



Owen David McNally

July 28, 2018

Owen McNally, a gentle man who saw the best in everybody, died on Saturday, July 28, 2018, at Hartford Hospital at age 81. Owen was the husband of Sheila (Brett) McNally. Owen was a gifted observer of people and things, and could make language swing with enough joy and spontaneity to rival any jazz improvisation. He had an appreciation for the absurd, and could wring humor out of nearly any situation. But even more important to those who knew him, Owen was kind. He was an excellent listener and had a way of putting people around him at ease. During his 40-year career as a writer and editor with the Hartford Courant, he was a general assignment reporter, covered the federal courts and the U.S. Attorney's office in Connecticut, was the night city editor, book editor, TV critic, editor of the Sunday Magazine, a features writer, visual arts reporter, and jazz writer. For many years, he wrote the Riffs jazz column for the Courant's CAL section. He also wrote the weekly Jazz Corridor column for WNPR.org. He was an adjunct instructor at Trinity College and the University of Hartford. Owen grew up in West Hartford. He played Little League, and in 1948, his team ("Exchange Club") won the Connecticut state championship. He was a member of Hall High's "glorious" class of 1955 and graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1959. With the exception of two years of military service in the U.S. Army, he lived his entire life in Connecticut. Owen was pre-deceased by his parents, John Irving McNally and Marietta (Gydesen) McNally, his brother, Peter McNally, and his sister Marietta (McNally) Shaw. He is survived by his wife Sheila, his children

Patrick and Maura, his son-in-law, Nathan, his beloved granddaughter Maeve, his sister, Susan (McNally) Miller, numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, friends, neighbors and colleagues. Calling hours will be Wednesday, August 1st from 4-7 p.m. at the Molloy Funeral Home, 906 Farmington Ave., West Hartford. Funeral services will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Malta House of Care, 19 Woodland St. #21, Hartford, CT 06105 or the Artists Collective, 1200 Albany Ave, Hartford, CT 06112. Online expressions of sympathy may be made at www.molloyfuneralhome.com

Previous Events

Calling Hours

AUG 1. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Molloy Funeral Home
906 Farmington Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06119
(860) 232-1322

Tribute Wall

BE

“ I was saddened today to learn of Owen’s passing. He turned me on to new jazz artists and was a joy to be with. I was honored to be a colleague.

Bob Englehart - August 07, 2018 at 05:59 PM

DW

“ Dear McNally family, recently I received an email from Andy Kreig who for the first time informed me of the sad passing of Owen, whom I knew for many years during my almost four decades as a reporter for The Courant. He was such fun to be working with! I only wish I had met up with him after I retired in 2005. I regret so uch that we did not do so and that I was not at his funeral to honor him! Sincerely, Dennie Williams PO Box 511, Litchfield. Ct. 06759 email denniew@optonline.net



Dennie Williams - August 07, 2018 at 12:20 PM

MF

“ Probably my best memory of Hall High School is that Owen sat between me and a girlfriend in a math class and intercepted our notes by adding one of his outrageous comments. What a humorous and gentle man- in later years long phone conversations brought me joy. I can't believe he is gone.

I was out of town for the visiting hours and am so very sorry not to meet the family and say farewell.

Muriel Rosenblum Fleischmann, Hall High's glorious class of 1955, West Hartford

Muriel Fleischmann - August 07, 2018 at 08:52 AM

GM

“ Although I never met Owen McNally, I grew up reading his jazz reviews in *The Hartford Courant*. As an English major, I appreciated his skill with language. As a musician, I enjoyed his knowledgeable observations about numerous jazz artists. After reading the obituary and several testimonials, I confirmed what I always suspected from the warmth and humor in his writing: that he was a very good person.

Gary McMahon - August 05, 2018 at 03:47 PM



“ Owen was a wonderful editor, teacher and friend. I knew him best early in my career during my two years as Courant night police reporter on the City Desk from 1971-73 when he was night city editor much of that time. As the clock turned to midnight and beyond, we would often be (at least in my recollection) just about the only ones left at the upstairs newsroom floor aside from Julie the telephone operator, Frank (Keyes) or Frank's successor on the sports copy desk, and of course Joseph "The Professor" Vetrano.

Owen was unflappable and always adept when something did arise that was important enough to squeeze into the paper with moments to spare via a hurried trip to what he'd call the "Decomposing Room" downstairs. For me, he embodied (as did so many there) a notion of journalism as civic service. In Owen's case, at least in my experience, it didn't involve rhetoric, pretensions or even much self-description (I didn't know he'd been a Little League champ until seeing this obituary above).

Instead, he'd just doing the job well and modestly and, when time permitted, offering up his sly but gentle wit. We had a lot of fun talking about the news of the day at the end of the day and this cub reporter learned a lot.


Let me extend my condolences to his family and my thanks for being able to share at least a bit in his good works. I am so glad that his talents and love of music led to such a successful and gratifying career for decades.

Andrew Kreig - August 03, 2018 at 10:22 AM

BR

“ When Owen was interviewing famous Cuban jazz pianist Chucho Valdez on a call from Cuba, Owen asked me if I could be his translator. He set up a conference call and there we were: Chucho and his translator and Owen and me. I'll never forget what an exciting and special experience that was particularly since I had been a great admirer of Valdez

bessy reyna - August 03, 2018 at 12:56 AM

 James
Endrst

“ Owen was a friend, a colleague and a man who I admired and loved. We spent night after night at The Hartford Courant where I was TV critic and he was by then the Jazz critic, laughing, rigging and trading one-liners. Years later, when I moved to California and found myself struggling on a profound level, it was Owen who, with zero fanfare and boundless grace, gave me strength and renewed hope through a simple, unexpected and generous gesture. I will never forget it and daily still learn from it. He called me “the kid,” when I first met him at the age of 28 and I loved it. As I love him. My prayers, heart and condolences go out to Sheila and his family. There truly was nobody like him and I will forever miss him. (James Endrst)

James Endrst - August 01, 2018 at 02:10 PM

 James
Endrst

That's ribbing. We never rigged anything. :)

James Endrst - August 01, 2018 at 02:12 PM

BR

“ To the family of Owen David McNally, and especially for Maura, Nathan, and Maeve: May you find strength in beautiful memories of a kind man so eloquently celebrated in the tribute. May you take comfort knowing that you and your father are in the thoughts and prayers of many, both near and far. We send our sincere sympathy.
Beth and David Roth

Beth Roth - August 01, 2018 at 01:32 PM



“ *Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Owen David McNally.*



July 31, 2018 at 11:47 AM

LC

“ *I am so proud to be his Niece. He was a gifted man with unconditional love for his family. He taught me to be authentic with words, actions and compassion. Never brush off someone who was in need. He was a prankster, who could outwit the nitwits who dared to challenge him with a game of words. Although departed, he will always live on with our memories and stories. If I could reserve a seat in Heaven, it would next to him.*

Love you always, Laura.

PS Liz found a Quarter in her shoe Saturday..... You are still pranking:~)!

Laura Coleman - July 31, 2018 at 11:19 AM