



Norman R. Strite

May 17, 1935 - December 12, 2023

Albany, NY-Norman Royer Strite passed away on December 12, 2023 at the age of 88. He was born in Baltimore, Maryland on May 17, 1935 to Norman Royer Strite Sr. and Viola Mae (Gaffney) and spent his first 7 ½ years in Buenos Aires, Argentina where his father's company transferred the family and where his only sibling, Charles, was born to survive him. A year after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, the Strites returned to the United States and were assigned for 2 ½ years to Columbus, Ohio and then assigned in 1945 to Albany where Norman attended Albany High, Siena and Albany State before graduating with a B.A. in English Literature from SUNY at Binghamton and pursuing further studies at Albany State and the creative writing program at Michigan University.

He liked to say he lived a working life followed by a long retired life beginning in 1990. During his early years, he was an electrical supply clerk, file clerk, rental car clerk, post office clerk, Stewart's clerk, Church janitor, dishwasher and high school English teacher. Eventually he joined New York State, first as a social worker for Mental Hygiene (2 years) and then as fiscal and administrative assistants with Health (20 years). But at age 55, he was able to retire and concentrate on the arts that had fascinated him from youth.

While at Siena, he studied acting under the Times Union movie critic, Martin Kelly. With another student, Norman launched a theater program at Siena, but

they lacked female students, so Kelly meshed the fledgling program with his better organized theater program at Saint Rose. Norman married actress Linda-Anne (Fredsell) who the critic, Gene Shalit, called "America's best-kept secret, funnier than Carol Burnett." Around this time, Norman, (who had written poetry under Karl Kasberg at Binghamton and fiction inspired by Arno Bader at Michigan), switched to writing unpublished novels and unsold figure art that he studied under Rudy Helmo, Franklin Alexander and other local artists. He tried printmaking and studied sculpture with Times Union cartoonist, Hy Rosen. A major hobby became his amateur comic strip inspired by Rick Yager's version of Buck Rogers, which he began when he was eleven and was still drawing whenever he felt a nostalgic twinge.

During his early life, he coached and played in various softball, basketball and touch football community leagues. He also became a 200 bowler. He liked to say that community sports allowed people to live out national fantasies. Norman spent thousands of hours watching live and televised sports and saw his first Siena and Albany State basketball games with his father in 1945-46, possibly making him the longest standing consistent fan at his death at both schools. He was a lifetime fan of Section 2 high school football and basketball teams, the Cincinnati Reds, his father's university's football team (Penn State) and the New York Giants. While at the Health Department, he served 19 years as the Commissioner of the first vigorously contested co-ed softball league in the Capital District. He believed he was the only serious jogger on Albany's city streets when he was 15 in 1950, and he later asked Dr. Alexiou of the Health Department to launch the state employees' jogging program that eventually moved into the Washington Avenue Armory and partly inspired the enormous interest in jogging in the Albany area.

Upon retiring, Norman switched from playing sports to making art and spent 15 years monitoring year-round sketch and paint clubs with the Riverfront Artists of Troy and Delmar and the Schenectady Community Artists at Union

College. This allowed him to concentrate on figure art based on his hiring models for the clubs, more than 70 of whom posed for his private studio paintings. In recent years, he was asked to provide art models to the many private and college sketch clubs from Cambridge to Greenville. Always more eager to paint another burning idea than to glaze and frame his paintings and try to engage galleries to show his work, he spent the pandemic patching and printing at a vanity press a three-volume set of 663 of his paintings and a 246-page book of his adventure comics. He will be missed at the art club currently meeting in Brunswick, where he was always in attendance and still provided the models and maintained a tight clock on the poses.

He and his wife (Linda, deceased in 1994) had no children, but Norman leaves behind a group of very close non-artists friends, plus many friends among the local artists and models, his brother Charles, relatives in the Gaffney clan in Pennsylvania and Florida, and what he felt was one of the better graphic libraries put together by a serious American book collector. There are more than 32,000 volumes.

Funeral Services Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 1:00 pm at McVeigh Funeral Home, 208 North Allen Street, Albany, NY 12203. Please enter the funeral home from the rear parking lot entrance only.

Interment will be held at Memory Gardens Cemetery, immediately following the Service. To leave a message for the family please visit www.McveighFuneralHome.com

Donations can be made to the Riverfront Artists, care of Steve Carberry, 518.265.2981 or SteveCarberry@hotmail.com

Cemetery Details

Memory Gardens Cemetery

983 Watervliet Shaker Road
Albany, NY

Previous Events

Service

DEC 19. 1:00 PM (ET)

McVeigh Funeral Home, Inc.
208 N Allen St
Albany, NY 12206
(518) 489-0188
info@mcveighfuneralhome.com
<http://www.McveighFuneralHome.com>

Tribute Wall

DL

“ I first met Norm shortly after moving to Delmar in 1978. We both worked at the NYSDOH and he was the key person in the formation that year of the Capital Region's first coed softball league. Norm "recruited" me and many others to play in "his" league during his 19 years as commissioner, coach and player. There were generally 8-12 teams so he is more than partly responsible for many of the (mostly) fond memories so many former players still have of playing in the Mall Tower Coed League. RIP, my friend. Dave Loux

Dave Loux - December 20, 2023 at 04:57 PM

JF

“ Norm always had a positive foot forward approach to life, he encouraged all his models to have a good healthy life. Always there to help in any way he could. He will be missed immensely.

Jamie Finley - December 20, 2023 at 04:15 PM

DT

“ I got to know Norm at the Health Department during his tenure there. We played on the same softball, basketball and touch football teams. The softball and football teams were part of a League but the basketball team was all Norm's creation. He scheduled games for us and kept track of our team record every year. He wrote a summary of each game, and highlighted specific players who he thought played well. What fun we had because of Norm's work. He also held a "decathlon" at his house for several years. He invited many couples. Two of the events I clearly remember were the three-legged races (Norm matched up the teams -- your spouse could not be your partner) and Gum Expectoration (Norm gave each participant a bubble gum and after a few chews, you sent it flying and Norm would measure the distance). He awarded points for each event and presented the winning team with a "trophy" at the end of the day. Charades inside his house would follow the decathlon. Thank you for all the great times Norm. You were one of the best. RIP. You earned it. Dom Testo

Dom Testo - December 19, 2023 at 09:46 AM

RE

“ Norm, we will miss you.

Rick Eckhardt - December 16, 2023 at 05:52 PM