



Gerald F. McLaughlin

June 6, 1936 - July 31, 2020

Albany – Gerald F. McLaughlin, an adviser to governors, state senators and a host of fledgling news reporters, has died after a lengthy battle against diabetes and other assorted ailments. He was 84.

McLaughlin died on July 31 at the Albany Medical Center with his wife, Marty McLaughlin, by his side. He was taken to the hospital after becoming unresponsive while at dinner earlier in the day at Shaker Place, the Albany County nursing home and rehabilitation center, where he had been living since last fall. In April, he had tested positive for the coronavirus, but had remained symptom-free.

McLaughlin was born on June 6, 1936, in Rutland, Vt., with printer's ink in his blood. His mother, Helen Scanlon McLaughlin, was a star crime reporter and his father, Gerald Edward "Mac" McLaughlin, rose to be managing editor of the Rutland Herald newspaper. The family later moved to Springfield, Vt., where the couple took over four weekly newspapers serving the eastern part of the state.

Their son, after graduating from the College of the Holy Cross (1958) and

Columbia University's School of Journalism (1959), began his own career as a reporter at the Providence (R.I.) Journal and its sister publication, the Bulletin. He quickly established himself as a street-smart reporter and was hired by The Associated Press in 1962.

McLaughlin arrived at the AP's Albany, N.Y., bureau, as then-Republican Gov. Nelson Rockefeller was on his way to winning a second four-year term. After six years of covering everything from college sports to the Electoral College for the AP, McLaughlin was hired by Rockefeller to run the public information office at the newly created state Pure Waters Authority. In 1970, McLaughlin joined the governor's own press office and began a life-long friendship with Joseph Persico, Rockefeller's speechwriter and later biographer.

When Rockefeller resigned as governor in December 1973, McLaughlin became deputy press secretary for newly installed Gov. Malcolm Wilson who had been Rockefeller's lieutenant governor.

Less than a year later, Wilson lost the governorship to Democrat Hugh Carey. McLaughlin was pondering his own future when state Sen. John Marchi, a Republican from Staten Island, got in touch. "Mr. McLaughlin, how would you like to take a \$25,000 pay cut?" the senator inquired. McLaughlin, knowing the difference between something and nothing, accepted.

In Marchi, McLaughlin found a scholarly figure who often likened the New York state Senate to ancient Rome's own august body and who frequently quoted its classical orators in his own debates. Unlike his new boss, McLaughlin could speak in simple declarative sentences, a skill much appreciated by

reporters covering the chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee.

“His job often required him to unpack for reporters Marchi’s lengthy orations on Cicero or references to Thomas Aquinas ...even when the topic of the news conference was something as mundane as the world’s largest landfill,” explained Robert Bellafiore, a former AP reporter who went on to serve as Republican Gov. George Pataki’s press secretary. “Then again, depending on the circumstances, he might just say: ‘I think the senator’s words speak for themselves.’”

Marchi left the Senate in 2006 and McLaughlin retired on Jan. 1, 2007. In October of that year, McLaughlin married Martha (Marty) Ann Kennedy, a neighborhood acquaintance who he grew close to while swimming at a local community center. McLaughlin had lost his first wife, Sandy, in 1989. In addition to Marty, McLaughlin is survived by a son, Michael (Geraldyn) McLaughlin and their twin sons, Zachary and Charles; and a daughter, Sarah (Jim Shuttleworth) McLaughlin. He is also survived by his stepchildren, Joseph Kennedy and his children, daughter Perry and son Brendan; and Carolyn Kennedy and her son, Thomas Delfield. Also surviving are numerous relatives in Vermont, New York, New Hampshire and California.

The family said special thanks should go to McLaughlin’s cousin Frank Scanlon and his wife Joanne Smith of Latham, N.Y., and to the staff at Shaker Place.

Funeral Services Thursday, August 6, 2020 at 10:00 am at the Parish of Mater

Christi, Albany where his Memorial Funeral Mass will be celebrated. Please enter the Church from the parking lot doorway Masks and Social Distancing are required; church ambassadors will be available to help with seating and questions; and please attempt to arrive before 9:45 am.

The family requests that donations in Jerry's memory be sent to Covenant House or to a charity of one's choice.

To leave a message for the family, please visit www.McveighFuneralHome.com

Previous Events

Service

AUG 6. 10:00 AM (ET)

Parish of Mater Christi
40 Hopewell Street (Rev. Kenneth J. Doyle Way)
Albany, NY 12208

Tribute Wall



“ *Gerald F. McLaughlin*

October 08, 2023 at 09:24 PM



“ *You likely don't know me, but my late father, Kurt Wachenheim, knew Jerry very well and I recognized his face from the obituary in the newspaper. My Dad was the Public Relations Director for New York State Police from 1969-1990; and that's likely the time Jerry and my Dad got to know each other. I'm sure my Dad would want to send his condolences, so I'm sending it to you for him. I'm very sorry for your loss and we're thinking of your family.*

*Sincerely,
Ron Wachenheim*

Ron Wachenheim - September 12, 2020 at 12:13 PM



“ *I was terribly saddened to learn In today's TU of Jerry's death. A great swimming pal in these last few years, I will miss his bigger-than-life personality. He was a joy to be with. My deepest sympathy to Martha, Michael, and our son Matthew's friend, Sara. Pax Tecum, Jerry.*

james fleming - August 12, 2020 at 02:05 PM



“Gerald or “Jerry” as my family and I knew him was one of a kind. When my immigrant Mother lost her husband only a year and a half after moving to Albany from Costa Rica Jerry and his family stepped in and quickly became a safe haven for us. My sister and I were 3 and 4 at the time of our Father’s death back in 1984. We had been living in Albany for over a year and none of us spoke a word of English. It was a tragic loss for our family and my mother found herself a widow at 27 years old. We only knew my American grandparents and could barely communicate with them at the time. They were a massive help to us but we also found solace in our dear neighbors the McLaughlins. Jerry and Sandy hired my Mom as their housekeeper so she could work and provide for her two young girls. She was by herself and had no family of her own. Surrounded by strangers in a foreign land my mother soon became fast friends with the McLaughlins.

On nights when she had to work or had her classes for English as a second language Jerry’s daughter Sarah would come and babysit us.

That’s who this family is. Generous, compassionate and loving people. They truly cared about our well being and Jerry was the Patriarch. I remember I asked Jerry for help with my very first science project. I was probably 9 at the time. Not only did he help me but he spent hours collecting “data” for me because my project had to do with his cocker spaniel who I was testing different dog food on. What a time we had!

I also remember one day Jerry telling my mom that my sister and I could count all the change he had in his huge glass jar and when we were done we could take it to the bank and cash it.

That was typical Jerry. Giving and kind in every way.

The time came when my mother was to be remarried. There was no one else she wanted to walk her down the aisle but Jerry. He was

beaming that day. We had come such a long way from the early days on Picotte Drive speaking only Spanish and unsure of what the future looked like. Jerry and his family always made us feel absolutely welcomed and loved.

*I'll never forget you Jerry. Not as long as I live.
I pray you are rejoicing in heaven with the Lord and having the best time.*

*All my love,
Sarah Houghton*

Raquel Macgregor - August 09, 2020 at 11:20 PM

SK

“ *Deepest condolences to Martha. Your friend from the center. Jerry will be missed.*

Steve Klein

Steven Klein - August 06, 2020 at 03:43 PM

MM

“ *Gerry was a classmate of mine at Holy Cross. Since we were both McLaughlins , we shared many classes together. In our French class, he was know as Le Bon Monsieur McLaughlin and I was called Le Mauvais (bad) Monsieur McLaughlin. Gerry and I kept in touch through the years. I was a reporter at the Daily News when he worked for AP. We kept each posted as our careers took similar political paths. Gerry was a smart, tough and loyal guy and I was proud to call him friend.*

*God Bless a good guy,
Marty McLaughlin*

Martin J. McLaughlin - August 05, 2020 at 09:45 PM

BP

“ Gerry was one of the respected "elders" of the Senate Majority when I was first posted to Albany by Sen. Joe Pisani in 1983. A year later, having moved to Kent Sanders' staff, I got to know him through Kent.

He was often amused by my naiveté, me with my fancy degree, but having no idea of how things really worked. Gerry was a friend in good times, a counselor in bad. He shook his head when I did dumb things, but did not spare praise on the (few) occasions when I got something right.

In later years, living fairly close to where he and Marty made their home, it was always a pleasure to run into him here and there.

A true gentleman, he made a decided impression on me and I was proud to count him as a friend. Elise and I extend our deepest condolences to Marty and the whole clan.

Bob Penna - August 05, 2020 at 10:10 AM

PR

“ I had the pleasure of knowing and working with Gerry for many years when we were both with the Senate Finance Committee when the late Senator Marchi was Chairman.

Gerry was a wonderful guy and a genuine "wordsmith".

May he truly rest in peace.

Paul Reuss
Menands, NY

Paul Reuss - August 05, 2020 at 08:47 AM

HS

“Gerry was a wise and good friend since our time together in Governor Rockefeller’s office. Together with Lou Thomson, we developed a rule as to when it was ok to not turn the other cheek and to forcefully respond to a wrong by another. “My family, house or job”. Gerry’s son Michael and mine were young friends. He will be missed.

Howard Shapiro - August 04, 2020 at 08:30 PM

DM

“Being a friend of the family for some 20 years now, I offer a very heart felt and sincere condolences to all of the family and most especially to his son Mac a dear friend and classmate. BIG HUGS. Sarah his daughter also a good friend Big Hugs and Lots of Love to everyone.



Douglas McKay - August 04, 2020 at 08:20 PM

PC

“So sorry to learn of Gerry’s passing. It brought back great memories of our days in Senate Finance. Joanne and I send our sympathy to Marty, Michael and Sarah and to everyone who had the privilege of knowing Gerry. Here’s to a life well lived! May he Rest In Peace. Paul Crispo

Paul Crispo - August 04, 2020 at 06:38 PM

JE

“ My condolences to Gerry’s family. I got to know Gerry in the early 90s as a young college grad working my first job in the Assembly. We’d spend hours talking about baseball (mostly the Red Sox), great stories he covered, and old time politics. It was a great education - entertaining and enlightening. He brought history to life. I’ll miss him. God Bless.

Johnny Evers - August 04, 2020 at 04:30 PM

MM

“ Gerry’s family does not know me but I had the pleasure of making his acquaintance when we were both regulars at the Albany JCC, Gerry in the pool, me in the fitness center. He was a charming and kind gentleman. So sorry to read of his passing.

*Michael Moore
Halfmoon NY*

Michael Moore - August 04, 2020 at 12:52 PM

LP

“ Sincere condolences to Martha in her time of loss. It was always good to see you both at the JCC pool. Prayers to Martha and Jerry’s entire family.

Lucille Phelps - August 04, 2020 at 12:19 PM

DF

“ Marty,
So sorry you lost Jerry. He was a good guy and a true gentleman. The gang at the gym has missed him.
Dave Friedrichs (JCC member)

David Friedrichs - August 04, 2020 at 11:43 AM

MF

“ *Gerry was the warmest and wittiest person we have ever known....His knowledge and personality would fill a room, and his kindness would flow to everyone he met.*

Our love and condolences to the family, and eternal peace for Gerry Diane and Mike Finnerty

MICHAEL FINNERTY - August 04, 2020 at 09:43 AM

GP

“ *I am so saddened to hear of the passing of Gerry. Gerry was a good friend at the Senate where I met him. He always made me laugh, and built me up with my accomplishments. He will be missed by many. My prayers to the family.*

Gail M Plath - August 04, 2020 at 07:04 AM