

Ralph Cuzzone Memorial Endowment



Congratulations on receiving a scholarship in memory of Ralph Cuzzone. His family established this scholarship because we know how hard most students have to work to save for an education, and we hope you will find this helpful. As Ralph's family, we wanted to put a few thoughts in writing that may give you some insight into the person that this scholarship was named after.

I once heard a reference made to the "width" of a person's life as opposed to its "length." It is easy to measure length in terms of years and the chronological progression of education, occupations, and accomplishments. Width is much more abstract. It refers to the quality of life and how a person enjoyed it during his/her life span. Length is only important in that it gives a person a longer opportunity to explore it with those they know and love.

Ralph enjoyed life! He was fortunate to be born into a family with a brother, sister and parents who loved him. Ralph had grandparents, a great-grandmother, aunts, uncles, cousins, and many good friends

who loved him. He was very tenderhearted and loved his pets and all animals. Ralph was known for his great sense of humor, and he played many jokes on his friends and family! Our brother also had a great talent for storytelling. He confiscated the family tape recorder one year and recorded hours of tales complete with sound effects; they were very entertaining!

We took family camping trips to Cape Cod in the summer and played in the waves at the beach. We went fishing with our dad and grandfather; we would stumble out of bed at 4:00 A.M. on the first day of fishing season to go to the Farmington River at the crack of dawn! In the winter, we would chop through 3 feet of ice on Big Pond too set up ice fishing equipment. Then, we would retreat to the cottage on the shore to warm up by a wood stove and drink hot chocolate while the snow fell outside the big picture window.

Ralph enjoyed skiing, snowmobiling, and target shooting. He happily pattered on mechanical things and he worked on old snowmobiles and cars. Ralph even renovated a unique amphibious all-terrain vehicle that no one thought would ever work again, but he got it going and had lots of fun with it! Ralph found an old 40-horsepower motorboat he named "Orca" because it was black and white, and he buzzed around Big Pond in the summer pulling his buddies on inner tubes or water skis.

One year for the Fourth of July, Ralph purchased some fireworks. Not quite sure of how they would turn out, he made an elaborate set up which set off an enormous explosion!

The blast echoed around the lake after an extremely impressive illumination of the shoreline. The spectators were stunned into silence for a moment, and then came big shouts and hoots of approval from all over the lake. Ralph gave everyone a holiday to remember that year!

One Christmas, Ralph and I decided to go find a Christmas tree on our own. We drove around until we found some pine trees in the country, picked out a good one, and then cut it down. We pulled the station wagon back into our driveway, hauled the tree out, and then proudly stood it up... somehow it looked completely different

at home...it was way too tall and was really very scraggly, but it made for a good laugh and added to the holiday fun!

Ralph worked on tobacco during the summer, and also had a job as a dishwasher/clean-up person in a local restaurant. These were very tiring, tough, dirty jobs that paid very little, but he worked hard and learned that every job is important, no matter what it is. He also learned the importance of furthering his education in order to get jobs that would be more interesting and lucrative. Ralph planned to go to a technical college after high school and major in drafting. Sadly, he never had the opportunity to fulfill this goal because he died during his senior year of high school.

Our family is pleased to offer this scholarship to you in honor of Ralph's memory, and we wish you the best of success in all your endeavors. Enjoy and make the most of the opportunities that life offers you every day – the width of your experience lies in those moments.

Written by: Norma Cuzzone (mom), John Cuzzone (brother), & Marilyn Cuzzone (sister)

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