

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Joe Greene

Sean McGowan

Mitch Paulsen

Mike Larson

PSALMS 4:8

*In peace, I will lie down and sleep,
For you alone, Lord,
Make me dwell in safety.*

Arrangements have been entrusted to

Chamberlain McColley's Funeral Home

Custer, South Dakota

Forever Remembered



Safely Home

*I am home in Heaven, dear ones;
Oh, so happy and so bright!
There is perfect joy and beauty
In this everlasting light.*

*All the pain and grief is over,
Every restless tossing passed;
I am now at peace forever,
Safely Home in Heaven at last.*

*Did you wonder I so calmly
Trod the valley of the shade?*

*Oh! but Jesus' arm to lean on,
Could I have one doubt or dread?*

*Then you must not grieve so sorely,
For I love you dearly still:
Try to look beyond earth's shadows,
Pray to trust our Father's Will.*

*There is work still waiting for you,
So you must not idly stand;
Do it now, while life remaineth-
You shall rest in Jesus' land*

*When the work is all completed,
He will gently call you Home;
Oh, the rapture of the meeting,
Oh, the joy to see you come!*



MAY THE SOUL OF THE FAITHFULLY DEPARTED

Joseph 'Joe' Edward McGowan III

REST IN PEACE

CHRISTIAN FUNERAL VIGIL

*7:00 p.m., Thursday, July 17, 2025
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Custer, South Dakota*

CHRISTIAN FUNERAL MASS

*10:00 a.m., Friday, July 18, 2025
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Custer, South Dakota*

CELEBRANTS

*FR. Collins Igwilo
Deacon Pat Coy*

SPECIAL MUSIC

Provided by St. John the Baptist Music Ministry

READERS

*Vigil-Bill Young
Funeral Mass- Kelly Steever, Gloria Alvarez*

LUNCHEON

St. John the Baptist Parish Hall

CHRISTIAN FUNERAL COMMITTAL

*Will follow Gate of Heaven Cemetery in
Hawthorne New York at a later date*

MEMORIALS

A memorial may benefit Feeding South Dakota

Remembering Joseph's Life

Joseph Edward McGowan III was born on February 25, 1940 in the Bronx, New York, to Joseph and Elizabeth (Dolan) McGowan. Joe was the oldest, later joined by brother John and sister Patricia. The young family resided on 262nd Street in the Bronx, just blocks away from family and lifelong friends. Joe attended St. Margaret's of Cortana Parish School in the Bronx then onto Cardinal Hayes High School, an all-boys private Catholic High School in the Concourse Village neighborhood of the Bronx. Other notable students who attended Cardinal Hayes were Regis Philbin, George Carlin and Martin Scorsese. The 1958 Commencement Exercises for Cardinal Hayes High School were held at St. Patrick's Cathedral where Joe graduated with High Honors. He attended Manhattan College in the Riverdale section of the Bronx where he received his Bachelor of Science Civil Engineering in 1962. While at Manhattan College, he was a member of Chi Epsilon, the National Civil Engineering Honor Fraternity; the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Society of American Military Engineers. His early work experience included Seasonal Sewage Disposal Helper for the Department of Public Works for the City of New York and later as Junior Civil Engineer for the Bureau of the Budget for New York City.

Joe and his brother John were very active in Boy Scouts. One of the highlights of his scouting career was attending the 1953 Boy Scout Jamboree in Irvine, California. To raise enough money for the trip, Joe sold newspapers throughout the neighborhood as well as any other odd jobs he could find. This momentous trip, July 10 – August 2, 1953, took him from New York to Washington, D.C., by train to Colorado Springs, Colorado where they ascended Pikes Peak, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Grand Canyon, and California stops: Santa Ana, Long Beach, Irvine, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge and the Redwoods, to Salt Lake City, Utah then Yellowstone National Park. This trip of a lifetime influenced Joe for the rest of his life.

Growing up in the shadows of the Brooklyn Bridge, a cable-stayed suspension bridge, Joe knew early on that he wanted to build "big things" which led him to pursue a Civil Engineering Degree and career. Shortly after graduation from Manhattan College, he headed to California and got a job in a rotational training position with the State of California Department of Highways in San Francisco. In September 1963, he enrolled in Stanford University, Palo Alto, California where he received his Master of Science Civil Engineering - Construction Management degree in May 1964.

After his graduation from Stanford, he interviewed with two major construction companies: Peter Kiewit and Sons of Omaha, Nebraska and Al Johnson Construction Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Although he could have earned a higher wage with Kiewit, he chose to hire on with Al Johnson Construction Company because they had a Reconstruction Project at Dam 4 in Charleroi, Pennsylvania, about a 6 hour drive from his parents' home in the Bronx. He was able to visit them often during the 32 months he was on that project.

Joe's career with Al Johnson Construction Co. (AJCCo) spanned 35 years. He started as an Office Engineer and promoted to Project Engineer before he left Charleroi. At AJCCo, his projects included work with the numerous Districts of the US Army Corps of Engineers, Arkansas Highway Department, Missouri Pacific Railroad, American Electric Power Service Corporation, Bureau of Reclamation, Ebasco Constructors, Inc., and Idaho Power Company. From Charleroi, PA he went onto Ozark and Little Rock, Arkansas; Carters, Georgia; Gainesville, Alabama; Amory,

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Mississippi; Justice, West Virginia; St. Paul, Minnesota; Racine, Ohio; Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana; Jackson, Wyoming; Concordia Parish, Louisiana; Kuna, Idaho; Coushatta, Louisiana; Eleanor, West Virginia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Joe worked on dams, highway and railroad bridges, powerhouses, spillways, locks, cofferdam removal, and hydroelectric plants. Joe was promoted to Project Manager in 1974, Project Sponsor in 1985 and Vice President of the Corporation in 1992. In July 1982, he received his Professional Engineer Certificate from the Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying and Landscape Architecture from the State of Minnesota.

After completion of the R. D. Bailey Lake Dam in Justice, West Virginia in January 1980, Joe returned to the Minneapolis office to complete punch list items, assist with ongoing projects and estimate new work. As he returned to work in, what he would call a “mausoleum of an office,” he heard the laughter of the company’s Purchasing Secretary/Receptionist and immediately *knew* he was going to marry her one day. It took a fair bit of convincing, but he finally captured her heart and married Monica Flatt on September 25, 1981 at Good Samaritan United Methodist Church in a small ceremony with immediate family. Their “romance,” touted as “we’re just friends,” was the best kept secret at the office and the phone lines across the country were buzzing on Monday morning with the news: “did you hear what Joe McGowan did??!!”

After years of moving around the country, from one construction project to another, Joe and Monica returned to Minnesota in June 1993 where Joe was “permanently assigned” to the main office, stepping into his role as Project Sponsor and Vice President of the Corporation. They spent that year designing and building their “dream home” outside of Lakeville, thinking they would spent the rest of their days at their idyllic location in the Hills of Credit River. Monica’s deep Western South Dakota roots eventually drew them back to Custer, when they sold their dream home in May of 2018 and returned to the Black Hills.

Joe enjoyed spending time in Custer “at the ranch” but always wished he could have a “view of the Needles.” When circumstances prevented them from moving back to her parents’ home, Monica found their “new” home with a view of the Needles and Joe was content. He enjoyed the serenity in his walks at Stockade Lake, continued his life-long pursuit as a birder and soon discovered and made new friends.

Joe passed away on Monday morning, July 7, 2025 at 4:08 a.m. at Monument Health Custer Hospital after a brief illness. As Monica was leaving after that “final goodbye,” a Great Blue Heron flew overhead, heading east toward the dawn’s early light; surely a sign from Joe and God that “all is well.”

Joe was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Elizabeth (Beth), brother John and his wife Sheila, parents-in-law Elmer and Ginger Flatt, niece Anne McGowan as well as aunts, uncles and cousins.

Joe will be missed by his wife of 43 years, Monica; sister Pat; many cousins, nieces, nephews; great-nieces and great-nephews, his extended Al Johnson Family and the many friends he made throughout his life’s journey.

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