



Peter L. Svanda

July 18, 1934 - September 15, 2019

Peter L. Svanda was born on July 18, 1934 in Easton, CT, and passed away peacefully surrounded by family on September 15, 2019. His life was enriched in his early years once his grandmother introduced the young 13-year-old to Helen Keller, in Westport, CT. He started working for Ms. Keller performing yard work and doing odd jobs around her 5-acre property. At age sixteen he earned his driver's license and thus began his Saturday afternoon ritual of driving Ms. Keller and Polly Thompson, her caregiver, to the movies.

Helen Keller and Peter got along famously because they were mutually inquisitive. She wanted to learn about him; he wanted to understand her life. Upon high school graduation she offered Peter her car to purchase so that he could drive to and from his first job at Sikorsky Helicopter Company. While at Sikorsky, Peter decided to enlist in the Army. He served and was honorably discharged as a Sergeant in the summer of 1955. He then entered Miami University of Ohio where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Psychology.

While in college Peter met, courted and married Jeralyn (Jeri) Thurman in 1957. Upon graduation, Peter joined Rohm and Haas Company where he enjoyed a career that spanned 32 years. Throughout the early years, Peter and Jeri moved with their children to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dayton, and Cleveland relocating for the last time to Rohm and Haas headquarters in the Philadelphia region in 1969. In 1974 Peter was promoted to Corporate

Advertising Director, and then in the early 1980's Worldwide Advertising Director. After retirement, Peter and Jeri were still restless and opened a small hardware store on 3rd and Chestnut in Philadelphia, aptly named Olde City Hardware. They sold the business in 2010.

In 1980 Peter and Jeri moved from Devon, PA to the Queen Village neighborhood of Philadelphia, so they could be immersed in the city they loved. They remained in Queen Village until moving to Waverly Heights in Gladwyne in 2012. Peter and Jeri spent most summers at their house in Stone Harbor, NJ with their family dog, always a Boxer.

During his career Peter was very involved in many professional and charitable organizations. Professionally, Peter was active in numerous Industry and Advertising organizations culminating with his placement in the Business Professional Association Hall of Fame. Peter's love for Philadelphia was characterized by his tireless involvement in many diverse organizations. He was a director at The Daemion House in Devon, PA; the Poor Richard Club, Philadelphia. With a passion for the arts, Peter was on the Board of Directors of the Wilma Theater, was President of the Opera Guild of Opera Philadelphia, and he was on the Board of Directors of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia.

Peter is survived by his wife of 62 years Jeralyn (Thurman); his children Gregory, Wendi (Charlie) and Allison (Kenneth); his grandchildren Michael, Stephen, Collin, Samuel, Ashley and Kolton.

Services will be held at 1:00 pm on Saturday October 19th at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 226 Righters Mill Road, Gladwyne, PA 19035.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to either:

Opera Philadelphia, Academy House, 1420 Locust Street, Philadelphia PA 19120 www.operaphila.org/support or Wilma Theater, 265 S Broad St,

Philadelphia, PA 19107 www.wilmatheater.org/giving

Cemetery Details

Adjoining Churchyard

Previous Events

Memorial Service

OCT **19**. 1:00 PM (ET)

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church
226 Righters Mill Road
Gladwyne, PA 19035

Tribute Wall



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Peter L. Svanda.



October 11, 2019 at 09:42 PM



“ Dear Jeri I just read Peters obituary and wanted to share a memory. All of our memories together were very memorable . I will never forget the fence painting party and all of our Fourth of July parties in Stone Harbor. My brother Ken was a mess and always had to send him to bed. Peter would just laugh and laugh at him. There are so many memories I couldn't begin to site. We all miss Peter and also you Jeri. Our times together in Stone Harbor were some of the best times of my life. May you find solace knowing Peter is at peace. I love you and God bless. Dianne

Dianne Fischer - October 09, 2019 at 05:31 PM



“ My dear friend, remembering how you & Jeri organized my very 1st Campaign to run for Council in Stone Harbor
Without you I would not have had my 9 years on Council
I remember u riding in ur convertible with ur rambunctious dog!
You are at peace now
Prayers & Condolences to Jeri & all your family



Joan Kramar

Joan Kramar - September 25, 2019 at 01:57 PM

SF

“ I remember Pete well. He was a colorful character, and always a true professional. I had dealings with him in Home Office in my role in Human Resources. I never knew his connection to Helen Keller. Our late son was profoundly deaf, and reading about Pete's past brought back many good memories. He lived his life as a real Renaissance man. May God bring Pete safely home, and may His love embrace all who love Pete. God's blessings, Steve & MarySandra Foster, Friendswood, Texas

Steve Foster - September 20, 2019 at 07:12 PM

DB

I worked, under the direction of him, in the home office, advertising department, for approximately 10 years. Send condolences to the family. May he rest in peace. Sorrowfully yours, Deborah Burton

Deborah Burton - September 20, 2019 at 08:38 PM

LS

*I worked in the advertising department with Mr Svanda. He was our director we had so much fun! I have nothing but great memories with him! He made my days so easy at work!!
Sending my deepest condolences!*

Levine suggs - September 21, 2019 at 05:46 PM

JG

I worked for Pete Svanda in the advertsing dept at Rohm and Haas for several years. Pete was the director of advertising. I remember him having an effervescent personality and a great sense of humor! He was a great manager and really treated everyone with respect and kindness. Pete always had a smile, a spark of gleam in his eyes. Deepest condolences to all family and friends. May he rest in peace.

Janet Gaspari - October 08, 2019 at 10:46 PM



“ *Serene Reflections Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Peter L. Svanda.



September 20, 2019 at 01:29 PM