

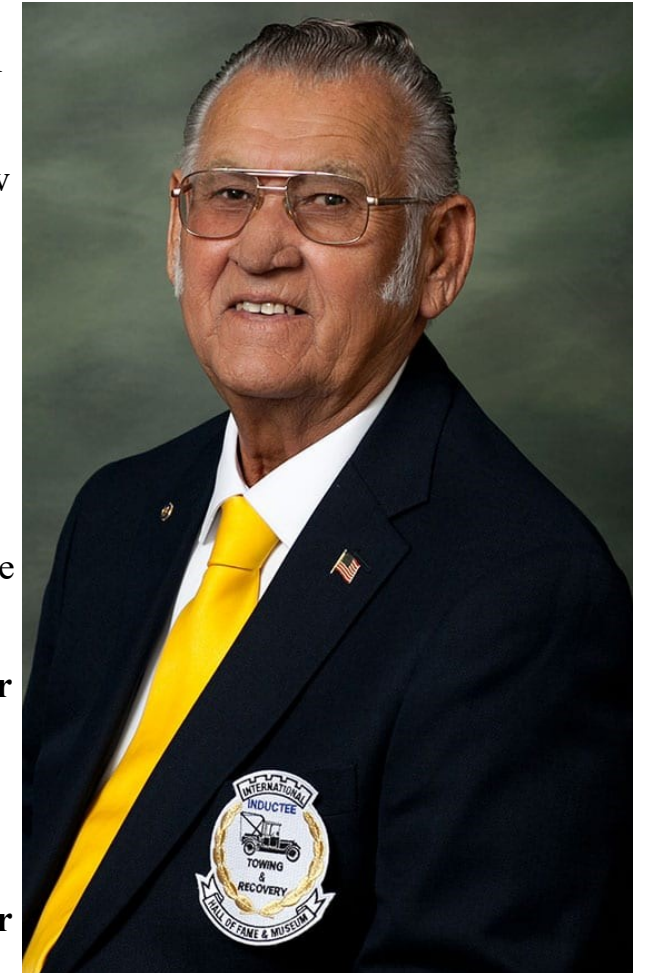


In Loving Memory Joseph George Kolodziej Sept 17, 1939 - Feb 22, 2021

Rotarian since June 14, 2008

Joseph George Kolodziej was born on September 17, 1939 in Long Branch, New Jersey and passed away on February 22, 2021 in St. Petersburg, Florida and is now under the care of
Serenity Funeral Home.

Visitation will be held on
March 6, 2021 at 12:00 pm
at
Pinellas Park Performing Arts Ctr
4951 78th Avenue North
Pinellas Park, Florida.
A Celebration of Life Service will be held on
March 6, 2021 at 1:00 pm at
Pinellas Park Performing Arts Ctr
4951 78th Avenue North
Pinellas Park, Florida.
Reception will be held on
March 6, 2021 at 1:30 pm at
Pinellas Park Performing Arts Ctr
4951 78th Avenue North,
Pinellas Park, Florida.





Joseph G. Kolodziej Sr. was born in Long Branch, New Jersey on September 17, 1939. He went to school from kindergarten to the eighth grade, and then attended a trade school to be a mechanic. He met the love of his life, Priscilla Rohde, in 1957 and they were married in 1958. Both worked very hard towards Joe's dream of owning his own business. Joe built his first tow truck in 1957. He and Priscilla gave birth to their first child, Joseph, Jr., in 1961, who currently works in the family business. In 1962, they drove the tow truck from New Jersey to Seminole, Florida and purchased their first home. Joe quickly became involved with the local law enforcements and fire departments. He first worked at a car agency, then at a gas station until he was able to purchase a 1962 Chevy with a Holmes 525 wrecker unit which he would use to run calls for the gas station and the local police departments. In 1962, Joe and Priscilla gave birth to their second child, Jackie Lynn, who also currently works in the family business. In 1967, a Navy recruiter offered Joe an E-5 rating with the Navy Seabees; he passed the testing and was inducted. Joe spent three tours in Vietnam (1967-1970) and he remained in the Seabee Reserves for the next thirty-two years. When he returned home, Joe leased a bankrupt American Oil gas station and named the station **Joe's American**, turning the gas station into a successful business selling gas, repairing cars, and towing. The towing grew so large that by 1973 they decided to purchase a piece of



property large enough to accommodate the growing wrecker business and auto repair business. They incorporated the name as **Joe's Towing & Recovery, Inc.**

In 1992, **Joe's Towing & Recovery** moved to its current location in Largo, Florida where they still operate this successful business today. Joe's fleet of trucks includes Heavy and Light duty tow trucks, Landoll trailers, detached trailers and flatbed tow trucks. Joe has been a member of the **Professional Wrecker Operators of Florida** since its existence and was instrumental in starting the **TRAA** in 1980 in St. Petersburg, Florida. Joe has been honored as the "Citizen of the Year" and "Distinguished Citizen" from the **Elks Club**, and "Citizen of the Year" from the **City of Pinellas Park**. He has received the "Key to the City" from the **City of Seminole** and many other awards too many to mention. He was a member of the **Pinellas Park Chamber of Commerce** and joined the **Pinellas Park Rotary Club** in 2008. Joe & Priscilla's generous contributions to **Rotary International** brought him to just shy of Major Donor (\$10,000) status. The **Pinellas Park Rotary Club** will be contributing to his account to bring him up to Major Donor Status. Joe had always been and continued to be involved in all children's fundraisers and various charities, including those for the homeless. Joe is featured in many news articles and videos as the **"go to guy"** for towing, extrication and recovery of anything that moves. Before the fire departments had the "jaws of life", Joe was the guy they called to lift, winch, and help extricate people trapped in cars and trucks. He has saved many lives, with his quick thinking and his



master extrication skills. He taught and worked hand in hand with all of the fire departments in Pinellas County. One of his last great accomplishments was the establishment of the **World Extrication Challenge** in Florida to hone the skills of fire departments from all over the world including Africa and Europe.

(Excerpt from **International Towing Hall of Fame** Site)

The **Pinellas Park Rotary Club**, and indeed all of the Pinellas County community, will miss **Joe Kolodziej**. He was a class act, and a true gentleman who always had a smile on his face, a friendly hand to shake, and was willing to do anything to help his friends, his community and his family.

May he Rest in Peace.

