

JEROME FONTENOT FROM THE BEGINNING

As we celebrate SLC's 60th Anniversary, we also celebrate one of the most distinguished seniors at St. Louis Center; Jerome Fontenot, one of St. Louis School's first residents in the early 1960s.



Jerome arrived at SLC at the age of 12.

He was enrolled from January 1962 through June 1965, and can still be found in the class photo hanging in the main entrance.

In 1965, his parents Clifford and

Josephine, took Jerome back to their home in Romeo, MI, where he worked with his father on the chicken farm.

By August 1996, both of Jerome's parents had passed away and Michelle and Norbert Rapp took over his guardianship. The Rapps were friends of the Fontenots, and Mrs. Rapp took care of Jerome for the next 17 years in her home until she passed away in 2013. Next to care for Jerome was daughter-in-law Denise Rapp, who is now Jerome's legal guardian.

"I promised Michelle that I would take care of Jerome. So Norbert Jr. and I tried to find him another place

to live because I couldn't care for him anymore. Then God somehow sent me to SLC. Jerome kept telling me that they had 'Closed the joint up.' Then one night at 2 am, I woke up and started Googling. I found SLC and learned that they were still doing residential care."

According to Rapp, Jerome was very talented and was involved in his local parish in Romeo. "He belonged to the choir at the local Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus, and he even played the organ. He's amazing."

When Denise Rapp returned Jerome to SLC in 2015, she looked on the wall, saw his class picture from 1962 and said, "Jerome look at this." Jerome was in the picture on the wall, and she knew he was home again. "SLC has been a great fit for Jerome. Everyone has been so wonderful to him! He was taken in with open arms, and it gives me a sense of peace knowing that he's being taken care of so well there."

Jerome represents the continuum of life for SLC during the past 60 years. He was here as a child, and through Divine Providence, he is back again enjoying the remaining years of his life.



"He was taken in with open arms, and it gives me a sense of peace knowing that he's being taken care of so well there. We are so blessed."

-Denise Rapp