



John F. Purcell Ph.D.

June 11, 1927 - October 12, 2017

John F. Purcell Ph.D., a Capital District Clinical Psychologist, passed away on October 12, 2017, following a short illness. He was 90 years old. Born in Troy, N.Y., he was the son of the late Frank A. and Mary E. (King) Purcell. He was also predeceased by his wife Patricia (Deuel) Purcell, his son Brian, and his daughter-in-law, Sharon Signor Purcell.

Dr. Purcell, known as “Jack” by contemporaries and affectionately addressed as “Doc” by younger friends, was a 1948 graduate of Siena College, appearing in the 1949 yearbook. Following graduation from Siena with a Bachelor of Arts degree, he received first a Master of Science and thereafter the Doctorate in Scientific Psychology from the Fordham University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in New York City. Jack completed his clinical internship in the St. Vincent’s Hospital system in New York City and at Harrison, New York. His experience in private practice was varied and he received Diplomate recognition in Medical and Forensic Psychology, Neuropsychology and Psychopharmacology. In 1961, Jack was elected to membership in the Sigma Xi, the National Scientific Honor Society. He was also eligible in 1961 to be listed in the American Men of Science.

In later years, Jack was Consulting Psychologist at St. Peter’s Hospital assigned to the Department of Medicine but covering the Rehabilitation, Surgical, Medical and ICU units. Earlier consulting, lecturing, staff and teaching positions, some running concurrently, included Siena College, St. Anne Institute, College of St. Rose, LaSalle School Psychiatric Clinic, St. Mary’s Hospital School of Nursing, Russell Sage College, Manhattan College, Syracuse University, Iona College, SUNY Albany and the Consultation Services Center for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany. He also held an appointment as Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Albany Medical College, Postgraduate Medicine Department. As a medical psychologist, he was invited to lecture at large forums on clinical subjects such as Stress, Differential Diagnosis, Psychotherapy and Suicide. He was often asked by the media to comment on clinical issues. He was a member of several area Boards and many Scientific and Professional Associations.

In addition to the practice of clinical psychology, Jack had a distinguished military career.

His military service began with enlistment in the Navy during WW 2 at the age of 17, with basic training at Great Lakes Naval Training Center. He was middleweight boxing champion of his training division. During the war, Jack served in the Asiatic-Pacific theatre at sea and on land in Hawaii, Guam and Okinawa. Following the end of the war, he was honorably discharged with the rank of Petty Officer 3rd Class.

During the Korean War, Jack was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army, completing Officer basic training at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. During the war, he was stationed at Valley Forge PA and subsequently at Fort Lewis in Tacoma, WA. On discharge he continued in Reserve status, and through the grade of Captain functioned as Intelligence Officer and Operations Officer with the 320th General Hospital in New York City and the 364th Army Reserve Medical Unit Corps in Albany, New York. At field grade rank, Jack received individual assignments as Clinical Psychology Officer at Fort Dix, NJ, Fort, Devens, MA, Fort Meade, MD and Walter Reed General Hospital. He also served as a War Games Umpire at Fort Drum (then Camp Drum), NY, and as a Liaison Officer to West Point.

Upon promotion to Lt. Colonel and Colonel, Jack received Mobilization Designation Assignments as Special Assistant to the Chief of the Behavioral Science Laboratories at Alexandria, Virginia. While there he developed procedural outlines for research studies to be followed by independent civilian contractors bidding to do various projects for the Army. Another high priority assignment was to study the utilization of women in the Army, including positive and negative factors to be considered with regard to possible participation in combat, and in connection with this assignment developed hypotheses to be tested under field conditions to determine the feasibility of subjecting women to front-line stressors.

Jack held an additional Mobilization Designation position in the Psychology Consultants Branch of the Army Surgeon General's Office at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. During his Pentagon assignments, Jack studied and reported on Biofeedback, relatively new at the time, as a projected treatment technique and also participated in the assessment of brief therapy protocols as effective measures whether used in far forward areas or COM-Z (Communication zone in US) installations.

Concurrent with his active duty service, Jack was assigned to the 1062nd Reserve Training Unit (Logistics) at the Army Reserve Training Center in Albany, New York, eventually becoming its Commander for a number of years prior to his retirement from the service in 1982. He was recently nominated to be inducted into the Siena College ROTC Hall of Fame.

Jack was an accomplished and classically trained pianist who enjoyed playing the melodic classical as well as constructing improvisational arrangements of popular standards and Broadway show tunes. He enjoyed invitations to play locally at various social functions. One might say that Jack was a person who had music in his soul. He also enjoyed engaging in critical thinking in the world of ideas but he was rarely critical of another human being. He was open, fair-minded, even-handed and enlightened. His general approach might be summed up by the old saying that “the only people to get even with in life are those who have been helpful”. He found his career interesting for, as he had said, there was the challenge and the excitement that comes with diversity. Jack also conveyed that when his time had passed, if at all possible, he’ll always have recollections of loved ones in line with that Benny Goodman signature song “Memories of You.”

Jack was fortunate to find a wonderful person to share his life with following the death of his beloved wife, Patricia. That wonderful person is Silvia Ferlazzo of Albany, New York. Silvia and Jack spent the last twenty years together, sharing interests, traveling together and generally enjoying each other’s company. Their lives were both richer as a result of the time they spent together.

Jack is also survived by his daughter Ellen (Andrew), sons David (Kathleen) and Peter, and grandchildren Brian, Michael, Julie, Catherine and Matthew. Those who wish to remember Jack in a special way may send a contribution to Disabled American Veterans, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, Ohio 45250.

Relatives and friends are invited to visit with Jack’s family Sunday, October 15, 2017 3:00 to 6:00 pm in McVeigh Funeral Home, 208 North Allen Street, Albany.

Funeral services Monday, October 16, 2017 at 10:00 in McVeigh Funeral Home, Albany thence to the Chapel at Siena College at 11:00 am where his Funeral Mass will be celebrated.

The Rite of Committal will be held in St. Agnes Cemetery, Menands immediately following the Mass.

To leave a message for the family, light a candle, obtain directions or view other helpful services please visit www.McveighFuneralHome.com

Cemetery

St. Agnes Cemetery

48 Cemetery Ave
Menands, NY,

Events

OCT **Visitation** 03:00PM - 06:00PM

15

McVeigh Funeral Home, Inc.

208 N Allen St, Albany, NY, US, 12206

OCT **Service** 11:00AM

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Siena College Chapel

515 Loudon Road, Loudonville, NY, US, 12211

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



McVeigh Funeral Home, Inc. - October 14, 2017 at 04:10 PM



“ Sending our deepest sympathies to the entire Purcell family, upon the passing of Dr. Purcell. Although we did not know Dr. Purcell, it is clear from how he is described that he was an impressive and much loved man. He made a real and lasting impact on the worlds that he touched.

Sincerely,

Al Leary and the entire TCA Team



Al Leary - October 18, 2017 at 02:56 PM



“ Please accept my deepest sympathy on the passing of your dad a very great man and one who truly influenced the world he lived in. Jack was a rarity among people. I had the good fortune to work with him for over 30 years at La Sale School and claim him for a friend much longer than that. As a professional he was impeccable in his work raising the art and science of psychology to their heights. Professionals from inside and outside our agency sought the counsel and wisdom of this master of his discipline. Jack was a key reason our clinic earned an outstanding reputation throughout the field.

Dr. Purcell possessed qualities of heroic proportions. He was a scholar, an athlete, a sociable member of the community and more importantly a person of immense character. He could be counted on to give a straight reading on complex issues, troubling interpersonal or group entanglements all with the wisdom of clarity, maturity and objectivity. His Christian values carried the day for him in matters regardless the pressure-a man true to his beliefs.

A love for family sat at the root of everything Jack did. He worked incredibly hard. His proud military career alongside his professional standing came second to Family where his sustenance came. His beloved wife and dearest-children had no measure. I can't thank this great man enough for all he added to my life- I regret not being able to attend his service but the final days for my sweet wife are upon us and I am unable to leave her bedside. Be well Purcell family-I know you carry a grand legacy.
Brian & Barbara Barr

Brian Barr - October 16, 2017 at 04:06 PM



“ My sincere condolences to family and loved ones.

I had the honor to work with Dr. Purcell in the early 1970's at Saint Anne Institute, at which time I was fresh out of college and trying to determine what profession to go into. As one of my mentors and role models, his wisdom, knowledge, compassion, and professionalism led me to pursue a career in clinical psychology. Through all of my years in training and practice, I cannot say that I ever encountered any psychologist or psychiatrist as brilliant as he was.

Bill Van Dyne - October 15, 2017 at 08:41 PM



“ Correction--Bill Van Dyne

Bill Van Dyne - October 15, 2017 at 08:43 PM



“ 37 files added to the album LifeTributes



McVeigh Funeral Home, Inc. - October 14, 2017 at 03:02 PM