



## Walter Richard Derlacki

November 13, 1923 - November 29, 2024

Walter was born and raised in Chicago, the younger son of Polish immigrants Walter and Jadwiga. He died at home in Albany of natural causes at age 101.

He is survived by his sons David (Sandy) and Douglas, and daughter-in-law Mary, grandchildren Dan (Helen), Steve, Taylor, and Avalon (Tim), great-granddaughters Katherine (Dan & Helen) and Vera (Avalon & Tim), his brother-in-law John Leinhard and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife Joyce, son Donald, older brother Eugene and niece Deborah.

Walter was a graduate of the Evanston Township High School and Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois and of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was in the Navy V-12 program in college and was in active service in the US Navy at the end of World War II. His passion for organization and planning led him to a career as a professional mechanical engineer first in design and construction and later in teaching other engineers.

In 1948, he married Joyce whom he met at Northwestern University. They celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in April 2018.

Walter began his career as an engineer for Proctor & Gamble in Cincinnati OH, then moved to New York and later Ohio working for the world's largest

scrap steel dealer managing large scrap steel plant construction. When his employer got out of the steel business, he had several jobs for large construction companies in Long Beach CA and St Louis MO. He ended his career working for Weyerhaeuser in Washington where he managed paper mill construction and teaching engineering processes to Weyerhaeuser engineers around the world.

Walter was athletic his whole life, playing sports in high school, running half-marathons in his 50s and going to athletic clubs at work and after retirement. He greatly enjoyed his friends at Timberhill Athletic Club for the 20 years he belonged there. With his roots as a high school baseball player in the 1930s, he enjoyed the Corvallis Knights games because they played “real baseball” with wood bats.

Walter’s love of music kept him involved in a lifetime of orchestra and chamber music (string quartet) activities from middle school until his eyesight made it too difficult to play in his late 90s. He was an avid supporter of music associations and music schools for children. After retiring, Walter was extremely active in playing string quartets, at one time driving from Corvallis to Portland and Salem every week while playing in four quartets at once.

No drive was too far if there were quartets or golf at the end of the trip!

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the charity of your choice in Walter’s memory. His favorite charities supported music, education, and veterans.

A celebration of life will be held in March, details are below.

Please share your thoughts and memories for the family at [www.McHenryFuneralHome.com](http://www.McHenryFuneralHome.com).



# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

MAR 8. 1:00 PM (PT)

Bonaventure Senior Living

420 NW Geri St

Albany, OR 97321

<https://bonaventuresenior.com/community/bonaventure-of-albany/>

*Bring stories of Walter to share! In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the charity of your choice in Walter's memory. His favorite charities supported music, education, and veterans.*

# Tribute Wall

DM

“Mr. Derlacki was an inspiring individual not because of his longevity but because of how he managed the long span with grace, humor, optimism and perseverance. Walt was an accomplished violinist and played in symphonic and chamber orchestras until his “failing eyesight and trembling fingers” forced him to act his age, as he would say. He had many health challenges from “head to toe” as he would describe them but Walt never uttered a complaint. “You think you had it tough? Talk to the other guys they got more problems than you can imagine.” Music, reading (listening to books) and exercise kept him on an even keel. He was quite an athlete, even in his primary school days, ladies on the golf course would pay him a nickel to T off for them. Marathons in his mature years and daily exercise in his golden days. Walt had a sharp and intellectual mind and anyone who had in-depth conversations with him would be thoroughly entertained and impressed. Walt was a WWII veteran, the navy wanted him to become a frog man since they thought he was smart and good with his hands. Walt said he got out of that one by being a really poor swimmer. Asked about what was his most harrowing experience during the war, his answer was on shore patrol and having ladies in Naples empty bed chambers on his head! Always understated and modest, Walt had so many stories to share that we never had a dull moment in our conversation. Being father, grand and great grand father, Walt was always thankful for life’s gift and grateful for every act of kindness. “To every man upon this earth, Death cometh soon or late,” what better way to go than being 101 and in peaceful sleep? Walt must have departed with a chuckle, a wonderful life.

David Mok

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David Mok - December 09, 2024 at 05:46 PM



“ *Walter was a colorful friend at Bonaventure. He loved going to concert and symphony performances and made sure Bonaventure took us frequently.*

*I'll miss trying to follow Walter when he sped to see his friends at the performances. I heard he was a violinist and hope the family will tell us more!*

*I'd even love if a family member could post Walter playing the violin on YouTube!*

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**Claudia Painter** - December 06, 2024 at 11:53 AM

BR

*I knew Walter for many years as a Stoneybrook Village neighbor. We often met at the mailbox and exchanged a few words. He was always cheerful. Walter frequently gave me his concert tickets because he could not go. I saw him last at his 100. birthday when I had arrived at the Buonaventure early and spent a pleasant hour chatting with him in his room. His mind was still amazingly sharp. Barbara Rossbacher*

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**Barbara Rossbacher** - December 06, 2024 at 06:49 PM