



## Ronald James Thate "Rona"

February 1, 1951 - November 25, 2023

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Born and raised in Burlington, WI, he was the son of Harry and Isabelle (nee Giannini) Thate. After graduating from UW-Whitewater with a BSE in Art Education, he resided in Milwaukee, WI until his death. Ronald, more notably known as Rona, was the Bar Manager/Bartender at M & M Glass Menagerie for 30 years and was named Miss Gay Wisconsin in 1981-82. When the M&M club closed, he worked for Sazs Catering, Inc. as a part-time food and beverage assistant and few other part-time jobs, including floral arranger and event coordinator with Bay Floral and Signature Designs, receptionist with Shorewest Realty-Downtown, and bartender at Boom/The Room. For many years, he has been employed with Potawatomi Bingo and Casino where he worked as a catering bartender in the food and beverage department and more recently a seamstress in the wardrobe department.

Founding member of the Wisconsin Cream City Chorus....Fundraising for multiple charitable organizations....He loved the theater, performing arts, art history, and his annual Acapulco trip with his closest friends who became more like family to him.

Ronald is survived by his beloved sister-in-law Karen Thate, nieces and nephew, Kendra Thate Manning, Robert Thate, and Karlie Thate. He is further

survived by other relatives and a large extended family of friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, brother, Richard, and nephew, Rustin "Rusty" Thate.

Visitation will take place on Wednesday, December 6th from 4-7:00 PM with a eulogy service at 6:00 PM at Northshore Funeral Services Chapel at 3601 N. Oakland Avenue, Shorewood, WI 53211. Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Thursday, December 7th at 10:00 AM at The Basilica of St. Josaphat, 2333 S. 6th Street Milwaukee, WI 53215 (Meet at Basilica). Interment to follow at St. Charles Cemetery, Burlington, WI.

# Tribute Wall

DK

“ Rest in peace Ron. You were always a great classmate and friend to all.

Dianne Kretschmer - December 14, 2023 at 12:00 AM

BE

“ I did not know Ron myself but he was a friend of my sister Leona. If she needed someone else to talk to, he was always there for her. I really do appreciate that she had him to confide in and to get advice from. Ron, you were a good man thank you for being there and for being such a good and trusted friend!

Beano - December 06, 2023 at 12:00 AM

PK

“ Rona invited me to join the Wisconsin Cream City Chorus! I've belonged to four choruses since 1988 joining WCCC! My first Gala Festival with the chorus was 1989 in Seattle with Rona! My last Gala-Festival was Montreal in 2004! I'm still singing as a part of the Gay Mens Chorus of South Florida! There was never a dull moment when Rona was around! We will miss you is an understatement! 💖💖💖

Peter Konrath - December 05, 2023 at 12:00 AM

LJ

“ Rest in peace, dear Ron. I only wish we had you longer. But you certainly had a lasting and profound impact on me and so many others. As your younger cousin, I watched in awe back in our Burlington days as you exhibited such talent (music, visual arts, design), style, humor, joy and life. I innately knew you were special - - and I was captivated, intrigued, and awestruck even as a young child. It was your Broadway record collection that turned me onto musical theater. (When I was just 11, you told my mother - your aunt Gloria - to make sure I see this young new star in a movie called "Funny Girl", which I did see at The Plaza Theater. And even as a kid, I knew it was exciting, different, and profoundly moving (and of course I've been a Streisand fan ever since). In fact, I was about to reach out to you while reading her autobiography that was just published, as you were much on my mind given that wise recommendation 55 years ago. And then I got the news. So much sadness and regret inside me right now. Wish we had more time together. You stepped away from the family for so many years -- or were you "exiled"? And then it was so sweet and wonderful to briefly reconnect as adults, by which time I also found my identity as a gay man, lover the arts, and a free spirit. While we lived so many miles apart and I could never entice you to come visit here in NYC, I was looking forward to re-discovering you in my "retirement" years ahead. Lesson learned to not postpone. But I so admire the courage, integrity, and inner fire it took to be truly you long before it was socially acceptable. I'll carry your memory for all my days, Ron. Thanks again for the inspiration -- and for likely seeing me before I even had a clue. Heaven will be a lot more fun and musical with you there now. Lots of love, Lars

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**Laurence (Lars) Jahns** - December 03, 2023 at 12:00 AM

TN

“ Rona, how blest we were to know you and how sorely you will be missed. But that was just the "overture". Heaven is suddenly brighter today. Your show is just beginning! Shine on, dear friend! We'll see you at Spurgeons! Tommi and Nannette

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**Tommi and Nannette** - December 01, 2023 at 12:00 AM

DG

“ Will always remember my cousins smiling, greeting us every Friday at M&M's and seeing him during the holidays at our home. He was a force and icon in our family and the LGBTQ community. We will miss him greatly. RIP until I see you again ❤️❤️❤️

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**Don Giannini** - November 30, 2023 at 12:00 AM