**Obituary**

Gerry Joseph “Joe” C. Danao, age 48, passed away on Monday, August 12, 2024 in Port Charlotte, FL. Joe was born on April 10, 1976 in Manila, Philippines to the late Genaro S. Danao and Eleanor C. Danao, moving to Arcadia, FL in 1992 and then to Port Charlotte, FL in 2024.

Joe was a 31-year resident of Arcadia and enjoyed participating in community activities through The Arc of DeSoto County. He was an active member of the Arc DeSoto Flag Team and competed in swimming and bowling at local and regional Special Olympics events. He was a faithful member of St. Paul’s Catholic Church. He enjoyed spending quality time with his family, playing games, cooking and baking.

Joe is survived by his mother, Eleanor C. Danao of Port Charlotte, FL, brother Peter Noel (Marjorie) Danao of Port Charlotte, FL, and sister Mary-Grace Danao of Lincoln, NE.

A mass of Christian Burial will be held on August 20, 2024 at 11:00 am at St. Paul’s Catholic Church, Arcadia. Inurnment will be at Royal Palm Memorial Gardens, Punta Gorda, FL.

Online condolences can be made at [www.pongerkaysgrady.com](http://www.pongerkaysgrady.com).

Ponger-Kays-Grady Funeral Home & Cremation Services have been entrusted with the arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that memorials to be directed to Arc DeSoto Inc., <https://arcdesoto.org/ways-to-help.html>.

**For Mass – Eulogy by Noel & Grace**

[Grace] Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for being here today as we gather to honor and celebrate the life of my beloved brother, “Joe” to most of you..and “Joey” to the rest of our family. It is both a privilege and a deeply emotional task to stand before you and share our thoughts about the incredible person my brother was.

[Noel] Joey was not just a sibling; he was a great friend and confidant. He never “spilled the beans”. Growing up, we did not understand everything about autism, but he was always there…and was as we have always known him to be. His nonverbal nature was “normal” for us, as our parents made sure Joey was treated the same way as Grace and I were. He, too, had responsibilities and chores to do – thirty plus years of folding laundry and emptying the dishwasher. He did an incredible service to the family…always with a smile. The only thing Joey did not have, which I thought in 3rd grade was completely unfair, was homework! Joey came home from school every day without homework or need to study for an exam. But otherwise, Joey had to work for his allowance by completing his chores and sharing in every adventure and challenge we had as a family.

[Grace] One of my fondest memories of Joey is when we played games. Joey may look innocent, but he knows how to play an extra tile in Dominoes or an extra card in Uno when you are not looking. He decimated me at Jenga! Make no mistake, Joey is competitive and he will win at all costs. Of course, he does it with a great deal of charm and an enigmatic smile. His sense of adventure and boundless enthusiasm on family trips to the zoo, aquarium, beach, and outlet malls made the simplest activities feel special and unforgettable.

[Noel] Joey was a person of immense strength and character. He faced learning challenges and was often underestimated. He faced these with resilience and determination that inspired everyone around him. His heart of gold, unwavering kindness and selflessness made him a dutiful son and a huge asset to our parents in their old age.

[Grace] In the past seven months, we’ve heard many hospice nurses and caregivers delight and amaze at Joey’s wisdom and insight. He was not a typical autistic person who is in their own worlds. Joey was very much aware, observant and a participant of our world, always anticipating what someone needs…so he could help them complete their tasks.

[Grace] As we stand here today, we filled with gratitude for the time we had together and for having him as our brother. He taught us how to be more caring, compassionate, independent, tolerant and responsive to the needs of others. His legacy lives on in the values he instilled in us, in the love and care he showed our family, and in the positive impact he had on everyone who knew him. We will carry his memory in our hearts forever and strive to honor him in all that we do.

[Noel] Joey, thank you for everything. Grace and I wish we could have grown old together but, as they say, the good die youg. Hug Papa for us and keep him company as you’ve always done. We know…you were his favorite. We’ll take good care of Mama for you and help her solve your jigsaw puzzles. Although we know, watching her try to solve one independently could be mighty entertaining for you and Papa in heaven. In your absence, I will do my best to humor Grace with her nonstop ideas and solutions and make sure she makes your flan recipe often…with the super secret ingredient. You loved us unconditionally and, now, it Is our turn to carry this love forward with your memories as guidance.

[Noel] Thank you everyone for being here today to honor the eldest and baby of our family.