



Paul J. Maher

February 19, 2021

Paul J. Maher, Political and Community Leader, 87, of Wilkes-Barre passed away peacefully on February 19, 2021.

Born in Wilkes-Barre he was the son of Paul W. and Elizabeth Zwiebel Maher. He was the last survivor of the immediate family.

Paul was married to the late, Judith DeLong who suddenly passed away in 2012, after a wonderful marriage of eighteen years.

A graduate of St. Mary's High School where he was active in basketball and baseball, Mr. Maher was a staunch supporter of St. Mary's since graduating and has been actively involved in the organization of all class reunions. He also attended Wilkes College and Wyoming Seminary.

Mr. Maher was a United States Army veteran during the Korean Conflict, serving at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, with the 81st Chemical Group attached to the 82nd Airborne. He was honorably discharged with the rank of Sergeant. He held positions of Company Administrator and Desk Sergeant. He also attended Service Schools for Personnel Administration and Chemical Biological Warfare. While in the service, Mr. Maher played basketball with the 81st Chemical Group in the 82nd Airborne Post League with many stars of the future who were in the service at the time.

Before entering politics, Mr. Maher was employed in the banking and finance business with firms that included The Beacon Loan Corporation, The Citizens Saving Association, and The Susquehanna Savings Association. He also worked in traffic and freight sales for the Lehigh Valley Railroad prior to their merger with the Pennsylvania Railroad.

He entered his political career in 1971 working for the City of Wilkes Barre as Coordinator of Federal Funds. According to Mr. Maher, the highlight of that position was working with the late Congressman Dan Flood, where a grant was obtained for a manpower program,

at no cost to the City that was responsible for 30 people being hired. He actively served the City in the wake of Hurricane Agnes in 1972 attending Flood Recovery Meetings and assisting in setting up trailer parks for flooded City residents. At that time, he formed the South Wilkes Barre Action Committee and served as chairman.

In 1976, Mr. Maher was appointed as the first Luzerne County Budget and Personnel Director by the late Chairman of the Commissioner Board, F.C. Wideman, Jr. As Budget Director, he was instrumental in setting regular meetings with Row offices and department heads to insure allocations were being kept in line. He also started a program that reached out to the many service clubs and women's organizations to get their input on the budget process.

In 1985, Mr. Maher became a Field Representative for Congressman Paul Kanjorski, of the 11th Congressional District. He spent the next twenty-six years working with Congressman Kanjorski and performed many duties. He served as a Liaison to all Unions in the 11th District and handled many small business inquiries. He represented the Congressman at countless fund-raisers, ribbon-cuttings, ground breakings and community events. Veteran political observers considered him to be savvy and astute. Many sought him out for his advice over the years.

He was a member of several Boards and Authorities including the Veterans Hospital Management Assistance Council, Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority, and Chairman of the Luzerne County Recreation Authority. Maher served thirty years as member and chairman of the Wilkes Barre Parking Authority – appointed by five different mayors. He also served the Wilkes Barre Catholic Youth Center, St. Vincent DePaul Kitchen, Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance, Luzerne County Transportation Authority, and the Tobyhanna Task Force Committee. He was a member of the Wilkes Barre Elks #109, Past Exalted Ruler, the Wilkes Barre and Hanover Township American Legions, Knights of Columbus, Donegal Society, Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and a member of St. Mary's Cemetery and Mausoleum Board of Directors.

Mr. Maher has been active in South Wilkes Barre his entire life and served as Democratic State Committeeman for forty years. He was always counted on to bring the Democrats through in South Wilkes Barre. He was an organizer of the South Wilkes Barre Mini-Mohawks and later served as an assistant coach. He also served as a volunteer coach on the Meyers Football staff with the late Mickey Gorham and was a long-time member of the Meyers Quarterback Club. He was a daily fixture walking the neighborhood with his great friend, his dog Kelly.

Mr. Maher was a devout Catholic and an active, lifelong member of St. Mary's Church of the Immaculate Conception where he served as Usher, Lector, and participated in many fundraising projects. He was devoted to the Rosary and Blessed Mother.

Paul enjoyed working with his relative, State Senator Edward Helfrick, Republican from Mt. Carmel, who served 30 years in the Republican dominated senate. When Maher needed help from the Republican side, he knew where to go – and he got it. Some of the counties served by Senator Helfrick were also represented by Congressman Kanjorski. Mr. Maher attended many of the Senator's get-togethers and came to know many of the Republican state senators quite well.

Paul and Judy loved Christmas and each year held an open house party for relatives and friends. It was always full of fun and laughter. Santa never missed and made sure everyone got a gift – even the adults. Santa always made this his first stop but was sure to come back to end his evening.

Mr. Maher was an avid Notre Dame Football fan his entire life. He traveled to South Bend for several games and has met former coaches Lou Holtz, Ara Parseghian, Frank Leahy and more recently Coach Brian Kelly. He developed a relationship with former coach Holtz that included exchanging correspondence before and after some big games. He truly loved Notre Dame Football and was a member of the Hanover Township Notre Dame Club serving as club auditor. Additionally, he was a member of the Wyoming Valley Boxing Hall of Fame. He was inducted into the Hall in 1998 as a boxing judge for bouts at the Scranton CYC and West Side Armory.

Mr. Maher was preceded in death by his beloved wife Judy (DeLong), a sister, Marilyn Maher Nolan and her husband Thomas Nolan, and a niece, Beth Nolan Drummer.

He is survived by nieces and nephews whom he loved and adored and always kept in constant touch to make sure everything was going well for them. Family included nephews, Thomas Nolan, Jr. of Seattle, Washington, his wife Rita and their children Lucy, Beth and Katie, and Christopher Nolan of Conshohocken; niece, Barbara Nolan Sheridan, her husband Stuart and son Matthew of Charlotte, NC; stepchildren, Angela Talanka, her husband Bill and children Abbey, Sarah, Chelsea, Bella and Jack, Colleen Harris and her daughter Kati; step-grandson, Corey Kehoe; sisters-in-law, Lynda DeLong and Louise Cologna.

Celebration of Paul's Life will include visitation on Thursday, February 25, 2021 from 9:30 to 11:30 AM at McLaughlin's, 142 South Washington Street in Wilkes-Barre, and Funeral

Mass to be celebrated at 12:10 PM in the Church of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception.

Memorial donations to the Parish of Our Lady of Fatima are preferred.

Share memories and condolences with Paul's family at <http://www.mjmclaughlin.com>

Cemetery

Saint Mary's Cemetery

1594 South Main Street
Hanover Township, PA,
18706

Events

FEB **Visitation** 09:30AM - 11:30AM

25

McLaughlin's

142 South Washington Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA, US,
18701

FEB **Funeral Mass** 12:10PM

25

Church of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception

130 South Washington Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA, US,
18701

Comments



“ My most sincere sympathy and prayers for the family of Mr. Paul J. Maher.

Mr. Maher was always very kind to me and he knew my parents well.

Sincerely,

Bernadette M. Scavone



Bernadette M. Scavone - May 11, 2021 at 12:30 AM



“ Paul was a wonderful friend and advisor to my step-father, Comm. Ed Wideman. He was also very kind to me when I used to accompany my parents to various political gatherings. He never treated me like a kid. Paul attended my senior art exhibit in when I was in college, and was at my wedding 38 years ago. When my step-dad passed away, he made sure that my mother, Ann, was okay, and kept in touch to see if she needed anything. The last time I saw Paul was at the wake for my mother 11 years ago. I was sad to learn of his death. It's really an end of an era for me; so many of my parents' friends are gone. Please accept my deepest sympathy.

Caprice Ryman

Caprice Ryman - February 24, 2021 at 09:13 PM



“ My deepest sympathy.

Fred Pierantoni III - February 23, 2021 at 04:38 PM



“ Paul Maher was a wonderful friend and neighbor to our family in South Wilkes-Barre. While he was a fixture in local politics, he was always a kind neighbor and friend above all.

May his family be comforted by many happy memories. Our thoughts & prayers are with Paul and his family.

Frank & Molly McLaughlin Hoegen

Molly Hoegen - February 22, 2021 at 10:06 PM



“ Clinton County Democrats send our thoughts and prayers to your family. Paul's was a life well lived of service and good will. He will be missed.



Rose Reeder - February 22, 2021 at 11:19 AM