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URGENT

## **NWI man dies from terminal cancer following vow renewal ceremony at Albert's**

Mary Freda  
Jul 1, 2020

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**H**AMMOND — A couple of dozen family members gathered at St. Nicholas Cemetery in Hammond on a sunny, breezy Wednesday afternoon to honor the life of Roy Slazyk.

Slazyk, 67, of Hammond, died Monday after being diagnosed with terminal cancer at the beginning of this year.

He is survived by his wife of 20 years, Mary Ellen; daughters, Alexandra Kaminski, Elizabeth Kaminski, Mary K. Kaminski and Dawn Vela; his son, Bruce Slazyk; his brothers, Bruce Slazyk, Marty Slazyk and Bob Slazyk; 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Slazyk was preceded in death by his parents, Martin and Jacqueline Slazyk, and sister, Victoria Slazyk.



In late January, Slazyk collapsed on the floor and turned gray. Neither Roy nor Mary Ellen Slazyk knew why, but would soon discover Roy had terminal lung cancer.

## NWI couple renew vows after terminal cancer diagnosis


Since then, he had been in and out of the hospital, Mary Ellen said recently. He spent his last days at home, while Mary Ellen and her daughters cared for him.

Roy lost his appetite and wasn't drinking much, Mary Ellen said. He slept a lot and found comfort in the family's new dog, Princess, who Mary Ellen found while walking on a trail.

When no one claimed the pooch, she became a service dog of sorts for Roy, Mary Ellen said, adding Princess would alert the family if Roy was about to have a seizure or if he had just woken up.

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Just last week, Mary Ellen said the family was taking it "a day at a time," a similar outlook she and Roy shared in February after the pair **renewed their vows at Albert's for their 20th wedding anniversary.**

"The only thing I'm concentrating on is I can't change things. I have no timeline, so I'll make the best of what time I have left," Roy said at the time. "I'm going to keep things as normal as possible and retire to the fact that there is no saving me — no matter how I decide to go. Just peaceful and painless as possible is all I'm shooting for." 

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Mary Ellen Slazyk, left, and her husband, Roy, renew their wedding vows in February, with the help of Magistrate Jeffrey Miller, at Albert's Diamond Jewelers in Schererville.

Kale Wilk, file, The Times

During the vow renewal ceremony, Mary Ellen walked down the aisle with a single white rose.



"You have been the greatest loving husband even though I've got a lot of faults," Mary Ellen said to Roy at the ceremony. "You're a great man. You're not perfect, but you were perfect for me."

The pair met while playing darts together on an informal team in the late 1990s, and this year's anniversary turned out to be the last they would share.

"Whatever time we have together, I've cherished in the past, and I'll cherish now because I love you so much. And I wish we could be together for 1,000 years," Mary Ellen said during the February nuptials.

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The secret to a great marriage, the couple agreed, is love.





Mary Ellen and Roy Slazyk share a kiss in their home in 2007.

Times file photo

Though the family knew his death was imminent, Mary Ellen said they didn't expect his last day to be Monday.

He died in his sleep in the same position Mary Ellen found him in while checking on him during the early morning hours Monday. It was painless and peaceful, just like the family had hoped for, she said.

"I got to say goodbye to Roy tomorrow, and I don't want to," Mary Ellen said by phone on Tuesday. "I don't want him to be gone."

Before Roy's casket was lowered into the ground on Wednesday, Mary Ellen and family members placed a dozen red roses on top of it.



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As she left Roy's blue casket Wednesday, she carried a lone white rose.

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