



George Otto Pfaff

August 5, 1926 - October 10, 2018

George Pfaff, 92, of Albany, OR passed away on Wednesday October 10th due to complications of Lymphoma. He died at Samaritan Evergreen Hospice with his two children by his side. George is survived by his two children; Maggie Kelly of Albany, OR and her two children Virginia (husband George) and Patrick (wife Ashley) and Peter Pfaff of Cheshire, CT with his wife Nancy and their two children Daniel and Thomas. George was also blessed with six great-grandchildren.

George was born in South Bend, IN on August 5th, 1926 and grew up there along with his two sisters. He was a good student and avid sailor in his youth. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a degree in Chemical Engineering. He served in the Navy during World War II. But, after the war, he realized he was not that strong at chemical engineering. He knew it could not be his career and so he went to the Wharton School of University of Pennsylvania and got his MBA. It was a wise choice, since he ended up having a very successful business career.

He started his career working in New York City at Owens Corning Fiberglass. He did reasonably well at the company, but more importantly he met his future wife Jane there. They got married, moved back to South Bend, IN and started a family. George took a job at Wheelabrator Corp where he started as a Sales Manager and worked his way up the ladder to VP of Sales. From there, George took a job at Huyck Corporation where he was the VP and General Manager of the Felt Division and moved his family to the Albany NY area. George and Jane loved the Albany area and spent the next 40 years in the same house. They both got involved in local community groups and volunteered throughout their stay. George loved the four seasons where he could enjoy gardening in the spring and fall, golfing in the summer and skiing in the winter. Ski trips became the big vacations for the family.

While in Albany, George's successful business career continued. He helped Huyck Corporation to expand their profits to the point the stock price increase by 6 times where it was. He did well enough so that he was in position to retire from the corporate world at age 47 to pursue other interests including consulting and teaching. The consulting and teaching work were OK, but he did not love it. So, a friend asked if he would be interested in helping out at the Albany Medical Center. He served for many years on the Board of

Governors of the hospital including serving as President/Chairman from 1972 to 1976, a trustee of Albany Medical College and a Director of the Albany Medical Center. This was a volunteer position, but he knew the other managers there and was interested in the challenge to help out with the hospital. He was integral in the merger of the hospital and college as served on the First Board of Directors following the merger.

While he was working at the Albany Medical Center, George was on the Board of Directors of various institutions including a couple of regional banks. One of those banks was the National Savings Bank of Albany. They needed a new manager at the time and asked George if he would accept the position as president of the bank. He accepted the offer and eventually became Chairman of the Board in 1988. He used his business acumen to increase sales and profits at the bank and eventually took the bank public on the NYSE. National Savings Bank continued to do well and they became a buyout target. While other institutions were bidding for the bank, George's number one concern was what would happen to the employees. If the buyout did not adequately compensate the current National Savings Bank employees, he did not accept the offer. In 1998 Key Corp made a profitable offer for the bank and every one of the bank's full-time employees got a substantial buyout payment. It was one of George's proudest moments.

During their time in Albany, Jane and George continued to invest in the area. They supported the Pruyn House, the College of Saint Rose, and St Pius X church in Loudonville. They loved the arts and were season ticket holders at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. Jane and George loved to entertain at their house, whether it was with friends, business associates or a Christmas party for the neighborhood. They both took special care to attend to their guests and they were both known for their engaging sense of humor and storytelling.

George ended up retiring in 1996 and then focused on gardening, traveling and also golf. Since George had a successful business career one of his next focuses was where to donate some of his acquired earnings. He was a big supporter of local and world-wide charities as well as the Church, serving on the board of the Albany NY Catholic Charities. He believed that those who have been blessed with success and fortune have the responsibility to give back in kind. It is something he demonstrated throughout his life. George and Jane preferred to help local institutions. They established the Pfaff Family Endowed Chair for the Rheumatology Division at Albany Medical Center and the George and Jane Pfaff Endowed Chair in Ethics and Moral Values at the College of St. Rose. It was the first Endowed Chair at the College.

In 2004, Jane and George moved down to Asheville, NC to be closer to their daughter Maggie and grandchildren and eventually great grandchildren. They cut back on travel, but George immediately dug in to do more gardening work and getting involved with local organizations. Again, he joined various groups at his local church and became a volunteer in a program for women coming out of prison. He also purchased a residence, the Jane

Pfaff House, so the women could have a safe transition place as they got out of prison. In 2009, Jane, his wife of 57 years passed away. George stayed in Asheville, continuing to support the area until he and his daughter Maggie moved to Albany, OR where they could be closer to Maggie's daughter Virginia and her family. It was nice to have additional family nearby and George always enjoyed seeing his great grandchildren playing together. He passed away in Oregon in peace. He affected the lives of a great many people and even though those who went before him will welcome him into the next life, he will be missed by those who knew him.

A funeral service will be held at St. Eugene Catholic Church in Asheville, NC on May 18, 2019 at 11:00am.

Comments



“ Maggie, your dad has been in my thought and prayers for a while and I just found out about his passing. You and your family will be in my prayer. It was a privilege to work for your dad and have so many beautiful memories of him. His love for Jesus and and his neighbor were exceptional. His memory will last in me and my family for ever.

Antonio Garcia.

Antonio Garcia - March 26 at 08:08 AM



“ To George's family: please accept the prayerful condolences of Bishop Edward Scharfenberger of the Diocese of Albany. George's joyful generosity has been a blessed grace to so many. May the Lord be pleased to welcome him home.

Rev. David LeFort, V.G.

Rev. David LeFort - November 06, 2018 at 02:21 PM



“ George was a good man, and a good friend. He was generous with his treasures, time and life experience. My regular outing with George was lunch at Doc Chey's, his favorite downtown place where he ordered a Noodle Bowl and a Highland Gaelic Ale. (and I, working, did not).

He loved his dog so ate most of his meals in his apartment. At one major donor event he attended, he brought along his dog who sat by his side on a couch all evening.

I missed him when he moved from Asheville.....glad he is now with Jane.

David Bailey

David Bailey - October 29, 2018 at 02:16 PM