



## Robert J. Congel

July 6, 1935 - February 3, 2021

Robert J. Congel, the Founder and Chairman of the Pyramid Companies, passed away peacefully at home on February 3rd surrounded by family. He was 85 years old.

A lifelong resident of Central New York, Bob was a third generation Italian American and entrepreneur at heart. He proudly attended Christian Brothers Academy graduating in 1954. After receiving his education from Fordham University, Bob returned to Syracuse and launched R.J. Congel Construction Company in 1958 with a \$175 loan from his grandfather Antonio Mondo.

After succeeding in the construction industry, Bob applied his talent into real estate, developing apartments, offices, warehouses, and small retail centers. In 1970, Bob founded The Pyramid Companies. Under Bob's leadership, The Pyramid Companies has been recognized as an industry leader on multiple fronts. Pyramid created nearly 26 million square feet of commercial space across New York State and Massachusetts.

Wanting to give back to the hometown he felt gave him so much, Bob's vision and creativity was instrumental in removing "oil city" from Syracuse's Lakefront, in advancing the redevelopment of Franklin Square, and in developing Destiny USA the 6th largest complex of its kind in the United States.

While Bob was exceptionally driven in his professional career, family was always his number one priority and source of pride. Married for nearly 60 years, Bob and his wife Suzanne have five children and twenty-one grandchildren. He is survived by his wife Suzanne, children Beth (Doug) Ulrich, Scott (Emily) Congel, Mark (Meaghan) Congel, Sheila (Eric) Goetzmann, Stephen (Alexandra) Congel, sister Elizabeth (Bob), nephew Joe (Diana) Goethe, all of his grandchildren and countless friends and business associates.

Bob was deeply patriotic and always appreciated the opportunities America provided. Bob was proud to be a husband, father, Gabba, brother, uncle, friend, and mentor. Bob loved

the outdoors spending summers at Skaneateles Lake, and skiing each winter with his children and grandchildren. Bob often used the saying 'Life is People' meaning human relationships are the most important part of your daily life.

Throughout his career, Bob served on the boards of a number of civic and business organizations including: Lifetime Trustee at Syracuse University, Christian Brothers Academy, the Metropolitan Development Association, the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, as well as Fays Drug Company, Unity Mutual Life Insurance Company.

Bob has been recognized for his commitment to the environment and community: Environmental Quality Award from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Greening USA, the US Green Building Council, the American Cancer Society, the Longhouse Council's Distinguished Citizen of the Year Honoree, the Onondaga Historical Association Medal, and the Rhea Eckel Clark Memorial Citizenship Award from the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board.

Bob's family would like to send a special thank you to the wonderful aides from Peregrine, as well as the caring individuals at Hospice of CNY.

A private Mass of Christian Burial and entombment will be held. Funeral arrangements entrusted to THOMAS J. PIRRO JR. FUNERAL HOME.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Association of Central New York.

# Cemetery

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## **St. Mary's Mausoleum**

4100 East Genesee Street

DeWitt, NY, 13214

# Comments

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“ I worked for Bob back in 1985-86, and I will always remember his business savvy, but even more his understanding of people. I learned a lot from him. May he Rest In Peace.

Reed Bergwall

Reed Bergwall - February 19 at 08:47 PM

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“ Mary Jo Paratore Downey lit a candle in memory of Robert J. Congel



Mary Jo Paratore Downey - February 13 at 01:06 PM

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“ I still have not gotten paid for my work on Carousel, hope he left some \$ for me especially considering the tax breaks?

Joe Carpo - February 13 at 11:25 AM

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“ Mrs. Congel and Family...

Please accept my sincere condolences...

I met Mr. Congel -- and many of you! -- when I was a very young account executive at Eric Mower & Associates. One of my first important assignments at Mower as working to help support marketing for Carousel Center, the carousel restoration, and key properties in Franklin Square. For a young advertising/PR guy, it was a dream assignment. And I was, and remain, very proud to have played a small part in bringing to life such important and enduring Syracuse landmarks.

I always enjoyed my experiences with Mr. Congel -- his work ethic, vision and passion set an example that has served me well in my career. And, I appreciate how he balanced professional achievement with personal philanthropy and a keen focus on family.

I don't make it back to Syracuse very often, but I have very fond memories of the city and my time working on Pyramid assignments...especially my time interacting with Mr. Congel and his children, as they entered the business. So, it's with gratitude and appreciation that I offer my thoughts and prayers at this sad time... My best to you all...

-- Tom Armentrout, Atlanta

**Tom Amentrout** - February 10 at 05:57 PM

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“ Sue, I'm so very sorry for your loss. I know Syracuse is a far better city because of Bob and his vision.

Interestingly, and for a reason I'm not certain why or how, I thought back to when my Mom & Dad came back from your wedding. They both were so happy and had such a wonderful time. My mom said what she loved was how much Bob kept kissing you! Boy he must really love her, she said. Of course my mom was so very happy for you. We all knew how much Bob loved you. Sue, we go all the way back to Collingwood Ave, I just want to say again how sorry I am.

Bill Schick

**Bill Schick** - February 10 at 04:22 PM

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“ My name is Mary Castrilli Osborne. My mother's name was Concetta Visalli. Her mother was Katherine Grosso, and When she came here from Sicily, Italy she lived with her cousin Dr. Grosso's family. I remember she talked about Robert's grandfather Antonio Mondo, also one of her relatives. She also told us that Robert Congel was one of her cousins. I believe I am a cousin- 2nd or 3rd and I just wanted to send you my condolences for your loss of your father, a true visionary.

Mary J Osborne - February 09 at 11:40 PM

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“ Donna Setrella lit a candle in memory of Robert J. Congel



Donna Setrella - February 09 at 04:08 PM



“ Jean & Family,  
Sending hugs and healing energies as you all continue on your grief journey. My deepest for your loss.  
Respectfully,  
Donna 'Byrd' Setrella

Donna Setrella - February 09 at 04:11 PM

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“ I served as one of Bob's finance lawyers for many years but he was for me a colleague, visionary and inspiration. Pursuing a dream to realization is not only a developer's role but a lesson in life for all of us. I am grateful for the time I was able to advise him. I will miss him deeply.

milton wakschlag - February 09 at 10:20 AM

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“ Our deepest condolences to the Congel family on the loss of your beloved father. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.  
Clarkstown Supervisor George Hoehmann

Supervisor George Hoehmann - February 09 at 09:18 AM



“ The Congel Family is in our thoughts and prayers for comfort and peace with the loss of a very special man. May all of your Memories of him remain with you throughout your lives. I know that our memories of him, and all of the Contributions he made to our Wonderful Community of Central New York will remain with us. And to Bob, May You enjoy your Rewards for a Life Well Lived, in Heaven.

Sandy and John Kinsella

**Sandy Kinsella** - February 08 at 07:41 PM

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“ I am sorry to hear of Bob's passing and send my condolences to his family. Because of Bob's vision, he gave me, as well as many others an opportunity back in October 2005 as part of the Carousel Mall Expansion Project - a.k.a. Destiny USA. Ultimately this chance of a lifetime changed my career path and I will be forever thankful. May Bob rest in peace

Beth Braun

**Beth Braun** - February 08 at 06:38 PM

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“ Sue, Can't tell you how sorry I am for your loss, I have always respected and admired Bob's foresight, attitude of 'never,never, never give up', love of family and his undaunted professionalism. Please tell Beth, Scott, Mark, Sheila and Stephen how sorry I am....he will be truly missed by everyone.....jack estabrook

**jack estabrook** - February 08 at 10:18 AM

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“ Please accept the most heartfelt sympathies of Le Moyne College. We hope the love and memories you will forever hold in your heart bring you peace and comfort during this difficult time.

**Le Moyne College** - February 08 at 08:52 AM

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“ Dear Sue and family , want to send our deepest condolences. Bob was such a great family man and made it possible for all of our extended family to say close . My Dad, Vinnie Paratore, so enjoyed getting together and sharing family memories .

Dolores Paratore Cavallo

Dolores Cavallo - February 07 at 09:33 PM

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“ Mrs. Congel, Scott and family, I am so sorry to hear about your husband and dad's passing. I have many fond memories of your family and the times I spent with you at your lake home. Mr. Congel was always so kind to me as you all were. Please know I am keeping your family in my prayers. He is resting in peace and guiding you from above. With sincere condolences, Laurie (Putnam) Hogan

Laurie Hogan - February 07 at 07:53 PM

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“ My condolences to the Congel family. Your Dad/ Husband was a good man who gave a lot of people the chance to make their life better. He gave me that chance and I'm forever thankful. God blessed him with a good life, may he also be blessed with eternal life . RIP

Tim Erwin - February 07 at 06:52 PM

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“ Dear Sue and family,

With deepest sympathy of the loss of your husband. Our remembrances of the wonderful times that you hosted the many CBA reunions will always be in our hearts. You graciously provided everything one could want. Bob will be greatly missed by the Class of '54

Dom and Marlene Mercurio  
New Smyrna Beach, FI

Dominic Mercurio - February 07 at 06:38 PM

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“ Our deepest thoughts and prayers are with Sue, his children and his sister, Betty. It was truly an honor and joy to work with all of you. I remember when he first met my boys and Michael went up to him and said “hi Bob” he got a good chuckle out of that. He was a great man and will be missed. Sincerely, Cathleen, Patrick, and Michael Ready

**Cathleen Ready** - February 07 at 05:10 PM

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“ Mrs. Congel. My name is Julia Davis. I am the daughter of Anna Starodubzew who cleaned your home She loved your family very much. She would tell me stories about your family. Thank you for being so kind to her. I am so very sorry for your loss. God bless

Julia Davis

**Julia Davis** - February 07 at 04:59 PM

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“ Mrs. Congel and Family,

I am sorry for your loss. I rememeber how both of you were so kind to me as a child. You have always been that way to our family.

Elizabeth Crotty Griffith

**Elizabeth Crotty Griffith** - February 07 at 04:01 PM

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“ Dear Sue, Bob was always a kind and gentle person who cared about his friends. He was very generous to his classmates, hosting class reunions. We enjoyed his sense of humor.

We are very sorry for your loss. Peter an Dolly Monteleone

**Peter Monteleone** - February 07 at 11:41 AM

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Suzanne and family

My deepest sympathy to your family. Both of you were always kind to me. I was so blessed to be the councilor when Carousel opened in my district. And you both supported me in my ItalianFest for the years that i did it.

Your family has contributed so much to Syracuse. May God bless you all and comfort you during this difficult time.

May he rest in peace.

Susann Panek

**Susann Panek** - February 07 at 11:05 AM

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Sue and family,

My sincere condolences to you all for the loss of your Husband and Father. I am sure you will be comforted by your many memories,

Sincerely,

Connie Renze Murphy

**Constance Murphy** - February 07 at 10:58 AM

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Sue and family...my sincere sympathy for the loss of Bob. He was an asset to the growth of Syracuse....Rest in Peace Bob.

Sue Dizazzo Fiero....

**Sue Fiero** - February 07 at 10:38 AM

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Sorry to hear he has passed. He was fair and honest in his dealing with others. And above all he listened. Thank you for the preveiledge of knowing him.

Michael F. Stoll, USFWS Ret.

**Michael Stoll** - February 07 at 10:37 AM

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“ Dear Sue and family, we are deeply saddened by Bob’s passing. While Bob is resting in peace, we know how difficult this time is for you and your family. We have so many wonderful memories of times spent together on Skaneateles Lake, the tennis court and other special get togethers. Bob loved his family who always came first. We will miss him dearly. With love and heartfelt sympathies, Angela and Francis Lombardi

Angela Lombardi - February 07 at 10:08 AM

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“ Dear Sue and Aunt Betty, I’m so sorry for your loss, my deepest sympathies for you and your families. Bob was the warmest, kindest and happiest person whenever I saw him. He will be missed on this world but his amazing legacy will endure. All my love, Darlene Goetzmann LaFontaine

Darlene Goetzmann LaFontaine - February 07 at 08:39 AM

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“ I first met Bob when I was working around the Mall in the early 90's and throughout the years he would always take the time to chat with me anytime he would see me. The time that I remember the most is when they were doing the most recent expansion and I was by the area in the mall ,Bob saw me and gave me a "50 cent" tour of the new construction .Bob always treated me and others with the respect that they deserved and he was a great all around guy. R I P my friend .



Tony Russo - February 07 at 06:51 AM

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“ To the entire Congel Family, Mr. Congel and his family were such an important and significant part of us Finnegan's lives, particularly when we were young. My Uncle, Father John Finnegan was so fond of Mr. and Mrs. Congel and always cherished our time at Skaneateles in particular. Speaking for the Finnegans, we send our deepest condolences and with all the Congels peace and joy in so many wonderful memories of such an impressive life lived.

Peace and Blessings,

Patrick J. Finnegan

**Patrick Finnegan** - February 07 at 01:00 AM

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“ Sue:

My condolences on yours and the family's loss. His journey is completed and now he is Home. May he eternally rest in peace.

Jim Dooher  
Blessed Sacrament Classmate

**Jim Dooher** - February 06 at 09:52 PM

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“ To Sue and family,  
I am deeply saddened to learn of Bob's death, and I extend my sincerest condolences for your loss.  
I am so proud to have been his classmate at CBA in the class of 1954. We were a relatively small group with, I believe, a great regard for one another. I remember Bob as a great football player and part of the many championship teams. I cheered them on in the school band. But Bob and you made that a lifelong connection with your immensely generous hosting of our 25th, 50th and 60th reunions. I can't thank you enough for all you did, and for all you and Bob have done for CBA and the entire community.  
I hope your memories give you the solace you deserve.  
Sam Vavonese '54

**Sam Vavonese** - February 06 at 04:58 PM

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“ As a fellow "Brother's Boy", I remember Bob as a senior at CBA. Bob was one of Brother Peter's favorites. I was a freshman and remember him as very friendly and personable and always willing to help the freshmen find their way..  
To Betty, may God grant you and your entire family the peace and resolve to cope with your loss. May his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace. Bob exemplified the saying, "Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass. It is about learning to dance in the rain."

My sincere sympathies and condolences. .  
Joseph & June Julian (CBA '57)

Joseph M. Julian - February 06 at 02:09 PM

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“ So very sorry may He Rest In Peace ,God Bless the Family I Know Mr Congel was a great man who knew my Mother Kate Nappi growing up on North Side near were she grew up , He was decadent To the North Side snd Syracuse and never forgot were he came from God Speed Him to Heaven for all he achieved in Life From Patricia A Nappi and Family Thomas and Thomas Jr Nappi -Dery Family



patricia a nappi - February 05 at 11:24 PM

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“ Sue & Family,  
My sincere condolences go out to you all during this tough time with Bob's passing. I will never forget him and you Sue when I had some health problems and you Two offered to have me flown anywhere in the United States for the help I needed. God Bless you Bob and may you rest in peace forever.



RobbieWells/LasVegas - February 05 at 09:25 PM