



Hugh J. McCauley

August 8, 1943 - August 20, 2025

Hugh J. McCauley

Bryn Mawr resident Hugh J. McCauley died August 20, 2025. Born in 1943 in Philadelphia, son of John P. and Rita Gallagher McCauley, he attended West Catholic High School for Boys in Philadelphia.

From an early age, and as part of a family of electricians and carpenters, Hugh McCauley was immersed in architecture and construction. These became his life's work as a hands-on architect. While attending night school at Temple University and the T-Square Atelier and Engineers Club classes, he worked at The Ballinger Company and then United Engineers in Philadelphia. He was drafted into the US Navy and after serving two tours in Vietnam as a steel worker in the Seabees, McCauley earned a Masters in Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts (now Weitzman) in 1972. At Penn, he won a number of awards, including the Dales Travelling Fellowship and Paul Cret Medal for best thesis.

After graduating, McCauley worked with several Philadelphia architectural and engineering firms and served as architectural consultant to Community Legal Services and historic architectural consultant to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Later, he became Chief Architect for the Philadelphia Housing Authority. From the mid-1980s onward McCauley

partnered with David Rietz, working as United Architects.

Hugh McCauley's professional specialization in historic buildings, primarily in Philadelphia and South and West New Jersey, gained him national recognition and led to co-authorship of important publications in the then-emerging field of architectural preservation. An enthusiastic teller of stories always laced with humor, he preached architectural preservation and shared his voluminous knowledge of history, architecture, and engineering everywhere he could, from dinner tables to consultancies, to slide lectures on tour for the Victorian Society, to Philadelphia University (now Jefferson), where he taught for a number of years.

Among Hugh McCauley's favorite projects and notable achievements were the 1976 restoration of Frank Furness' Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts building with Day and Zimmerman; the multi-year Historic American Buildings Survey of Cape May, NJ, resulting in *The Cape May Handbook* (with Pitts, Fish, and Vaux); the Philadelphia Waterworks survey for the *Historic American Engineering Record*; the survey of the Coach Barn at Kykuit, John D. Rockefeller's estate at Pocantico Hills, NY; and the multi-year restoration of the Hereford Inlet Light House in North Wildwood, NJ. McCauley was also active in early preservation advocacy efforts in Philadelphia and co-authored *Historic Rittenhouse* (with Burke, Sperr, and Vaux).

New buildings and complexes designed by Hugh McCauley while a partner in United Architects include the Poverty Beach houses and Philadelphia Beach condominiums in Cape May, NJ, as well as a number of shopping centers and medical office buildings.

Hugh McCauley is survived by his wife, Trina Vaux, daughter, Hannah, and son, George, also sisters-in-law, Molly Vaux and Marilyn McCauley and brother-in-law, Walter Nagel. A brother, John, and sister, Joyce Nagel, died

earlier.

Contributions in his name may be made to the Mario Romanach Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania

<https://giving.aws.cloud.upenn.edu/fund?program=GFA&fund=042159>

Or the Navy Seabee Foundation, PO Box 657, Gulfport, MS 39502,
info@seabee.org.

Tribute Wall

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“ Teresa H. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hugh J. McCauley.

Teresa H. - September 05, 2025 at 08:37 PM

KC

“ Deepest sympathies to Trina, Hannah and George on the loss of your dear husband and father. Hugh was my first cousin, and although there are many memories, especially related to him after his return from Vietnam and the house near the bay in North Wildwood, but specifically I lived in Rome NY for years, and when Hugh found out, he shared with me that he had worked on the restoration of a Revolutionary War fort there, Ft. Stanwix, which is a big tourist and historical attraction in Rome. I told everyone I encountered about my cousin working on that historical dig and restoration, after I learned of this. I was very proud to share that!

Karen Clay

Karen Clay - August 29, 2025 at 10:53 AM