



## Carlisle W. Fiers Jr.

September 29, 1928 - October 19, 2022

Carlisle Worthington Fiers, Jr. passed peacefully on October 19, 2022, at 94 years old while surrounded by his beloved family at his home in The Landings of Sarasota. He was born on September 29, 1928, to Carlisle Worthington Fiers, Sr. and Mary Guidos Fiers, in East Orange, N. J.

Throughout his life, Carl loved people and people loved him. His generosity was a thread that weaved through his entire life, whether it was giving a large tip to a restaurant server or helping a stranger in an accident. He always found common ground between people he met, converting strangers into friends in a flash. Carl mastered the “gift of gab,” as he put it. His desire to make people smile and feel welcomed was evident, even into his final weeks from his hospital bed with his nurses and doctors. He loved to tell jokes and talk about the myriad of experiences he’d had throughout his long life: growing up in 1930s New Jersey after The Great Depression; working as a teenaged golf caddy in East Orange, NJ and a busboy on the Jersey Shore in 1940s WWII era; remembering his Navy days during the Korean War in the 1950s; and his real estate ventures in Florida and Pennsylvania spanning from the 1950s through the 2010s.

Voted “Most Popular” by his Senior Class, Carl was also Class Vice-President and a 4-Letterman at Summit High School (football, track and field, basketball, and the fire committee). Nicknamed “Inky” for his jet black hair and cobalt blue

eyes, his senior class tagline was “Sing away sorrows, cast away cares,” a philosophy that he continued throughout his life. He studied Economics at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School, enlisting in the Navy to pay his tuition. After graduation, he received his commission and served on the destroyers, Ingraham and Wren, in antisubmarine warfare during the Korean War. He left with the rank of Lieutenant, JG after 6 years. He used to say that, had he accepted his next promotion instead of leaving the service, he would have become the youngest Full Lieutenant in the Navy. Joining the Navy was the second best decision he ever made, he often declared, next to marrying his wife of 50 years, Diane.

After his military service and a brief career in life insurance sales, he began his lifelong career in real estate in the 1950s. In the summers, he joined the team of his childhood pal and father, Logan and Bob Steele, to sell vacation homes in Scenic Lakes, New Jersey. Having discovered Florida in his Navy days, Carl spent his winters in Englewood, Florida where he had purchased several beachfront cottages known then as Sutton’s Beach Apartments. Carl invited his parents to leave the cold winters of New Jersey to join him and help manage the rentals. Here he began combining his love of family with his passion for real estate.

Carl’s mother, Mary, had heard through one of her tenants - Walter Dreher - that a beautiful 300-acre lake and the land around it nestled in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania was for sale. Carl and his partners, the Steeles, negotiated with the owners and the heirs to buy the land and all the necessary rights for development. In 1965, they established this property as the vacation home communities of Lake Naomi and Timber Trails, where Carl continued to develop and sell properties for the next five decades.

While Carl split his time between the Poconos and Englewood, in the 1960s, he and his first wife, Kay, started their family with the births of their daughters,

Suzanne and Bethany. In the 1970s, Carl married his second wife, Diane, with whom he had his third and fourth children, Jennifer and Worth. With Diane's son from her previous marriage, David, Carl would always say he had five children and would refer to his family as "blended". As David noted, Carl welcomed him and even his own biological father's mother, Eileen, into his life with open arms.

The next 50 years found Carl and Diane spending summers in The Poconos and winters in Florida developing and selling commercial and residential real estate. Some of Carl's development projects in Florida include the very first condominium complex in Charlotte County - Admiralty Villas - as well as collaborations with Bill Beer and Leonard Corcoran on some of the earliest condominiums on Venice Island. These include Aldea Mar, Quarterdeck, Bahia Vista Club, Jetty Villas and MacArthur Beach & Racquet Club. In the early 1970s, Carl also brokered the 25,000 acres in Englewood owned by the Vanderbilts, now known as Rotonda and Cape Haze. Although Carl joined several brokerages throughout the 1980s and 1990s, he was most proud of the partnership he started with Diane, and their son, Carlisle Worthington Fiers III (aka Worth). They eventually founded the family brokerage Worthington Property Group, Inc. in 2006 which continues to this day.

As an all-round athlete, Carl loved playing tennis, pool, baseball, football, golf, cards and going fishing and swimming. He loved showing his children and grandchildren how to shoot pool, throw a baseball, punt a football, drive a golf ball, hook a fish, swim freestyle, and play blackjack and gin rummy. Carl relished taking his children out on fishing trips from small excursions into Lemon Bay with his first child, Suzanne, to deep-sea fishing in the Gulf of Mexico with his youngest child, Worth. Most Sundays, he would serve his homegrown grapefruits and oranges from the backyard and his homemade banana blueberry pancakes for his children before taking them out on

Sarasota Bay, fishing for anything he could cook up for the family dinner. Carl passed the captain's hat on to his son, Worth, who eventually became the boat owner, pilot and fisherman of the family as Carl got older.

Of all his sports, Carl was most passionate about playing tennis. He shared this passion with his daughter, Jennifer, who went on to have a successful competitive tennis and coaching career with his guidance and unwavering support. During the years spanning the 1980s to the 2010s, Carl and Jennifer competed together almost every summer in the Lake Naomi Tennis Club's Open Mixed Doubles Championships, even after Carl had a massive stroke, and earned the title many times. During the winter months of those years, he was a fixture at The Field Club, the Bath & Racquet Club, and Serendipity's (now Sarasota Sports Club) tennis courts.

Carl joined The Landings Racquet Club in 2018 where he played tennis with other nonagenarians and worked out in the gym. He loved keeping a workout routine, especially when weakened by his hospital stays, which inspired his daughter, Bethany, to study physical therapy as a career. Even into Carl's final months, he would be seen working out at the gym or hitting tennis balls at The Landings. Tennis and fitness, in general, gave Carl his social outlet and a way to prove his youth no matter how old he was.

Additionally, as a lover of music, Carl played his favorite tunes from the 1930s, '40s and '50s on the piano, especially the song "Diane" for his beloved wife and muse. His skills were apparent with his improvisational renditions of boogie-woogie greats to sentimental sing-alongs. All of his children and grandchildren would dance as he played, and he would dance with them as he let the stereo play his big band favorites. Even when he was unable to leave his bed, he played his keyboard in his lap and was soothed by the music he always loved.

Using some of his favorite phrases, Carl was known as a “no bullshit” businessman, “Clever Carl” on the tennis court, “Fearless Fiers” in all of his pursuits, and always knew when to “look the old bulldog in the face.” But above all, he was a loving, positive, and supportive family man encouraging all five of his children to achieve their goals: Suzanne’s master’s degree from FSU and career working with the visually impaired; Bethany’s bachelor’s degree from Keiser University and career as a physical therapy assistant; David’s architecture degree from UF and careers in architecture, construction, and agriculture education with Sarasota County Schools; Jennifer’s doctoral degree in anthropology from UF and careers as an academic, tennis player and coach; and Worth’s real estate career and entrepreneurial spirit to follow in Carl’s footsteps and carry on the family business.

Carl was truly one of a kind with a zest for life that cannot be fit into one lifetime. On his very last day from his bed, with his grip as strong as ever, he pitched his last throw and hit his last forehand volley to his children; evidence that he never wanted to stop playing. His passions and philosophy to live life to the fullest will surely be passed on to his five grandchildren and great-granddaughter.

His memory will live on through his surviving family: wife, Diane Fiers; daughters, Suzanne Martin, Beth McCord (Jeff McCord), Jennifer Fiers (Daniel Flath); sons, Carlisle Worthington Fiers, III aka Worth (Ebony Fiers), David Gwatney (Laura Gwatney); grandchildren, Lauren Hulihan, Ayla Gwatney, Eryn Gwatney, Maximillian Fiers-Flath, Margaux Fiers-Flath; great-granddaughter, Alannah Hulihan; brother, Thomas Fiers (Rosemary Fiers); and nieces, Marilynn Putriment (John Putriment) and Christy Fiers.

Services are open to the public and will be at Toale Brothers Funeral Home on October 31, 2022, at 10:00 am located on 40 N. Orange Ave., Sarasota, FL 34236.

Carl will be buried with military honors by the United States Navy at the Sarasota National Cemetery at 1:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Wounded Warriors or a veteran's charity of your choice.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Carlisle W. Fiers Jr..* ”



---

October 27, 2022 at 05:41 PM