



Nafi Donat

April 16, 1933 - October 19, 2025

Nafi Donat, 92, of West Hartford, Connecticut, passed away peacefully at home on Sunday, October 19, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

Born and raised in Mardin, Turkey, Nafi grew up with a strong sense of family, culture, and faith. He studied at the American Theological Seminary in Beirut to become a preacher and later worked as a high school English teacher in Mardin, sharing his love of language and learning with young minds. He also worked in Ankara at an American college, further deepening his connection to cross-cultural education. Nafi proudly served as a sergeant in the Turkish army, an experience that shaped his character and commitment to service.

In the 1960s, Nafi traveled to the United States to pursue higher education and earned his masters degree in library science from Appalachian State University in North Carolina. Shortly after, he met the love of his life, Maribel, who, like him, had come from Turkey to study in the U.S. Together, they built a beautiful life in West Hartford, where they raised two daughters whom he loved dearly.

A man of deep intellect and unwavering principles, Nafi worked for over 25 years as a librarian with the Connecticut Department of Corrections, firmly believing in the power of knowledge and education. He also served for many years as the archivist at the Hartford Seminary, a role that combined his faith

and love of learning.

Fluent in three languages, Nafi was a voracious reader, an insightful thinker, and a storyteller at heart. He had a deep love of music and enjoyed playing the violin. He loved sharing stories from his life over a cup of tea and his home was often filled with the aromas of Turkish food and warm conversation. Nafi had a special appreciation for the outdoors. He enjoyed biking and running, and found peace spending time in Elizabeth Park, especially among its beautiful flowers.

But above all, he cherished his family. Spending time with them was his greatest joy. His quiet strength, sharp mind, and kind heart left a lasting impression on all who knew him.

He was preceded in death by his beloved parents, Melek and Behice, and is survived by his loving wife of more than 50 years, Maribel; his two daughters, Laura and Lisa; four grandchildren, Erica (Ben), Aubrey, Nicolette (Devin), and Aaron; two great-grandchildren, Hudson and Rory; five cherished siblings: Nadir (Emel), Emel (Edip), Necla (Emanuel), Elis (Armenak), and Nebil (Linda) and many dear nieces and nephews. He will be missed beyond measure and remembered always for his integrity, faith, and the love he shared so generously.

All services will be held privately. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Elizabeth Park Conservancy <https://elizabethparkct.org/support/annual-appeal/>