

## Our Friend Romeo



On the afternoon of December 26, our beloved Romeo Garcia Lumaban, Jr. passed away of an unexpected heart attack. Romeo was an extraordinarily important part of his community, and will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all who had the good fortune to know and care for him.

Romeo was born in San Diego, California, but moved to Virginia Beach during his childhood and forever adopted Virginia as his home. After graduating from Green Run High School in 1988, Romeo attended Virginia Tech, where he graduated in 1992. Romeo then earned his Juris Doctorate from Widener University in 1995, after which he worked as a Deputy Commonwealth Attorney at the Hampton Commonwealth Attorney's Office, a post he held until 2008. In 2008, he joined the Smith Law Firm in Hampton, Virginia, where he worked to defend the rights of his clients in the areas of criminal law and domestic relations. Romeo was also appointed as a substitute judge for the Eighth Judicial District and was a respected member of the legal, business, and philanthropic community for the entirety of his career. Romeo served as the Past President of the Hampton Rotary Club and the Hampton Bar Association, as well as serving on the boards for the Newport News Center for Sexual Assault Survivors and Bacon Street. Romeo also served as a board member for a variety of other local non-profit organizations. Additionally, he was an adjunct professor for many years at Thomas Nelson Community College.

While Romeo will be remembered as an excellent attorney, judge, and colleague by his co-workers, he will be remembered as a loving husband, step-father, son, brother, and uncle by his family. Romeo, born to Romeo Tabara Lumaban, Sr. and Amparo Garcia Lumaban in 1969, married his best friend and the love of his life, Mary Celeste Lumaban, in a beautiful ceremony in 2012. Mary Celeste and Romeo enjoyed a wonderful life together, full of travel, fun, and adventure. From roller coasters at Busch Gardens to horseback riding in the Dominican Republic, Romeo loved to share new and exciting memories with his loved ones. Romeo also shared his personal warmth and love not only with his wife, Mary Celeste, but with his step-children, Cade and Cara Shaw. Romeo will be remembered for his easy smile and genuine enjoyment of Cade and Cara's soccer games, dance recitals, and graduations. Romeo could always be counted on as a fun, cheerful, and bright presence at any family, social, or professional event.

Particularly important to Romeo were his Sunday afternoon trips to Virginia Beach, where he would have lunch with his mother, Amparo. Romeo was also a devoted brother to his two sisters, Gina and Grace, and an uncle/godparent to their children.

Romeo was preceded in death by his father, Romeo Tabara Lumaban, Sr. He is survived by his wife, Mary Celeste; his mother, Amparo Garcia Lumaban; his sisters, Gina Lumaban Marpuri and Grace Lumaban Key; his brothers-in-law, Jojo Marpuri and Dallas Key; his step-children, Cade and Cara; his nieces, Alexa Marpuri and Kayla Key and his nephews, Ian Marpuri and Austin Key. Romeo also leaves behind a community's worth of friends and colleagues, as well as two cherished cats, Echo and Neo.

I got to spend an hour with Romeo ringing the bell on Black Friday. He made me laugh for most of that hour. He joked about Barktoberfest because he knew that I knew the story. "What kind of guy attends an event for dogs and comes home with a sick cat!?", he joked. I laughed, but what I should have said .....The kind of guy who loves his family and does whatever makes them happy. A good guy. A guy like you.



"You ain't got jack on Jack, Holiday Party Challenge!!"

To my surprise....the winner was me.



Kevin Steele Jack Pope Garrick Blount



.....this is so much worse in color. As I could not accept my own donated prize, or as our President suggested, "Keep it", I donated it to the HYC staff. After having to deal with us, they earned it. Thank you to all the members who organized our event!



January 6th: Voting on our new slate of Officers and Board

January 13th: Ask Marqueta

January 20th: Induction of New Members

January 27th: Prince Andrew, Duke of York, just kidding, Ask Marqueta



### Incoming RI President Announces 2022-23 Theme

**Shekhar Mehta**, a member of the Rotary Club of Calcutta-Mahanagar, West Bengal, India, revealed the 2021-22 presidential theme, **Serve to Change Lives**. Mehta spoke about how participating in service projects through Rotary changed him as a person and made him empathize more with the needs of others. Soon after joining his club, he helped carry out projects that benefited rural communities in India.



*Happy Birthday!*

Greg Lawson 07 January

David McInnis 13 January