

IN MEMORIAM
Peter Van de Water
13 October 1926 – 19 November 2010



Peter Coakley Van de Water was born on October 13, 1926 to John Walker (Jack) Van de Water and Ruth Langmuir Van de Water in New York City. Jack and Ruth Van de Water were renowned for their love of hiking and mountain climbing, and were active participants in the Appalachian Mountain Club. Jack was an engineer at Bell Laboratories.

Pete moved with his family to Omaha, Nebraska, in high school, and he and his future wife Betty Meyer Van de Water met there at Benson High. They both attended the University of Iowa, marrying November 24, 1948. He cared for Betty with love and devotion for 62 years of loving marriage.

Pete enlisted in the United States Army at the tail end of World War II and remained stateside as the war was coming to a close. He was a Technician Fifth Grade in the Ordnance Department at Camp Campbell, Hopkinsville, Kentucky, finishing as a Corporal. He then attended college at the University of Iowa, earning a Bachelor of Science in Commerce in 1949. Pete went on to earn a Masters of Science in Business at Columbia University in New York City in 1950. His diploma was signed by the President of Columbia University, Dwight D. Eisenhower, shortly before he ran for President of the United States.

In 1950 he returned to the US Army, this time in the Reserve, and also took a job with The New York Telephone Company. He had many interesting jobs during his 38 years with the company, including Fleet Manager of the New York Telephone fleet of cars and trucks, District Manager, and finally Director of Corporate Services at NYNEX, one of the new "Baby Bells" created by the breakup of AT&T, and later known as Verizon.

Pete and Betty's first daughter was born in 1953 and second daughter in 1955. The Family lived in Closter, New Jersey, and then Armonk, New York, both an hour's train ride away from New York City, where Pete was back again with New York Telephone. One of his posts was at 140 West Street, which was later damaged severely when the Twin Towers came down.

He continued with a US Army Reserve unit in Manhattan, the 301st Logistical Command, and the annual summer camps made for unique and varied family vacations. In 1961 Pete was recalled to active duty during the Berlin Crisis, and the family moved to Fort Bragg for a year.

Back in Armonk after Ft. Bragg, Pete returned to his job at New York Telephone and also became very involved in local town government and volunteer work. He was a member of the Town of North Castle Planning Board from 1965-1987, holding the position of Chairman from 1970-87.

In 1986, Peter accomplished the first of many retirements, this time from the US Army Reserve as a Major. When the time came to retire from NYNEX, Pete's 25 years of planning experience provided a great opportunity for a second career as Director of Planning for the Village of Scarsdale, New York, from 1988 to 2000. As if that wasn't enough, he had many other volunteer positions, accumulating many awards of appreciation:

President, United Way of Northern Westchester 1965-66
Recipient, Harold Marshall Award, United Way of Northern Westchester 1971
Westchester Municipal Planning Federation 1982-83
New York Planning Federation, Albany, New York 1983-85
30+ Year Member National Association of Fleet Administrators, and
Treasurer 1980-89
Member of Society of Automotive Engineers 1986-88
Member Land Use Advisory Committee, Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, Albany, New York 1991-
2000
Board of Directors, Westchester County Soil and Water Conservation District 1990-2003
Member American Planning Association, Vice President of NY Metro Chapter 1993-96
30+ Year Member Armonk Lions Club, President 1965-66, Pat Bresha Award recipient 1997 and 2000, Melvin
Jones Fellow 2003
Founders Lions Club, San Antonio, Texas 2005-2010, Director 2005-07

Appalachian Mountain Club 1960-2010, Vice Chairman and Chairman, New York and Northern New Jersey
Chapter 1986-89, Board of Directors and Vice President 1991-97
Appalachian Trail Conference, New York-New Jersey Trail Conference
Lifetime Member Telephone Pioneers of America
Recognized for many years of service by the dedication of the Peter C. Van de Water Appreciation Day of
Westchester County, NY 11/20/1987

There are too many recognitions and awards to mention all, but I will finish with the Catskill 3500 Club. This last entry is not one to be glossed over or dismissed! To be a member, one has to hike *all* the Catskill Mountains above 3500 feet, and then do it *again* on snowshoes!

In his "spare time" Pete also loved white water canoeing, something that Betty also loved, and they competed in canoes and kayaks for several years in the northeast. Some of the most fun moments Sally had with her dad were paddling a canoe together. Susan remembers the time they went out cross country skiing and got turned around in the dark woods and had some close moments before they found their way out.

Pete retired for the third time in 2000, and this time he really meant it. But wait...there was yet another career to be explored! Pete and Betty loved to travel, and they became tour leaders. They researched trips and destinations on their own, and then led groups on great adventures down canals in France and to the Galapagos Islands and Bali, among others. They would probably be enjoying that endeavor to this day if not for Pete discovering he had a spinal tumor that robbed him of the use of his legs.

In 2004, Peter and Betty moved to Air Force Village II in San Antonio, TX, where they gained a wonderful new family of friends. Even in that relatively short time, his new friends came to know the most important thing about Peter C. Van de Water - in the face of almost inconceivable adversity he could always find joy in life.

He showed his wife and children that joy for 62 years. He led them by the excellent example of always doing the right thing and always following through. He never wavered.

And to paraphrase Winston Churchill, he "never, never, never gave up". We will always remember his cheerful, upbeat and optimistic outlook. His family is truly touched by the outpouring of affection for Pete and the many warm remembrances of how he inspired so many of you to find the joy, and to never, never, never give up.

Peter is survived by his wife, Betty; his daughter, Dr. Susan Van de Water; his daughter, Sally and husband Kent Ernsberger; and his granddaughter Angela Ernsberger. He is also survived by his brother David and wife Jeanne; their children, Mark and wife Melinda; Nancy McPherson and husband Chris; Eric and wife Diane; and Dave's grandchildren and great grandchildren.

A memorial service celebrating Peter's life will be held on January 15th, 2011 at 2pm at -.

Air Force Village II Protestant Church
5100 John Ryan Blvd.
San Antonio, TX 78245

Air Force Village Front Desk 210-677-8666

Donations in Peter's honor may be made to

The Appalachian Mountain Club
5 Joy Street
Boston, MA 02108
617-523-0636

<http://www.outdoors.org/donations/legacy/index.cfm>

-or-

The Air Force Village II Protestant Church, San Antonio, TX

Peter Van de Water will be interred in a family plot in New York.

Tondre-Guinn Funeral Home, 502 Lafayette, Castroville, Texas 78009
830-931-2221

http://www.webfh.com/fh/home/home.cfm?&fh_id=10337