



W. Keith Wuerthner

August 10, 1934 - September 28, 2023

W. Keith Wuerthner, 89, of Farmington, CT, passed away Thursday (September 28, 2023) at the UConn Medical Center in Farmington. He was predeceased by his “Sweetheart of Sigma Chi” of 55 ½ years, Betty Elizabeth, on March 29, 2012; and his three brothers: John (2000), J.J. (2008) and Ben (1998).

Mr. Wuerthner was born August 10, 1934 (the 60th birthday of President Herbert Hoover) in Great Falls, MT, the fourth youngest son of the late Clista Edith (Pierce) and Atty. Julius J. Wuerthner, Esq, former two-term Republican Mayor. He was a 1952 graduate of Great Falls High School where he received the Heisey Award as an outstanding student, was president and student Director of the marching and concert bands and organizer and director of the school’s German band. He was also a member of the Great Falls Chapter of the Order of DeMolay.

He graduated from Montana State University (now University of Montana) in Missoula with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism in 1956, where he was a member of Pershing Rifles, military honor group; member of the Sigma Chi fraternity; and a member of Sigma Delta Chi, professional journalism fraternity. After graduation he was employed by the Butte Daily Post as a cub reporter, covering the police and fire stations, the U.S. Forest Service, the military recruiting station and five civic club luncheon meetings as well as writing by-lined feature stories. He served as a public information specialist in the U.S. Army from 1957 to 1959 and returned to The Montana Standard in Butte

where he was the state news editor and assistant sports editor. His next job was in the missile industry with Thiokol Chemical Corporation in Brigham City, UT, where he was the editor of The Impulse, the company's monthly employee magazine. Mr. Wuerthner was then employed in the corporate headquarters of Champion Papers – Knightsbridge in Hamilton, OH as a communications specialist. The General Electric Company in Fort Wayne, IN then employed him as editor of the The GE NEWS, a bi-weekly tabloid employee newspaper. While in Fort Wayne he was named Editor of the Year by the Fort Wayne Association of Business Communicators. He transferred with GE to Salem, VA as a communications specialist and company spokesman and also edited THE REPORTER, the daily employee bulletin. While in Salem he was president of the Roanoke Chapter of the Industrial Management Association and also served on the National Board of the IMC as Zone 51 representative. He and his wife belonged to several square and round dancing clubs in the Roanoke Valley where they earned their "Rover" badges for square dancing 1000 miles from their home club. Mr. Wuerthner retired from General Electric in 1975 and came to work in New Britain, CT for Fafnir Bearing, a division of Textron, Inc. as a communications specialist, company spokesman and editor of The Inner Ring, the company's employee publication. While at Fafnir, he received a national Savings Bond award from the U.S. Treasury Department for his continuing local communications efforts and employee bond program. He also served as public relations officer for the Fafnir Fire Brigade. After retiring from Fafnir in 1987, he became the first Director of Community Affairs for the Central Connecticut Association of Retarded Citizens (CCARC) and later was Director of Membership and Public Relations for the New Britain YMCA. He then went to work for the State of Connecticut's Department of Revenue Services (DRS) and transferred to the Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) as a special assistant to the blind where he retired from in 2004 after driving more that 208,000 miles providing agency services to blind residents in 148 towns and communities (out of 169) around the state.

He was active in the New Britain community in numerous fraternal, civic and non-profit organizations and was an honorary citizen of Atsugi, Japan. He coordinated six Red Cross bloodmobiles a year for Fafnir, served on the board of the Central Connecticut Red Cross Chapter and donated 24 gallons of blood to the Red Cross over 50 years. He received the Golden Rule award for donating 10 gallons of blood from Hartford's King of Diamonds, Bill Savitt in 1985. He also received a Community Service (Red Feather) award and the first communications award from the New Britain/Berlin United Way. Mr. Wuerthner was a member of the International Association of Business Communicators for 10 years, held several officer positions and received an Outstanding Service Award from the state organization.

At the New Britain YMCA he was a corporator, secretary of the Board of Directors and participated in many World Service and Partner Member campaigns both as a volunteer and a staff member. He was past president of the Greater New Britain Management Association (YMCA-sponsored) and represented the local Y in 1986 during a trip to Colombia, South America to visit the Cali YMCA that received funds from the local organization. He was a member of the Y's Century Club. He served as first vice president of the Board of Directors of CCARC as a volunteer and was a corporator of the New Britain Boys and Girls Club.

Mr. Wuerthner also served more than 32 years on the Advisory Board of the New Britain Salvation Army Corps where he coordinated the advisory board bell ringers during many holiday seasons at the Holiday Castle and received a special community service award in 1986 for his photographic efforts on behalf of the corps. In 1995 he was an Honored Guest Driver for the World Special Olympics in New Haven where he drove members of the Shriver family during the event.

He was member of Lions Club International for than 62 years, serving clubs in Butte, MT; Roanoke, VA and New Britain where he was present of the local club during the 60th anniversary year in 1982-83 and was named the club's

“Lion of the Year” the following year. He also had 50 years of 100 perfect attendance. Wuerthner was the New Britain club’s most senior member in of Lions’ membership service at the time of his passing. After serving on the district cabinet for eight years he was elected District Governor of Lions District 23B (Hartford and Litchfield Counties) in 1991-92 (the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Lions) and during his term organized the van replacement program at the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation in Bloomfield, the only guide dog training school in New England. Following his governor’s term he received the 100% District Governor’s medal with an excellence award and a 100% District Governor’s LCIF award for all clubs in his district contributing. He held a Lions’ master builder key for sponsoring 14 new Lions member, four District Governor’s appreciation medals, four club president’s appreciation awards and an International President’s Certificate of Appreciation. In 2001 he received the prestigious LCI Guiding Lion award for guiding, assisting and advising the Farmington Lions Club (organized a chartered in 2000) during its early years of operation. Lion Wuerthner was also a Melvin Jones Fellow, a Knight of the Blind, an Ambassador of Sight and a Loyal Shepard Fellow of Fidelco where he was a member and chairman emeritus of the Lions Advisory Board to Fidelco and a member of its Board of Directors. He was awarded his Life Membership in Lions in 2003. Wuerthner also served on two committees that wrote and published the History of Connecticut Lions in 1983 and 2007. He was also a charter member of the Connecticut Lions Pin Traders Club.

In other organizations, he was a 34 year and lifetime of New Britain Elks Lodge #957; a 67 year Master Mason in Cascade Lodge # 34, AF&AM, Great Falls, MT; a 63 year 32 degree and life member Scottish Rite Mason; a 59 year Goodwill Ambassador and Legion of Honor member of Algeria Temple of the Ancient and Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (Shriners); a charter member of Bannack Historical Lodge #3-7-77 AF & AM in Bannack, MT; a life member of Knights of Birmingham in Butte; and a 69 year Life Loyal Sig (life member) of Sigma Chi fraternity. He was also a past president of East

Farmington Water Supply Association and a director of the East Farms Civic Association. He was a member and officer of the Tunxis Senior Citizens Association in Farmington. He and his wife graduated from the Farmington Citizens Police Academy in 2000 and he joined the Crisis Support Team sponsored by the Farmington Police Department. Wuerthner also graduated from the FBI Citizens Academy in 2007 and was a member of the group's alumni association in New Haven.

Most recently he was an RSVP volunteer on the information desk at New Britain City Hall for several years.

Wuerthners membership years by organization: Salvation Army Board 1986 to 2018; Lions Club International 1961 to present; Lions Perfect Attendance 1969-2019 (50 years); Life Member of Sigma Chi 1954 to present (69 years); Elks Lodge 1989 to present (35 years); Blue Lodge Mason 1956 – present (67 years); Scottish Rite Mason 1960 to present (63 years); and Algeria Temple Ambassador 1964-present (59 years).

Survivors include nephew John (Ruth Ann) Hickey, Hatfield, PA; Sam (Debbie) Hickey, Allentown, PA; Mark (Barbara) Wuerthner, Framingham, MA; John (Joan) Wuerthner, Arlington, VA; nieces Ginger (Michael) Flood, Perkasio, PA; Susanne (David) Wuerthner, Syracuse, NY; Ande (Peter) Metzger, McLean, VA; and Shelle (John) Gordon, Westminster, CO; and numerous grand nephews and nieces and great grand nephews and nieces around the country.

Funeral services will be held Thursday (October 12, 2023) 7:30 PM at Carlson Funeral Home, 45 Franklin Square, New Britain. Burial will be private in Arlington National Cemetery. Calling hours are Thursday 5 to 7:30 PM prior to the service at the funeral home. The New Britain Elks Lodge # 957 will conduct their ritual at 6:30 PM and the New Britain Lions Club will conduct their ritual at 6:45 PM. Carlson Funeral Home, New Britain is assisting with arrangements. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the New Britain Lions Club, PO Box 1933, New Britain, CT 06050-1933. Please share a memory or note of sympathy at www.carlsonfuneralhome.com.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

Arlington, VA 22211

Previous Events

Calling Hours

OCT 12. 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM (ET)

Carlson Funeral Home
45 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051
(860) 225-6361
carlsonfh@aol.com
<https://www.carlsonfuneralhome.com/>

Funeral Service

OCT 12. 7:30 PM (ET)

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