



## Robert Paul Cunningham

August 12, 2021

Robert Paul Cunningham, 93, beloved husband of Barbara, died at UConn Medical Center on August 12, 2021. How to capture in these few words the essence of a man whose true greatness grew through thousands of small kindnesses? A well-lived life, rooted in West Hartford, but enjoyed to the fullest wherever he traveled, leaves countless memories.

Born in Melrose, Mass., the son of William A. and Ethel McCullough Cunningham, Bob graduated from Hall High School in June of 1945. As a Hartford Courant paperboy, he delivered news of the end of World War II. Weeks later, he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps, where he learned the reveille bugle call he used on weekends to rouse his six children to ensure they didn't "waste the day."

At New York University (Class of 1953) he joined the Delta Phi fraternity, where he developed a taste for the Manhattans that became his nightly cocktail tradition with Barb.

He worked 37 years as a trust officer at Connecticut National Bank, but he knew where to invest to build true wealth: his family. He honored his commitment to be home every night at 5:30 for family supper, even the times he walked home through a blizzard when the buses stopped running. He taught the kids to practice FHB ("family hold back") to ensure enough left to feed the many unplanned guests who joined lively conversations around the

dining room table, but only after he delivered the obligatory “grace.”

Bob flourished when serving others. Whether as a Boy Scout Leader, volunteering at the West Hartford Senior Center as a tax preparer, a member of the Elmwood Senior Center, as a Communicant of St. Thomas the Apostle Church, or presiding over the West Hartford Squires, he gave more to his community than he took.

Bob’s smile radiated warmth. From his front porch on Arundel Ave. or while traversing the continent in his RV, he shared stories with friends and strangers alike. Even by the peat fire of an Irish pub, where his extensive research in the Connecticut Society of Genealogists led him to trace his family tree, his gregariousness won him new friends. He could be the life of the party, dancing to the “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy” at a wedding, as easily as he could be a homebody, sharing the nightly cup of salted peanuts with Barbara while enjoying “The Tonight Show.”

Bob and Barbara succeeded spectacularly at what they valued most – raising a large and loving family that laughs with the joy he imparted. His spirit lives and grows in those who survive him: his sister Shirley Kucia of Canton; his children Robert “Rusty” Cunningham Jr. and wife Wendy of Burlington; Mary Avery of Tolland; John Cunningham of Virginia; Jane Derrick and husband Doug of South Carolina; Peter Cunningham and wife Susan; and Paul Cunningham and husband Don George of Virginia; his grandchildren and their spouses Julie and Pawel Lisek; Lisa and Rob Wistrom; Paul and Tiffany Ricciardi; Dani and Erik Dettenmayer; Holly and Nick Merullo; Kelly Cunningham and fiancé Ryan Marques; Nick George; Vanessa George; and his seven great grandchildren Joshua, Mikayla, Alaina, Cameron, Karina, Kenneth, and Andrea. He was predeceased by Barbara, his wife of 60 years, and his sisters Jean and Barbara.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Tuesday, August 17, at 11:00 AM at St. Thomas the Apostle 872 Farmington Ave. in West Hartford, followed by burial at Fairview Cemetery. Due to COVID concerns, there will be no calling hours nor post-burial meal. Donations in lieu of flowers can be sent to St. Thomas the Apostle of West Hartford, or the Connecticut Food Bank.

Directions and online expressions of sympathy may be made at [www.molloyfuneralhome.com](http://www.molloyfuneralhome.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Fairview Cemetery

200 Whitman Ave.  
West Hartford, CT

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

AUG 17. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Thomas the Apostle  
872 Farmington Ave.  
West Hartford, CT  
(860) 233-8269

# Tribute Wall

KA

“ Hi I will miss talking to him every Sunday after mass such a nice man. I miss you mom Barbara too very much nice funeral too . Enjoyed everything you said about him too take care Kathy DeConti

Kathy - August 17, 2021 at 01:33 PM

DH

“ We'd like to offer our warmest regards and condolences to Mr. Cunningham's family. In his memory we've made a donation to the Connecticut Food Bank.

- From Don George's friends and colleagues at Amazon

Dan Hammel - August 17, 2021 at 11:18 AM

JS

“ Jamie (Swift) Shaw purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Robert Paul Cunningham.



Jamie (Swift) Shaw - August 16, 2021 at 12:04 PM

CW

“ I feel like its an end of an era. Mr. Cunningham was our neighbor when we were growing up in Windsor Locks. He was unfailingly kind and friendly as was his wife Barbara. They both helped make our neighborhood a wonderful place to grow up in during an era when kids ranged back yard to back yard without any fences and paraded around the block easily on bikes and riding toys. He and Barbara remained close personal friends to my Mom Elly Vozzola and I derived much comfort from his and daughter Mary's attendance at her funeral a few years ago. I wish much comfort to his children, our former friends and their own children and grandchildren. God bless,  
Cathy Vozzola Wilcox

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**Cathy Wilcox** - August 15, 2021 at 04:57 PM

EV

“ The Vozzola family has so many fond memories of Mr. Cunningham and the whole family from the days in Windsor Locks where we lived a backyard away. My mom, the original Elly Vozzola, held Barb and Bob as very special friends through the years. I remember John staying with us when Barb was in the hospital for Janie's birth and later my doing a few stints of babysitting before you all moved to West Hartford. Bob was definitely a great soul --kind, gracious and loving. My sincere condolences. Elly Vozzola

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**Elly Vozzola** - August 15, 2021 at 10:26 AM