



Howard I. Gross

May 16, 2020

Howard Irwin Gross, Age 97, died on May 16 at home with grace and dignity in his native West Hartford. He was surrounded by his beloved puppies, most loyal caregivers, his local family and in spirit by his New York and Vermont family members who could not be by his side due to the pandemic. Cheers, Dad! Because your glass was always half full, our glasses are overflowing!!

Howard was born on May 6, 1923 to Abraham and Eva (Goldenthal) Gross at Mount Sinai Hospital, the day before its formal opening. He was educated in West Hartford schools through his graduation from Hall High in 1941. There, he developed his love of the written and spoken word, theater and music which was to continue until his last days. A good book and a good joke (along with good Scotch), British theater and excellent classical and jazz music were among his favorite companions.

While a student at UConn, Howard enlisted in the US Army after Pearl Harbor. He served as a 2nd lieutenant in the Military Police in the South Pacific; he retired in 1946 after a year spent in an army hospital due to a war related illness. Those who knew our Dad were aware that throughout his adult life, he had a true aversion to hospitals both as a visitor and a patient.

Howard returned to his studies at UConn, graduating from law school in 1951 and beginning what turned out to be 58 years as a highly respected member of the Connecticut Bar. In that same year, he married Jean Patur, with whom he had two daughters, Stephanie and Meg. He began his practice of law, moving from Park Road to Constitution Plaza, to his building on Farmington Ave., not retiring until the age of 87 from the firm of Levy and Droney of Farmington.

Howard was a lifelong aviation enthusiast and spent many years as a private pilot. Early in his career he was asked to spearhead the 1950s fight to save Brainard Field. He became a charter member and then Chairman of the Ct Aeronautical Historical Society (later known as the Connecticut Aviation Museum). He was also a director of the National Pilots

Association.

Howard's career in law spanned many decades and many areas of civil law. He was Secretary and Treasurer of the Connecticut Bar Association, a 20 year member of the Ethics Committee and served for many years on the Board of Governors. He travelled to Washington and was sworn in before the U.S. Supreme Court. Over the years, he developed a reputation for his expertise in Estate Planning, authoring a book in the 1990s titled, *The Trustees Guide*. He loved the role of mentor and over the years we heard from many younger associates how much they felt they had learned from him. He enjoyed sharing his knowledge and advising friends, family members and individuals who would cross his path. Time and again we have heard tributes to his generosity of wit, spirit, friendship, liquid libations, and cash when least expected, often delivered with a succinct personal note.

Howard unquestionably possessed a true "joie de vivre." He loved to laugh, celebrate and experience the good things in life with others when possible, and as a parent, encouraged us to do the same. "Life is uncertain", he would quip, "eat dessert first!". In 1967 he experienced what he described as the most important event in his life: his marriage to Susan Huber. With Suzie he had more than 50 years of joyful companionship until her death in April 2018. Suzie brought him Mindy and Wendy, who became his daughters too, her own zest for great food, late night adventures and parties, many laughs, good music and travel. Among his greatest joys were their many travels to Europe including an 8-day hot air balloon ride through the Loire Valley. He also enjoyed trips to London and his beloved France with his daughters and granddaughters as well as trips with his good friend John Walker.

Howard is survived by his daughters Stephanie L Gross of Brooklyn, NY, Margaret (Meg) Howard and her partner Tom Northrop of Huntington, Vermont, Melinda Ottmann of Farmington, Wendy Wassell and her partner Mark Resnisky of Farmington, grandchildren April M. Howard of Burlington, Vermont, her husband Benjamin Dengl and their children Leon and Eulalia; Jennifer Therian and her husband Tim of Windsor and their son Axel. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Susan and his grandson Elias Howard.

The family would like to acknowledge the incredible loyalty and amazing care Howard received during his last two years from Josephine Bosompem and Donna and Desiree Royce.

Howard left us, his children, with the immortal words of Joe E. Lewis (or was it Mae West??!!) "You only live once, but if you do it right, once will be enough." Au revoir, Dad!

Wherever you are, may there be escargot, Prosecco and good cigars!

Taylor & Modeen Funeral Home, West Hartford has care of arrangements. For online condolences, please visit www.taylorandmodeen.com.

Comments



“ I am Josephine Bosompem Howards Caregiver, he used to call me the magic fingers when ever I made breakfast. He will say to me , the magic fingers is bck again, he calls me my African queen, mama poil, and Empress, on his sick bed he ask me to get him a north Africa coffee the next time I will go to Africa, he was like a Dad and Grand father, he gave me the opportunity to be part of his lovely family, he was so much fun to be around with, I miss him so much when I look around and there's no one to call me all those names, tears in my eyes, but am happy because, I know he is with his lovely wife together . Where he wants to be. May his soul Rest In Peace.



Josephine Bosompem - May 28 at 05:53 PM



“ Condolences to his family, became acquainted with Howard in his days with Stoner, Gross in West Hartford. Lovely man, gracious mentor. Rest easy.

Bud Harvey - May 26 at 09:01 AM



“ Mr. Gross was a quintessential gentleman. I was fortunate to meet with him many times, as he was my parent's, Dr. and Mrs. Salvatore Carrabba's attorney for many decades. They enjoyed a trusting relationship and deep friendship with one another. I often reminisce about the broad conversations they had, from family to world peace. God bless Mr. Gross.

Gloria Carrabba Nozko

Gloria Nozko - May 25 at 12:01 PM



“ Howard was a true friend to my Dad, John Walker. They were so fortunate to have the relationship that they did. There was barely a week that went by that they didn't enjoy a meal, a pipe Or cigar and a cocktail together. Over the year's, our family enjoyed many memorable events with Howard and his favorite gal, Susie. They loved life, and were so much fun. We miss them both, dearly. Our condolences to the entire family. With much love, Pam & Mitch Willis

Pamela & Mitch Willis - May 22 at 10:12 AM



“ You left a big footprint, my friend. Your life was a success in so many ways. I'll miss you. Debbie Winick

Dee Winick - May 21 at 07:14 PM



“ I've literally known Howard Gross all of my life. I was born in West Hartford as the son of Joe and Peggy Grifenhagen. My mom's maiden name was Pauline E. Gross and she was Howards first cousin. Howard was always a favorite of my mom and dad and of my brother Richard Grifenhagen.
Rest in Peace, Howard.
Yours was a life well-lived.
Bill Grifenhagen

Bill Grifenhagen - May 21 at 10:57 AM