

JOSEF OSKAR SCHMIDT



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ITHACA – Josef Oskar Schmidt, 65, of Ithaca, died Sunday, July 15, 2007, at home with his children by his side following a year and a half long battle with cancer. He was born March 4, 1942 in Ujvidek, Hungary, son of the late Josef M. Schmidt and Helene Schmidt of Ithaca who survives him.

Josef came with his family to the United States when he was a young child. The family soon settled in Ithaca where Josef lived for the remainder of his life. He was a graduate of Ithaca High School and Ithaca College and was employed for more than twenty years at Cornell University's Wilson Synchrotron Laboratory. An avid garage-saler and bicyclist, Joe could often be seen early on Saturday mornings riding from sale to sale. He knew the value of a dollar and tried to instill that value in his children in a number of creative ways. For example, when students in Cornell's Department of Entomology were offering a penny a piece for lightning bugs, Joe encouraged his kids to become young entrepreneurs – helping them to catch lightning bugs in the evening, store them in vented jars in the fridge, and "cash them in" at Cornell the following day. Anyone who had the opportunity to accompany Joe to lunch will remember that, although frugal, he was not adverse to taking some financial risks. At the end of the meal when the check would arrive, he would pull out a coin and challenge the unsuspecting waitress. "Flip you for it – double or nothing." Whether anyone ever accepted his challenge, however, remains a mystery.

In addition to Josef's mother, his two children survive him, Josef J. (Amber) Schmidt of Arlington, VA and Ingrid H. (James) Garrard of Candor, NY. His granddaughter, Stella, also survives him.

In keeping with Josef's wishes, services will be private and held at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that those wishing to make a contribution in Josef's memory to consider Hospicare, 172 E. King Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850. Their ability to make Josef comfortable while allowing him to remain in his home during the final days of his life is deeply appreciated. Arrangements were by the Bangs Funeral Home.

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