
In Memory of
Damian Russo



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Damian Russo, patriarch of Russo Farms, dies at 64

By

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Damian Russo, the longtime president of Russo Farms, who helped modernize the company, died on May 12 after a long battle with cancer. He was 64.

Mr. Russo was born Sept. 18, 1959, to the late Pasquale (Charlie) and Mary (DeMaria) Russo. After graduating from Villanova University, he later went to work at Russo Farms, which was founded about 104 years ago.

Described by his son, Tom, as “the chief cook and bottle washer at Russo Farms,” Mr. Russo became the business’ president in 1992 when his father and company founder, Pasquale Russo, died.

“He was the bread and butter here,” said Russo, who himself became president of Vineland, NJ-based Russo Farms two years ago. “He carried this place through all these years. My dad was one of the hardest-working men I have ever known without a shadow of a doubt. Sometimes, we thought he worked too hard, but he always found time for his family — me, my sister, Genevieve, and his wife and our mom, Nickala.”

Russo added that his dad was not a farmer, per se, but rather an expert on hiring the right people to get the job done. “He was always right on when it came to hiring good people to help him at Russo Farms,” Russo said. “When he was younger, he did a great job shepherding our family business, working with my grandfather and uncle to develop every aspect of what we did here. He was extremely organized and was as neat as a pin, which helps explain how efficiently he ran our company.”

Russo noted that his father was extremely instrumental in getting Russo Farms food safety certified more than a decade ago. “He did that before it was necessary,” he said. “He was always ahead of the curve. We have very big shoes to fill.”

In addition to his wife, who he met in 1981, and son and daughter, Mr. Russo is survived by Tom’s wife Marissa and one granddaughter, Hazel Sage. He is also survived by his brother, Thomas Russo, and his wife Eva.

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