



Nick Zello

April 25, 1927 - January 15, 2026

After 98 years of making spaghetti, cheating at cards, driving too fast, general tinkering, happily being the butt of the joke, and getting bossed around (“Hey Hon”) by his wife of 62 years, Nick Zello passed away peacefully in the early hours of January 15, 2026.

Nick was born to Angelo and Mary Grace (Alteri) Zello on April 25, 1927 on the family's kitchen table in Sayre, PA. Nick was the youngest of seven. He is predeceased by his parents, wife, brothers, Michael, Giuseppe (“Pep”), Patricio (“Putz”), and sisters Clementine, Susan, and Lucia. Nick served his country during World War II. He was a Navy Signalman on the USS Pocono. During this time, he earned the nickname “Pretty Boy Zello”. Upon returning from the war, he went back to finish high school where he met the love of his life, Jean Kelly. Nick told Jean he was going to give her a nickel to call him when she turned 16 and a bag of rocks to keep the wolves away. Jean waited until she was 16 and sent Nick a card telling him that she was all out of rocks, letting him know it was well past time for him to ask her out. Nick and Jean were wed on July 23, 1949. They had their first child in 1951 and six more followed over the next 19 years: Mark, Joe, Peg, Colleen, Nick, Ed, and John. A devoted father, Nick never missed a chance to support his kids in all their endeavors.

Nick was well known for his triple beer move; while in the kitchen he would

drink one beer, pour another into his glass, and bring a full beer out in the bottle. He was a man of great patience and few words, who mastered the art of expressing his emotions through sighs, throat-clearing, and the occasional “Bah!”. He could frequently be found relaxing in his chair, beer at his side, and Blue Bloods on full blast with the captions on. Nick was a lifelong lover of dogs...and Tom Selleck; he would light up when discussing either one. Nick spent countless hours driving to see his kids, repainting the walls white (“Hey Hon”), going to the grocery store multiple times a day, flip-flopping the dining room and living room furniture (“Hey Hon”), playing Hand and Foot (always keeping score, always winning...hmmmm), making people food or getting them snacks (“Hey Hon”), soaking up the sun, and cheating on crossword puzzles. He could cook, he could sew, he could return items to the store that had been used for years, he could speak an old Italian dialect that drew gasps when he visited his parents’ village in Italy.

In addition to his seven kids, he is survived by lots of grandkids, a few great-grandkids to whom he was known as “Old Grandpa”, and, most importantly, several granddogs and great-granddogs. The family would like to express their heartfelt appreciation to the staff at The Springs of Lafayette and River Terrace of Bluffton for the compassion and care shown to Nick during his years at those facilities. A private celebration of life will be held at a later date. Nick was a cool guy; in lieu of flowers or donations, go pet a dog, listen to the Eagles, drink a beer, or watch some Blue Bloods with the volume all the way up. He’d planned to make it to 100, but his Irish Honey let him know that she ran out of rocks again... “Hey Hon”.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. Friends may share online condolences with the family at www.thomarich.com

Cemetery Details

Garden of the Chimes - Elm Grove Cemetery

3500 East State Road 124
Bluffton, IN 46714

Tribute Wall



“ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAhdHj6ZWoU&t=309s>

Mark Bowman - May 07 at 05:25 PM



“ Dear Zello family, Sending our thoughts and payers to all. What a great obituary about your father. He lived a good long life and will be missed by many. Deepest sympathy from the Wiley Street Wolfcale kids, Connie, David, Sally and Katie

Connie Wolfcale Bade - January 24 at 08:34 AM



Thank you warmly, Connie!❤️

Margaret Schamerloh - May 08 at 09:46 AM



“ I enjoyed working with Nick at the Corning plant in Bluffton. Such a good man. My parents, Tom and Mary Frank, cherished the friendship they shared with Nick and Jean and always spoke highly of them. Rest in peace.

Gordy Beemer - January 23 at 08:00 PM



Thank you, Gordy! I remember your parents and family well!!❤️

Margaret Schamerloh - May 08 at 09:47 AM

JB

“ *What a lovely obituary (they are not easy to write!)... thank you for sharing this wonderful human (I'm a long time yoga follower past & present of Colleen & always love when she'd tell stories about her dad). I'm sorry for your loss... while unavoidable at 98... it's no less deep- you can't "prepare" or hide from the sadness - but the smile I couldn't help with the theme of "hey hon" throughout this was special - like he so clearly was 😊❤️🙏*

Jessica A Brown - January 22 at 08:26 AM

MS

Thank you Jessica.

Margaret Schamerloh - May 08 at 09:48 AM

RA

“ *Sendin Prayers, My Condolences The Family.*



Rachel - January 22 at 04:25 AM

DZ

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Domonic Zello - January 21 at 08:47 PM

NZ

Thank you for posting this, Domonic. It is a strong reminder of how important immigrants like our parents are to this country. They have paid a high price to defend this "melting pot", and it's up to us to preserve that spirit.

Nicholas E Zello - January 26 at 06:32 PM



“ *So many memories of 'Mr.Zello' and a lot of great times at the Zello home! You are all in my thoughts and I can hear you all laughing as you share happy stories of your Dad... Xo*

Jill Roddy - January 21 at 08:22 PM

MS

Thank you Jill!!! I am sure you remember Dad jumping out of a cake! 🍰

Margaret Schamerloh - May 08 at 09:50 AM

DZ

“ *Condolences on the loss of Nick.*

Domonic Zello - January 21 at 06:18 PM

JJ

“ *To all the zello kids - you had one of the best and I know you will always have such great memories of your dad. Prayers for comfort to all.*

Jackie Johnson - January 20 at 01:59 PM

MS

Thank you to my lovely neighbor! ❤️

Margaret Schamerloh - May 08 at 09:50 AM

KY

“ I will think of Nick fondly again this weekend when I make a big batch of the pasta fagioli recipe we made together at River Terrace years ago! Take it easy! Thoughts to the family.



Kylie - January 20 at 01:56 PM

MS

Thank you and bless you!❤️

Margaret Schamerloh - May 08 at 09:51 AM

BC

“ Dear Zello Family Mark, Joe, Peg, Colleen, Nick, Ed, and John, we are Sorry to hear about your Dad Nick! He was such a wonderful Man! My Dad Kenneth “Ping” Crosbie always said he was going to live to be a 100 years old, but only lived to be 76 so Nick made it a lot closer t being 100! Lol! 🙄 Our Prayers are with u all! 🙏🙏🙏 God Bless the Zello Family! Love, Barry and JoEllen! 💔💔



Barry Crosbie - January 20 at 08:41 AM

SW

Don't believe I ever met Mr. Zello, but love his obituary! Sounds like he lived life to the fullest! A life well lived.

Sharon Kay Woods - January 20 at 02:18 PM

MS

Thank you.

Margaret Schamerloh - May 08 at 09:52 AM

Jl

“ Beautiful life, and very proud to consider Nick, Jean and all their kiddos part of the Irwin family, too! ❤️🥰🤔❤️

Jim and MaryAnn Irwin - January 19 at 05:29 PM

MS

Thank you!❤️

Margaret Schamerloh - May 08 at 09:53 AM

TM

“ Trudy Murray lit a candle in memory of Nick Zello



Trudy Murray - January 19 at 03:57 PM

MS

Thank you Trudy!❤️

Margaret Schamerloh - May 08 at 09:54 AM