



Herbert Keyser Zearfoss

October 13, 1929 - April 8, 2008

Herbert Keyser Zearfoss, of Villanova, an attorney-at-law, business executive, Pennsylvania state legislator, and leader in many volunteer organizations, suffered a massive heart attack and died on Tuesday morning, 8 April. He was 78 years old. Mr. Zearfoss was born on 13 October 1929 near the small town of Montandon, on the east bank of the Susquehanna River, in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania. He enrolled in Bucknell University, in nearby Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, and earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1951. He was a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1954 to 1958 and in the latter year earned the Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from American University. He was admitted to the Pennsylvania bar and opened a law office in Lewisburg in 1959, practicing as Fetter and Zearfoss. He then joined the Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company in Philadelphia, where he served as Assistant Counsel from 1960 to 1967. He was a Justice of the Peace in Radnor Township, Delaware County from 1966 to 1967 and an officer in the Insurance Federation of Pennsylvania from 1967 to 1968. In 1968 he was elected a State Representative to the Pennsylvania General Assembly and served for five terms, 1968 to 1978. He then returned to the Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company, where he served from 1978 through 1982 as Senior Vice President and General Counsel. In 1982 he joined Provident Indemnity Life Insurance, where he served as Senior Vice President, Secretary, and General Counsel. From 1991 until his retirement in 2001 he was Assistant General Counsel and Assistant Secretary at Teleflex,

Inc., now in Limerick, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Zearfoss was perhaps best known – certainly in the last thirty years of his life – as the cheerful, engaged and inspirational leader of volunteer organizations throughout the Delaware Valley. His interests were expansive, stretching, for example, from the Boy Scouts of America (in 1989 the Valley Forge Council of the Scouts conferred upon him its prestigious Silver Beaver Award) to the Civil War and Underground Railroad Museum of Philadelphia (where he served as Treasurer at the time of his death). His passion, however, was in genealogy and in patriotic hereditary societies. He was the President or Governor of at least eight of these societies, including the Netherlands Society of Philadelphia; the Philadelphia Continental Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution; the Colonial Society of Pennsylvania; the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania; the General Society of the War of 1812; the Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati; the Pennsylvania Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States; and the Society of Colonial Wars in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. His presidency of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania lasted thirteen years; he had stepped down from that post – and been elected an Honorary President for life – just two weeks before his death. He was also active in the Huguenot Society of Pennsylvania; the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution and its Color Guard; and the Welcome Society of Pennsylvania. All of these organizations benefited enormously from his time and many talents.

Mr. Zearfoss was a member of the Merion Cricket Club and the Philadelphia Club. He worshipped at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, where he sang in the choir. Mr. Zearfoss was married in 1953 to Thelma Mary McCarthy, with whom he had three children, Timothy McCarthy Zearfoss, Jonathan Andrew Zearfoss, and Sarah Creighton Zearfoss. Mrs. Zearfoss died in 1984. Mr. Zearfoss married, in 1992, Suzanne Vander Veer, who, with the children, survives him.

His Memorial Service will be held on Sat. April 19th, 2PM in the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, 625 Montgomery Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to either the Genealogical Society of Philadelphia, 1300 Locust Street 2nd Floor, Philadelphia PA 19107 or The Society of the Cincinnati, 2118 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20008

Chadwick & McKinney Funeral Home of Ardmore

Previous Events

Service

APR **19**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
625 Montgomery Avenue
Bryn Mawr, PA