



## Robert Frederick Neal

July 1, 2022

Robert Frederick Neal (Bob) of West Hartford died peacefully on 1 July 2022 surrounded by his family, following a short illness. Bob is survived by his wife of 55 years, Regina (Murphy) Neal; daughter Kathleen Neal of West Hartford; son PJ Neal, daughter-in-law Jennifer, and grandson Hunter of Waltham, MA; and sister Carolyn (Neal) Van Zandbergen of Daphne, AL. He was preceded in death by his parents and son, Robert F. Neal, Jr.

Bob was born in Scotia, NY (15 February 1935) to Frederick N. Neal and Edith (Johanson) Neal, and was the older brother to Carolyn. Bob enjoyed spending summers in a rented cabin on Lake Champlain (no small feat in the age of gas rationing!), where his love of nature emerged. Days were spent swimming with Carolyn, fishing with his dad, and picnicking with the family.

He left NY to attend UConn, from which he graduated with a degree in business administration in 1956.

Bob worked as a salesman for Southern New England Telephone (SNET) after college before being drafted in 1958 and completing two years of army service in Alaska. Afterwards, he returned to Connecticut – and to SNET – for what would be a 38-year career comprised of 25 different assignments, ultimately rising to the level of Senior Vice President. He was revered for his intellect, leadership, counsel, and future vision. Reflecting on being with one

company for his entire career, he later said “I was so busy learning each new area that I rarely thought about leaving!”

In addition to his work with SNET, Bob was a director of Connecticut Water Services, Connecticut Economic Development Corporation, the American School for the Deaf, and other corporate and nonprofit boards. A lover of the arts, Bob served on and chaired the board of trustees at Goodspeed Musicals for a number of years, well into retirement, and never missed a show. Goodspeed was one of the rare examples of when he broke his golden rule to never bring work home – the house was often filled with showtunes, either from a CD or his own whistling (which his kids knew meant they were catching him in a good mood!).

As dedicated as Bob was to his career, he was ‘the most happy fella’ when at home with his wife, children, daughter-in-law and grandson. Bob’s 28-year retirement – his ‘glorious schedule-free days’ – was comprised of his biggest joys: spending time with Regina and the family; reading prolifically; watching Yankees, Patriots, and UConn basketball games; driving with the convertible top down; and being in Regina’s garden working on his summer tan.

Visiting hours will be held at Molloy Funeral Home in West Hartford on Sunday, 17 July 2022, from 12:30pm-2:00pm followed by a memorial service at 2:30pm. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in his name to Goodspeed Musicals in East Haddam, CT ([goodspeed.org](http://goodspeed.org)).

# Previous Events

## Calling Hours

JUL 17. 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

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

## Memorial Service

JUL 17. 2:30 PM (ET)

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

# Tribute Wall



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Robert Frederick Neal.*



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July 15, 2022 at 08:46 AM



“ *When I applied for a job at SNET in 1967 after leaving the Army Bob interviewed me. I was so impressed with him I accepted a job at SNET. I worked there 34 years. Many of them reporting to Bob. He was just a wonderful man. Supportive, intelligent, compassionate and a leader. He had a tremendous positive impact on my life. He will be missed.*  
*Bill Porter*

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**William Porter** - July 14, 2022 at 07:58 AM

MP

“ As a member of the board and as our chair for five years he was one of the most consequential leaders of the Goodspeed. He presided over an unprecedented period of growth for the institution, and continued long after he was chair to put into perspective what we were doing and why. As I remarked to Fran Adams this past week, I remember Bob taking copious notes at every meeting, often not making comments, but when he did he miraculously pulled together his thoughts from those notes, sometimes covering years of scribbles, and made great sense. He loved musical theatre and comprehended not only the artistic endeavor but the business of show business. He led by enriching, encouraging and trusting the staff of the theatre. He did not manage, he advised and always in the most constructive ways. His leadership style was one to be admired and obviously most effective. He exuded a sense of friendship and support that propelled the Goodspeed to new heights. And he was a fan. His collection of posters and memorabilia of the work of the Goodspeed was so present in the home he built with Regina, PJ and Kitty and his love of the theatre was evident in their lives as well.

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**michael price** - July 12, 2022 at 04:49 PM

MD

“ Bob was one of the kindest of men. We could disagree on many issues but he always respected my opinion even though he was more experienced and wiser. He and Regina were kind to sit with me at SNET Board dinners and make me feel welcomed. To Bob's family my condolences on your loss  
Madelyn DeMatteo

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**Madelyn DeMatteo** - July 12, 2022 at 12:42 PM

ST

“ So sorry for your loss. My condolences to the Neal family.

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**Suzanne Shay Travers** - July 10, 2022 at 04:48 PM