



David Arthur Harnett

October 2, 1940 - June 1, 2023

David Arthur Harnett was born in Washington, DC October 2, 1940. His father, Arthur John Harnett had emigrated from England in 1914, married soon thereafter and made a career as a hotel administrator. At the time of David's birth to his second wife, Anne Leonard of New York, Arthur Harnett had distinguished himself as manager of the Westchester Apartments on Wisconsin Ave as well as the Mayflower Hotel on Connecticut Ave and later in the 1950s would serve in that capacity at manager of the Hotel 2400 on 16th street.

David went to school at St. Anselm's Priory, later the Abbey School, where he excelled in Priory Players and other extracurricular activities. He went on to the Honors Program at Georgetown University, where he majored in History and served on the editorial board of *The Hoya*, the school's newspaper. He was elected to *Who's Who* on the basis of his grades and extracurricular work. He went on to Harvard University under his mentor, Stuart Hughes, and developed a thesis on the Philosopher Nicolai Berdyaev. During the summer months he worked at Dumbarton Oaks and for the Peace Corps (Turkey II) directed by an influential Georgetown faculty member, Hisham Sharabi. During that time he helped organize Peace Corps candidates and Jesuits scholastics to participate in MLK's March on Washington and honed his Civil Rights credentials for his whole life.

After his graduate study and PhD, he served Harvard as Secretary of the Faculty for many years. Subsequently he served as academic dean at Nova University in Florida, at Rosemont in Pennsylvania, at Bradford College in Massachusetts, at Fairfield University in Connecticut and eventually in California at San Francisco University. He was at that latter university during California's earthquake in 1982 and calmed many students who were alarmed about returning to their dorms. During these years he was an active promoter and Board Member of the International Baccalaureate, a program which has now spread to American public high schools and which enhances academic achievement and draws upon his humanistic training at St. Anselm's in Washington DC. At all the institutions where he administered, he continued to teach Middle East History, a subset of his Harvard work.

In retirement, David has settled in Philadelphia and especially into the Wallace Street neighborhood, where his dog walking routines segued into an informal organization of neighborhood leaf raking and snow removal, to the great advantage of all his neighbors. When there is a block party, he is the ever-present goto person and at one of them, was deemed in poetry to be the “Mayor of Wallace Street.” In one unfortunate, domestic accident, he was literally saved by his medical alert button and the intervention of wonderful neighbors, especially John Wilson, Louise Ward, Holly Harrity and Stephanie Forden. A more recent diagnosis of Parkinson’s Disease has only strengthened his resolve to remain on Wallace Street, surrounded by a community of supporters he loves and respects. His 1840 townhouse is not really susceptible of a person with his illness but via adaptations and the assistance of Melodia Reid, David persevered ingeniously and, sustained the pattern of a life well lived, with determination and brio. He died June 1, 2023 age 82 in Philadelphia. His nimbus can be found at Jack’s Firehouse, around the corner from his house and a center of his activity: Mick Houston, (David’s executor) Jack’s Firehouse, 2130 Fairmount Avenue, Philadelphia Pa.

Tribute Wall

SA

“ There's an error in the obituary. It says he worked at San Francisco University. No he was the Dean of the College of arts and sciences at the University of San Francisco. The private Jesuit university. He was an amazing man. The students liked him. He had a dog and students would come into the office and walk his dog, I was a secretary and ran the front counter in that office 82 to 1986. I had always wondered what happened to him and yesterday I had a dream that I was at a party with a lady friend from high school and it was at a fancy house and I saw David Harnett there as he was young The way I remember him back in the 80s always wearing a suit extremely articulate and even funny sometimes I woke up thinking what happened to Dean Harnett - I googled him. and I found that he passed away last year. I just wanted to share the memory and say that , it was no short stint at USF when he was the Dean. He was there for several years and he was appreciated and he was a good man - his obituary is so long and he's done so many things that there's so many parts that were left out, but I do remember him with his big dog named, Ben that everyone liked and loved. May he rest in peace.

Sylvia Aguirre - April 21, 2024 at 04:08 AM

SA

“ Sylvia Aguirre lit a candle in memory of David Arthur Harnett



Sylvia Aguirre - April 21, 2024 at 03:53 AM