisconsin football and basketball games. Throughout his career in radio, Jack received many awards including the 1977 Mitchell V. Charnley Award for Outstanding Performance to Broadcast Journalism, the 1982 Wisconsin AP Broadcaster Carol Brewer Award for Service to Broadcast Journalism, and induction to the Wisconsin Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 1993.

Jack served many organizations as a member of the Board of Directors including the National Radio Broadcasters Association, The National Associated Press Broadcasters, The Wisconsin Broadcasters Association (president 1981) and the Wisconsin AP Broadcasters (president 1965). Locally, Jack was on the building committee for the McMillan Memorial Library in 1968 and then became the treasurer on the Library Board of Trustees until 1979. He also served on the Board for the Wisconsin Rapids Chamber of Commerce from 1967 through 1980, serving as president 1970/1971 and chairman of the Community Development Committee from 1972 through 1980.

As a member of the Wisconsin Rapids Noon Rotary Club from 1980 through 2002, Jack was honored with the Paul Harris Award in 1992. He also served on the Boards of the MSTC Foundation and the Wisconsin Rapids Community Theater.

Jack loved sailing on Lake Petenwell and golfing (especially with his friends on the local courses). For years, an annual trip to Winter Park, Colo., with skiing buddies, was a winter highlight. He and Diane found Door County as their favorite getaway and visited there as often as possible.

The last few years, Jack was confined to a wheelchair due to a medical disability, but he and Diane enjoyed every day and treasured visits from family and friends.

Jack is survived by his wife Diane, his son, Charles (Kristin) Gennaro of Wisconsin Rapids, his daughter Mary Hart of Oshkosh, his stepdaughter, Gail (Jeff) Scheuers of Neenah, and his stepson Glen (Tammy) Polfuss of DePere; eight grandchildren, McKee Zalabak, Rael Gennaro, Gregory Gennaro, Jerimiah Spenser, Aaron Gennaro, Nicole Gennaro, Anthony Gennaro and Andre Gennaro; four stepgrandchildren, Nicole Scheuers, Elizabeth Scheuers, Lauren Polfuss and Carter Polfuss. He is also survived by several aunts, uncles and cousins.

In lieu of flowers, Jack wished to support future young broadcasters with funds given to the Wisconsin Broadcasters Foundation for college scholarships (44 E. Mifflin St., Madison WI 53703) or to help people with disabilities through donations to the Opportunity Development Center (1191 Huntington Ave., Wisconsin Rapids WI 54494).