



James Vincent DeCosmo

December 12, 1924 - October 5, 2011

Apalachicola native James Vincent DeCosmo died Wednesday, Oct. 5, in Tallahassee following an extended illness. He was 86. DeCosmo was the only son of the late James Vincent DeCosmo Sr. (1898-1956) and Katherine Emanuel (DeCosmo) (1900-1987) of Apalachicola.

His siblings were the late Clara DeCosmo (Herndon) of Carrabelle, Florida, and the late Katherine DeCosmo (Lovett) of St. Petersburg, Florida. The DeCosmos grew up on 53 10th Street and enjoyed the beach at Indian Pass whenever they could.

DeCosmo's grandparents were Frank Vincent DeCosmo (who came to Apalachicola from Italy) and Mary (Silva) Randolph, who came from New Orleans along with her mother, Anna Silva, who came from Italy. When she reached Apalachicola, Anna Silva married a Buzzett first, and after his death married Antoine Messina.

DeCosmo ("Coz" to all his friends) distinguished himself as an avid outdoorsman and a talented athlete, playing both basketball and football at Chapman High School. In 1943 he was drafted into military service and eventually served two years as a private first-class in the Army Air Corps as a navigator. On the Philippine island of Leyte, he and all his crew members survived the crash of their aircraft behind enemy lines and walked to safety. After service, DeCosmo used the G.I. Bill to pursue a college degree. In 1946, he enrolled at the newly formed Tallahassee Branch of the University of Florida (TBUF), the transitional institution between the Florida State College

for Women and Florida State University, created by the Florida Legislature in 1947. He became a member of TBUF's only football team.

After obtaining a masters degree in physical education at FSU, DeCosmo was hired by the department in which he was enrolled. He served 28 years, teaching all aspects of physical education and serving for many years as the assistant director of the university's famed Flying High Circus. DeCosmo created and coached a team of flying trapeze artists that was known as "The Flying DeCosmos."

After retiring in 1975, DeCosmo became a stand-out golfer in his age group, regularly posting scores that matched his age through 2005 at his favorite course, Hilaman Park, in Tallahassee. The club eventually created an annual tournament in his honor, naming it "The Coz."

DeCosmo was married to Lucy (Kelley) DeCosmo, originally of Perry, Florida, for 60 years until her death in 2009. He is survived by four children, Janet DeCosmo, Linda DeCosmo, Patricia (DeCosmo) Wesolowski, all of Tallahassee, and James M. DeCosmo, of Austin, TX, along with 14 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, October 8th, at Grace Lutheran Church, Rick Eckard, Pastor, 2919 Miccosukee Road, Tallahassee, Florida 32308.

In lieu of flowers, friends are encouraged to send a donation in his name to the American Heart Association (<https://donate.americanheart.org>) or Camp Charis (www.campcharis.org).

Previous Events

Service

OCT 8. 10:00 AM (ET)

Grace Lutheran Church
2919 Miccosukee Rd.
Tallahassee, FL

Tribute Wall

BS

“ My family moved to indian head acres in 1955 and we were to find out we had moved next door to a family named DeCosmo. I was about 8 years old and there was a little girl named Jan living there. I also came to know Linda and Pat as we grew up and I remember when little Jimmy was born and my little brother Mitch came along in 1958. My parents, Frank and Frances Smith became good friends with Jim and Lucy. I remember the child size trapezes he set up in the back yard and all the neighborhood kids wanted to go play in that fenced in yard with the playhouse and the big sandbox. I spent many days playing on that trapeze with Jan and the kids and thinking what a cool dad Mr. DeCosmo was to have all these neat things for the kids to play with. Mr and Mrs. DeCosmo were always very nice to all us kids. I remember when I was about 13 that Mr. Decosmo asked if I could come over one night for a few hours and watch out for the kids while he and Lucy went out for awhile. Boy such a show of trust and confidence in a 13 year old. I never forgot. Such great memories growing up next door to the DeCosmos. I wonder if Jan, Linda, Pat and Jimmy remember what a great place to grow up indian head acres was? My parents and my little brother have all passed on but they all thought the DeCosmos were the best. Can not see a trapeze act without thinking about the FLYING DECOSMOS. Thanks for the good memories Mr. DeCosmo
Bennie

benjamin smith - October 07, 2011 at 06:45 PM