

# Stranger and his muscle car help say goodbye to Stamford man

A stranger and his muscle car attend Corbo funeral

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Above, a 1969 Dodge Super Bee, owned by Bill Parrott, of Stamford, makes its way through St....



STAMFORD -- A growl interrupted the Saturday-morning quiet at St. John's Cemetery on the city's border with Darien.

A shiny racing-orange 1969 Dodge Super Bee wound its way among the headstones on the narrow cemetery road during a funeral. After the casket was removed from the hearse, the Super Bee revved up, broke out of the funeral procession and headed for Hoyt Street.

There, it took off, sending the sound of the powerful muscle car engine rolling over the granite and marble stones at St. John's.

Nick Corbo would have loved it.

It was Corbo's dying request that his hearse be followed by a line of muscle cars, particularly the Dodges and Chryslers of the 1960s and '70s that he loved.

But Corbo, 65, a beloved coach who worked with players in the Stamford Babe Ruth baseball leagues for 30 years, almost didn't get his wish. Corbo's friends' cars are in

varying stages of rebuilding, and members of car clubs said they were having trouble finding muscle-car owners who could drive in the procession.

Bill Parrott, of Stamford, didn't know Corbo, but he showed up at Sacred Heart Church on Schuyler Avenue during the funeral Mass, and directors for Lacerenza Funeral Home gave him a place in the procession. Behind the wheel of his prize-winning Dodge, Parrott escorted the hearse through downtown Stamford to the cemetery in Springdale.

"I read the story about Nick, and it hit home," Parrott said of an Advocate article about Corbo's caring attitude for his young players all those years. "I love the cars, too, and I have three kids in Little League."

Corbo's longtime friend Billy Bellofatto, of Norwalk, drove in front of Parrott in a more sedate light blue 1969 Plymouth Belvedere.

"I used to race cars with Nick," Bellofatto said. "He was such a good guy."

Rick Saunders, a Stamford Fire & Rescue firefighter who once worked with Corbo selling stripes and other decals for muscle cars, rode in the Belvedere with Bellofatto.

"He was one of the best people you'd ever hope to meet," Saunders said.

Corbo died of cancer over Memorial Day weekend, though he had hoped to live until August to watch one more Sharkey Laurenno Tournament at Cubeta Stadium. The event raises scholarship money for Babe Ruth players. Corbo helped organize the tournament for nearly three decades.

People leaving the church after the funeral Mass saw Parrott's Super Bee and Bellofatto's Belvedere in the parking lot and smiled.

"I'm so glad a couple of cars showed up," a woman said.

After a prayer at Corbo's grave, friends and family members released black and white balloons.

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