



Walter J. Wagner

January 11, 1936 - February 10, 2024

Walter Joseph Wagner passed away on February 10th, 2024 at the age of 88 surrounded by his family after a courageous battle with leukemia.

Walter was born on January 11, 1936 in Holyoke, Massachusetts to Walter and Phyllis Wagner. He was the first born child and older brother to his sister Constance. As a child 'Cappy' (as known to his friends and cousins) had a devilish sense of humor. He always said it like it was and was not one to mince words. He worked hard and played hard, enjoying hanging out with friends at one of his favorite spots, Nick's Nest, a local hot dog eatery.

As Walt grew up he developed a love of music, and in high school he began playing his clarinet and tenor sax in a local band. People who know Walt know that his music became one of the most important parts of who he was. Walt's first love was polka music, harkening back to his polish heritage, but he also was an accomplished big band musician and leader. Walt was always in some type of band throughout his life, whether it be the 'Uncalled Four' in the 1970's or the Serenaders Big Band later in life. In fact, Walter was the dedicated leader of the Serenaders for 30 years. In this capacity, he grew the following of his band and expanded the range of where they played. He also developed the smaller 'Polka Serenaders' band which developed its own groupies. Walt produced four different 'Polka Serenaders' albums, including 'Raised on Polkas' and 'I Love to Polka with My Carolcia'.

Speaking of Carolcia.. You can't talk about Walt without talking about his wife of 63 years, Carol. The only thing Walt loved more than his music was his family, Carol in particular. Carol and Walt met, fell in love almost instantly and then married in 1960. They went on to raise two daughters, Jenny and Laura, and developed a beautiful life together. They journeyed through both good times and bad, moved to different states (Massachusetts, Delaware, and Michigan) for Walt's job with Hercules Chemical Company, and purchased their beach house in Stone Harbor, New Jersey. This summer home became their refuge and was well loved by the whole family. Walt taught the girls how to bodysurf, and Laura and Jenny have fond memories of their childhood days out surfing the big waves with their dad and the other men. Carol could always be found on the beach, not daring to dip a toe in the cold surf. A perfect day for Walt would be a day out body surfing the waves, a cookout of 'hamburgs' and hotdogs with the family and a night playing in his polka band - maybe at the Polka Spree by the Sea. Walt also enjoyed spending time with his grandsons, Alex and Tom, when they came to visit. In their later years, Walt and Carol became Florida snowbirds, spending the winters in their condo in the Ocean Trail community of Jupiter. Here they enjoyed spending time at the beach and pool and playing bridge with their friends and neighbors.

Lastly, people who knew Walt would tell you he knew his paper chemicals. Walt earned his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic in Massachusetts. Then after he spent a few years in the navy as the chief entertainment officer (where he actually met Elvis), Walt went on to work in chemical sales at Hercules Chemical Company, specializing in defoamers and wax emulsions. After 30 years with Hercules, Walt retired and started a second career with Hase Petroleum Wax Company. He found a real home with the Hase people and was well loved by both the Hase people and his friends at ARG and Langboard alike. He loved his associates with Hase so much that he kept working with them until his death. He loved going on the

road to call on customers in Willacoochee, Georgia (hello Shelley!) or in other states.

Walter was a very good, generous, and kindhearted man. He is dearly loved and will be dearly missed. Walter is survived by his sister Constance Lust, his wife, Carol, his daughters Laura Wagner and Jenny Traynor, and his grandsons, Alex and Tom Denham. A funeral service for Walter will be held at 10:30 on March 9th at the First United Methodist Church of Jupiter on Indiantown Road. Flowers can be sent to the church or in lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Walter's name to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

The service for Walter Wagner will be live streamed and can be accessed through the church website at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOJpehSukRg>

<https://www.jupitermethodist.org/>

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAR 9. 10:30 AM (ET)

First United Methodist Church of Jupiter/Tequesta
815 Indiantown Road
Jupiter, FL 33458

Tribute Wall

DA

“ I'm saddened to just now learn of Walter's passing. Walter played sax in my polka band, the "uncalled four" in the 70s. I always said he was the best sax player in West Michigan and was sad to see him leave for Delaware when he was transferred. I learned a lot from him and we had some fun times. I send my sincere condolences to Carol and family. Fair winds and following seas my friend.

Dick Allwelt - December 24, 2024 at 04:20 PM

TM

“ We would hire Walt's band to play for the Philadelphia Swing Dance Society swing dances. It was always a treat for the dancers to dance to Walt's band. He always had top notch musician in the band. The swing dancers will miss you Walt. Rest in peace and God bless you. You brought allot of happiness to us dancers.

Tom Madle - December 12, 2024 at 01:25 PM

FK

“ REST IN PEACE WALT AND MY GOD WELCOME YOU AND YOUR WIFE WITH OPEN ARMS

FRANK KOSLOW - August 05, 2024 at 06:14 PM



“*Richie Prostack loved filling in on bass guitar in Walts' swing band, especially at the Commodore Barry club and the Wilmington Country club, and the polka band , especially at Jolly Joe Timbers. Walt always counted off the tempos and if the rhythm section picked up the tempo a bit, "Jump, Jive and Wail" comes to mind, we'd hear about it onstage. Lol. Poor Pat Carrigan sang that song at the time at Wilmington Country club on one lung and had to sit down from exhaustion. You could NEVER say you were late to a gig because you got lost. Walt would mail out fastidiously hand drawn maps with arrows and directions down to how many tenths of a mile or yards before you had to make a right or left turn. It was an honor to play for you Walt. Playing in your bands with top notch players was sheer pleasure that always put a smile on my face and warmth in my heart. Thanks for the memories Walt. Rest in peace. If there are bands in heaven I am sure you'll be in front of one again. 😊*

Holly Wood - May 31, 2024 at 01:18 PM

GL

“*I worked with Walt many years with “The Serenaders” swing band. Walt was a real “hustler” keep the band working. Along with leading the band he also played Tenor Sax and Clarinet and contributed many musical arrangements to the band “book”. We spent many happy hours on the bandstand. Thank you Walt for some great memories.*

Gary Letts - May 29, 2024 at 07:14 PM

RC

“*I loved working with you, listening to your music. You gave us all happy days. Condolences to all of your family.*

Russell Craig - March 23, 2024 at 11:05 PM

MB

“ I am sorry to hear of Walts passing. I will miss our bridge games.

Mike Barbuti - March 11, 2024 at 08:06 AM

MH

“ Mary Ann Hiles lit a candle in memory of
Walter J. Wagner



Mary Ann Hiles - March 08, 2024 at 11:38 AM

FK

“ We grew up together in Holyoke, MA...found each other while I was
in NJ years later...proud to have been part of the Serenaders, Bless
you Wladziu,

Fran Kosienski - February 25, 2024 at 08:00 PM

LW

Thanks Fran. So glad we found you again. Wished I could have seen
you play together when you were young.

Laura A Wagner - February 25, 2024 at 10:36 PM

MB

Rest in Peace I am sure you will find some great Bridge games up
there.

Mike Barbuti - February 27, 2024 at 05:32 PM

MH

My condolences to Carol, Laura, Jenny, and all the family.

Walt and my husband, Dave (who passed in Feb 2016) worked together at Hercules and as a four-some (Walt, Carol, Dave, and myself), we frequently socialized together in DE/NJ. We also attended many events where Walt played with his polka band and the big swing band. One weekend at their Stone Harbor beach home, we gifted Walt and Carol with a new ceiling fan for their screened front porch, and my husband Dave with assistance from Walt, took down the old fan. The wiring was old but Dave was determined to get it right. Up went the new wiring and new fan. To this day I can see Walt's expression as Dave said to Walt, "turn on the switch". It worked then and for many years after and hope it still is running well.

Will miss Walt, his kindness, and great sense of humor.

Mary Ann Hiles

Mary Ann Hiles - March 08, 2024 at 11:36 AM

RC

I am trying to find a phone number for Carol. She was a dear friend of mine and her number is not in order now. Can you help me? Ruth Crossan 302 738-4318

Ruth Crossan - September 13, 2024 at 10:18 AM