



# Roderic W. Groat "Rod Wood"

DEC 11, 1940 - DEC 12, 2021



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## **Roderic W. Groat "Rod Wood"**

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**R**oderic Woodruff Groat, also known as Rod Wood, and to close friends as “Roddy”, proudly of Syracuse, was called home to the Lord on Sunday, December 12th, one day after his 81st birthday, and after a short, but courageous battle with cancer. A native son of Syracuse, Rod was the youngest of four siblings in a Dutch and English family. He was the son of the late Romaine and Irene (Pierce) Groat and the grandson of John and Cora Groat of Syracuse, as well as Edwin and Edna Pierce of Auburn. He was predeceased by his wife of 52 years, Nanette (Nicholas) Groat, as well as brother John Ellery and sister Priscilla.

Rod was a Syracuse television news anchorman, a dean of local broadcast journalists, and a fixture of Central New York airwaves for 57 years. He diligently wrote, reported, and delivered the news to his hometown, beginning in 1963 and continuing until his retirement at age 80. 44 of those memorable years were spent reporting and helming the anchor desk at NewsChannel 9 (WNYS, WIXT, WSYR-TV). He began his career in radio shortly after serving in the U.S. Army. One day, friend Dickie Snyder dropped him off in front of WOLF and said “Roddy, go in. I bet you’d be good at this!” Blessed with a deep voice, and strong communication skills, that one fateful day led to a long and unique career. WOLF gave him a shot. After a short while there he accepted a job at WNDR, followed by years at WHEN Radio, where he also filled in as a television weekend anchor on WHEN-TV5.

In his first year in broadcasting, he was tasked with the heavy responsibility of delivering the news to Syracuse that President Kennedy had been shot and killed. A few years later, he found himself snowed in for three days while reporting on the Blizzard of ’66 from the small Dewitt studio of WNDR Radio. In succeeding years, he reported on countless world, national, state, and local news stories, interviewing thousands of newsmakers, and all the while, focusing on the question “What does this mean locally and how do I best convey this information to the viewer?”. Although he interviewed many famous people, he was most interested in meeting and reporting on everyday Central New Yorkers, their issues, challenges, safety, and concerns - this was his community too.



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He was uncompromising in his conviction that his reporting be fair, balanced, unbiased, and above all, accurate.

Through the years, his work overlapped with some who went on to become giants in the field. He was fortunate to cut his teeth in broadcasting with luminaries who worked in Syracuse and went on to national acclaim, including Al Roker, Bob Costas, Steve Kroft, Mike Tirico, and Syracuse's own, David Muir. He reveled in and championed their successes. Additionally, he was proud to help mentor and find jobs for scores of young journalists and broadcast professionals who spent time in our community before growing their careers elsewhere. Sometimes help came in the form of "friendly advice from experience", and at other times, a phone call, email, or connection was made from his reservoir of nationwide contacts - a network earned from decades of goodwill in the field. As competitive as he could be to scoop the competition, he respected his peers...fellow broadcasters who had lived a shared experience.

Rod was not born into privilege or blessed with an advanced education. But, he was naturally bright and had a drive that saw him work 12-hour days for nearly six decades. He was gifted with an encyclopedic memory. Surely, you'd want him on your trivia team, particularly if the topic was "anything and everything about Central New York". His knowledge and passion for local history made him an asset in the newsroom and a resource for his co-workers. He also lived to lighten the mood in the often stressful and always "deadline-pressure" environment of the newsroom. Viewers at home may never have known, the composed gentleman delivering the news was a cutup to his co-workers, friends, and family when the cameras were off. He had a self-deprecating sense of humor and laughs were generally at his own expense.

At his core, he was a man of the people from humble roots. As a young boy, Roddy's mother thought he might enjoy being involved in a play. Little did she know the dividends that parental push would yield. Not only did he like the creative outlet, he flourished, and won the lead in a Syracuse University Children's Theater production of Pinocchio.

A lifelong Syracusan, Rod grew up in the University Section's Westcott Neighborhood and attended Ed Smith School and Nottingham High School. Uncle Sam beckoned and he spent three years in the US Army. A proud veteran, he had the utmost respect for all those who served our country in any branch of the service, as well as for law enforcement, having been an MP during his time in uniform. A Cold War veteran, he served in France during the Berlin Wall Crisis and in Florida during the Cuban Missile Crisis.



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He was a husband and father of five. He loved his wife, children, and ten grandchildren. He took great pride in taking care of and providing for his family. He was also a traditionalist when it came to taking care of his yard - it had to be neat as a pin. Wintertime meant snowblowing the driveway of the family's small cape in The Valley, with Rod regularly clearing the sidewalk up and down the block. He appreciated simple pleasures. He loved the home cooking of his Italian and Arabic wife, Nanette. Eating out at a restaurant or diner...or at the home of a friend or family member...was something special he looked forward to. He loved The Valley and was a regular at Green Hills, Luigi's, and Gannon's.

He appreciated cars throughout his life and was especially fond of any built before 1970. He knew every make, model, and year! One day in middle age, he hopped on his teenage son's motor scooter. That first ride led to the purchase of a series of scooters and motorcycles. After finishing weekend chores, he loved to ride and make stops to visit friends, usually unannounced, and always ready with a story or two. He looked forward to the State Fair all year, its amazing food, and getting to meet people who'd watched Channel 9 at home. He also enjoyed reading the newspaper, especially the columns from his friend from The Valley, Dick Case. And when home, he honest-to-goodness really liked to watch the news. He was a loyal fan of Syracuse University football and basketball. In his later years, he grew to love cats! And over time, he became quite the dapper dresser for work. This was contrasted with his decidedly unsophisticated "dad" weekend wardrobe of cutoff or cargo shorts, jeans, and t-shirts that he kept and wore, just a little...too...long.

He was a NABET union member and past president of the Syracuse Press Club, a member of their Wall of Distinction. Rod won numerous awards for his work including from the Associated Press and the New York State Broadcasters' Association, who selected him for their Hall of Fame. He was grateful for proclamations and citations from the United States Congress, the State of New York, Onondaga County, and the City of Syracuse. He was the recipient of a variety of superlatives from readers of the Syracuse New Times. He was especially proud of the honorary degree he received from Onondaga Community College. He'd begun taking classes there in the early 1970s, but with a wife and five children to support, higher education was something he was never able to get back to. A finer day was not had by him, than when he was honored with a section of South Salina Street being named "Rod Wood Way". This was an occasion that may have only been eclipsed by WSYR naming its newsroom in his honor, upon his retirement.

He very much appreciated the times he was asked to speak at civic events. He felt privileged to work with close friend Nancy Duffy, founder of the Syracuse St. Patrick's Parade, as the parade's



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grandstand emcee, from its beginning through its first 20 years. Being without Irish ancestry, he was grateful to have been selected the "Honorary Gael of the Year" in 2002. Rod was also a host for annual telethons for the Children's Miracle Network, raising funds for Upstate University Hospital.

He is survived by sons John (Katie) Groat and Christopher (Lindsay) Groat of DeWitt; daughters Elizabeth (Robert) DiNardo of Webster, Rebecca (Kate Liddle) Groat of Baldwinsville, and Priscilla (Mike) Allen of Syracuse; as well as brother Hall Groat, recently of Endicott; brothers-in-law Richard Nicholas of Liverpool, Robert Nicholas of Onondaga Hill, sister-in-law Deborah (Nicholas) Spencer of Charleston, SC., as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins, including cousin Dick Pierce of Cedarvale.

Rod was a proud grandfather to ten grandchildren including Enzo, Madison, Mya, Taylee, Jace, Cooper, Hudson, Willem, Holland, and Pierce.

He is irreplaceable, the patriarch of our family, an absolute original.... He will be missed beyond measure!

The family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the staff of the Syracuse Home in Baldwinsville.

All are invited to calling hours to be held from 3:30-7:30pm on Wednesday, December 22nd, at Holy Cross Church, 4112 E. Genesee St., Dewitt. A mass of Christian burial will be held the next day, Thursday, December 23rd, at 12:00 noon, also at Holy Cross Church, with burial to follow. All are invited and we hope to see you as we remember our father. Donations for a memorial scholarship in Rod's honor may be made in care of John Groat, P.O. Box 49, Syracuse, NY 13214. Personal remembrances of our father are very welcome and may be mailed to the same address.

Please sign the guestbook at: [syracuse.com/obits](http://syracuse.com/obits)



# Events

**Roderic W. Groat "Rod Wood"**

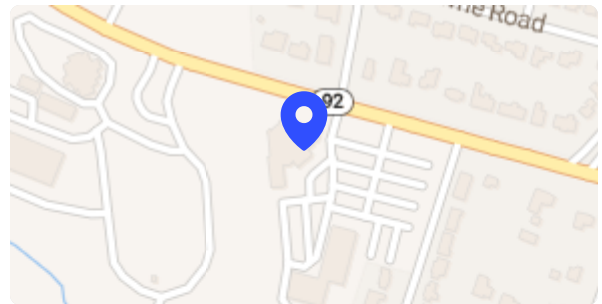
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## Visitation

 **Wednesday**, December 22, 2021


 3:30 PM - 7:30 PM ET

 **Holy Cross Church**  
4112 E. Genesee St., Syracuse NY 13214

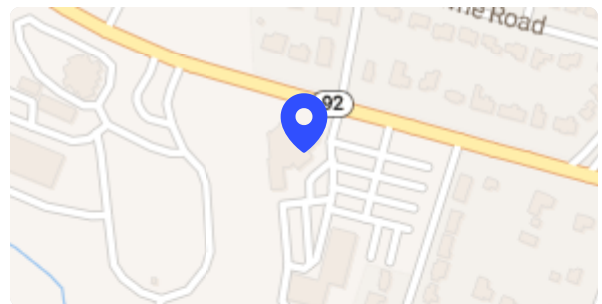


## Funeral Mass

 **Thursday**, December 23, 2021

 12:00 PM ET

 **Holy Cross Church**  
4112 E. Genesee St., Syracuse NY 13214





## Tribute Wall

**Roderic W. Groat "Rod Wood"**

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NA

**Nate** posted:

Rod was always a generous man. I've had the pleasure to meet him a couple of times at the State Fair and throughout the years, I've known him as a local legend...and he is one. RIP, Rod. You will be missed throughout the Syracuse community.

December 29 at 5:37 PM

MS

**Marion Donhauser Sutliff** lit a candle in honor of Roderic.

Condolences to the family and friends.

December 26 at 4:31 AM



KE

**Karen Esposito** lit a candle in honor of Roderic.

I will always remember Rod watching him on the news, and when I went to the state fair. Such a very nice and caring man. R.I.P. God be with you all at this time of sorrow!

December 24 at 10:12 PM



NL

**Nabet-Cwa Local 211** posted:

The NABET-CWA Local 211 Officers, Stewards and Union Members would like to pass along our deepest condolences to the Groat Family and friends of Rod. Rod was a beloved Union Member of 44 years. He was our highly energetic MC to our yearly clambake, which he truly enjoyed. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone grieving during this difficult time. As we reflect and remember our beloved Roddy through tears and laughter, we have found comfort in Rod's ability to always keep us entertained in the most challenging of times. Rest in peace, Roddy. You WERE and will ALWAYS be a LEGEND."

December 23 at 4:49 PM

RP

**Royce Pinkard** lit a candle in honor of Roderic.

December 23 at 2:15 PM





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JB

**James Bell** posted:

We have watched him on the local news for years. Loved to hear his broadcasts. Jim and Ellen Bell Hannibal, NY

December 23 at 9:49 AM

KT

**Kathleen Townsend** lit a candle in honor of Roderic.



December 22 at 8:30 AM

JC

**Jim Carrick** posted:

My thoughts and prayers to the family and many friends. I worked with Roddy at Ch 9 for 23 years and will never forget him and my many suppers he ate on me. He loved food. Rest In Peace my friend. Jim & Kathy Carrick

December 21 at 5:23 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Groat family.



December 21 at 3:12 PM

PV

**Patty Vecchiarelli** lit a candle in honor of Roderic.



December 21 at 4:17 AM

PV

**Patty Vecchiarelli** lit a candle in honor of Roderic.

My condolences to Becky and her family. I enjoyed watching your dad every night. He will be truly missed.

December 21 at 4:16 AM





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PR

**Patricia Reilly** posted:

Although you do not know who I am, my thoughts and prayers are with your family. Everyone knows that Rod was a very special person and an amazing new anchor who will be truly missed. The only station I watch for news is Channel 9 and ABC News with David Muir at 6:00 p.m., one of the best parts of my day. Patricia Reilly

December 20 at 12:43 PM

TC

**Tracie Coulson** lit a candle in honor of Roderic.



December 20 at 10:15 AM

JH

**Jim Heins** posted:

My condolences to the entire Groat family.

December 20 at 8:57 AM

KT

**Kathleen Townsend** posted:

rod we will miss you on newchannel 9 i been warching you since i was a teenager rest in peace we will miss you in the valley

December 20 at 7:00 AM



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JL

**Jim Lamanna** posted:

There is a common theme to what former coworkers of Rod – like me – have to say about working with him. And it is so true. He treated everyone he worked with as equals. No matter how young, no matter how experienced. My first day working at channel 9 was in 1995 with Rod on the night shift. I had ten years in the business by then at other stations here and there. But I grew up seeing Rod on the news. So on that first night I was intimidated by working with such a broadcast icon – for about a minute and a half! That’s about how long it took me to realize Rod would treat me kindly and professionally. And usually make me laugh every time we chatted! I hear descriptions about Rod like “funny”, “professional”, “kind”, “hard-working”, “dedicated”, and these are all spot on. My deepest condolences go out to Rod’s family. And to our channel 9 family. While I’m sorry Rod has passed, I’m so grateful I was blessed enough to have had his friendship. Rest in peace Rod, I will never forget you.

December 19 at 8:09 AM

DM

**Dick Mastriano** December 20 at 11:29 AM

Having relocated to North Carolina recently, as many others, we were shocked to learn of Rod’s passing. A longtime friend, I had the privilege of taking over Rod’s news reporting duties at WNDR Radio when Rod moved over to WHEN Radio/ TV in 1967. We kept in touch over the years, to include the Syracuse Press Club where we both served as President, and always Rod had that unique sense of humor that would evoke a chuckle and leave a smile on your face. The consummate Pro and always at the top of his game as a Reporter and Anchor. My deepest condolences to the Groat family and Rod, Thank you for the memories. RIP

RJ

**Robert Jones** December 20 at 6:20 AM

My wife and I have admired Rod for years and followed his career as he gained a following in central New York. A straight shooter who gained your respect and confidence, he is greatly missed. RIP Rod.

Jl

**Joe Insel** December 20 at 4:37 AM

Well said, Jim. Although I never had the privilege of knowing him, your words, and those of so many others, resonate with me that he enriched the lives of everyone who knew him.

DW

**Debby Wood** posted:

I’m so sorry to hear about your father. I can remember when my son and I went to the state fair when my son was young he walked up to Rod and called him grandpa and smiled at my son and said good morning and nice to meet you

December 19 at 6:03 AM



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MS

**Mary Stimson** lit a candle in honor of Roderic.

December 19 at 4:11 AM



LH

**Linda Orzel Hanno** posted:

Chris, Lindsay, Cooper, Hudson: I am so sorry for your loss. May you have peace & strength at this difficult time. Linda Orzel Hanno (ECC)

December 18 at 9:05 PM

SB

**Sabrina Betts** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Groat family.

December 18 at 4:19 PM



SB

**Sabrina Betts** posted:

Roddy. Oh, how I miss you already. I've said to a few people that a world without you is hard to imagine. You truly lit up every room you entered. My heart is heavy, but I'm hanging on to the countless memories and stories - so many of them documented in photos and videos - and I will cherish them forever. You welcomed me with open arms the day I started at NewsChannel 9. Way back in 2003 as an intern and again in 2008, as a producer. You were kind and curious, incredibly charming and ridiculously funny. You never looked at me like the rookie I was. You embraced me and treated me as an equal always. You trusted me and as anyone in the business knows, that's a key element of any anchor/producer relationship. You encouraged me, pushed me, supported me, entertained me, fed me...and sometimes frustrated me. Haha. Our "fights," however, never lasted long and usually ended in a late night "I'm sorry and I love ya" email. I never doubted that you did, but you always made sure to say it. It was an honor to produce the news for you for more than a decade, but it was an even bigger honor to call you a dear friend. Rest In Peace. I love you and miss you already. Say hi to my dad for me. Sending all of my thoughts and prayers to the Groat family. ❤️❤️

December 18 at 4:07 PM



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**Chuck Celentano** posted:

I met Rod in 1978, when I was hired as a Master Control Director, at WIXT TV 9. I quickly became good friends with Roddy. My daughter was born in 1978 and whenever I brought her in to see the gang, Rod would call her, "My Elizabeth". Rod was a great person, a valued friend and a good man! I will miss his humor and fun at our annual clambake! R.I.P. Rod! Love you brother!

December 18 at 11:56 AM



**Charlene Rowe** December 23 at 10:39 AM

Such a consummate professional. I have watched Channel 9 News and ABC News for as long as I can remember. Wish I got to know the funny side of Rod Wood. RIP I will never forget you.



**Roger** December 20 at 7:47 AM

Rod I always watch you and carry each night at dinner. The most awesome pair giving the news rest in peace rod will be missed forever



**Jack Mindy** December 20 at 7:35 AM

Happily, I was able to "touch bases" with Rod at a gathering of Syracuse radio alumni a few years ago. Wonderful to visit, however briefly, with a coworker back in our days at WHEN in the early 70s. A "Pro" - simple as that.



**Margaret Russo** December 19 at 7:42 AM

Since I never met your father in person, your ENTIRE family have my heartfelt sympathy.



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Roderic by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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