



T. David Stapleton, Jr.

January 30, 1943 - May 15, 2020

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It is with profound sadness that we announce the death of our dear father and wonderful husband, T. David Stapleton, Jr. David died peacefully in his sleep, May 15, 2020, holding his wife's hand and surrounded by his children – in person and by telephone.

David was a man of great intellect and integrity who was blessed with an abundance of humor and selflessness. David spent his early years tormenting his teachers with an insatiable Irish desire to socialize with those around him. The classroom was his stage; his peers, the audience. David always was ready with a quick joke or long story – or both – to captivate an audience. He took great pride in his Irish story-telling skills and relished making as many people as possible laugh and smile throughout the day.

David and his wife, Helene (Karpinski), made the perfect pair. David said he laid eyes on his beloved in first grade and never lost sight. Married for nearly 54 years, the two committed themselves to making Auburn, NY, a better place to live and work. David practiced law for more than 50 years – first with his father-in-law, John J. Karpinski, and then with his brother-in-law, John A. Karpinski. David served Cayuga County as an Assistant District Attorney, and then focused on Estates and Trusts for many years. David's legal acumen earned him admission to argue before the Supreme Court of the United States of America. His true legal passion emerged in the second half of his career when he focused on Elder Law and became the first attorney in the Cayuga County area to do so. David's dedication and determination to care for the elderly and those with special needs quickly earned him peer recognition. David was asked to serve on the Executive Committee of the Elder Law Section of the New York State Bar Association. He served in numerous capacities, including as Chair ("Antique" Chair, as he jokingly referred to himself) of the 3,000-member Section where he continued to advocate for the elderly and those with special needs. He worked tirelessly lobbying lawmakers and changing New York State law while sharing best practices in the field. For his efforts and expertise in Elder Law, David received numerous awards, including Best Lawyer and Super Lawyer.

David also volunteered his time to ensure that the elderly in Cayuga County knew best how to protect themselves and their life's savings.

Beyond family, David's love of his hometown of Auburn, NY, came second. Following his graduation from Georgetown University with a Bachelor's Degree, and then a law degree from The Columbus School of Law at The Catholic University of America, both in Washington, D.C., David and Helene returned home in the mid-1960s to start a family and raise their children in a place they always called home. David was proud of his myriad contributions to Auburn, including, but not limited to, his Chair of the United Way Campaign for two consecutive years. He worked diligently to raise more than \$1 million for the county during each campaign. David served on numerous Boards throughout Onondaga and Cayuga Counties. In addition to the United Way, he served on the Boards of OnBank, M&T Bank, Auburn Memorial Hospital, and Cayuga Community College Foundation Board, as well as the Board of Blessed Trinity School (St. Joseph's) as pro bono legal counsel for 25 years. When David was Chairman of the Cayuga County Bar Association in the 1980s, he instituted a mentoring program to help at-risk middle school students in the community.

Finally, David served his alma maters with distinction for decades. He proudly carried on his family's legacy of attending Georgetown University (College 1964). He also interviewed prospective students in the Central New York area for Georgetown University admissions, and actively raised funds for a Stapleton family scholarship established to help Central New York students attend the university.

David and Helene raised three children from their home on Teller Avenue: Shannon (Armando Galindo, Jr. – now deceased), Meghan (Eric Steenburgh), and T. David Stapleton III. David spent his children's formative years teaching them the fine art of backyard games while coaching his son David's CYO basketball games and driving his daughters to weekly harp commitments. David took great pride in helping his girls carry on his family's fourthgeneration tradition of playing the harp as he continued his tradition of transporting the instrument for yet another generation.

David and Helene traveled the world together and reveled in all the opportunities that presented. One of David's favorite stories centered around a gentleman he met and befriended in a DC airport three months following the September 11th attacks. With great enthusiasm, David instantly accepted an invitation for him and Helene to spend time in the man's home in Kenya. It seemed that wherever they went, their dreams came true because of their adventurous spirit and love for the world's peoples and cultures.

David was a founding member of the “Saturday Morning Breakfast Club” at Lewis Restaurant in Auburn, NY. For more than four decades he and many of his dear friends gathered every week over pancakes and oatmeal, debating the most pressing issues of the day.

Golf was a passion of David’s as well. “Nine [holes] before 9 [am]” was his motto as he and his buddies / cousins, Ray and Mike Cuddy, trash talked and traded nickels and dimes in the early-morning mist hanging over the holes of Auburn Country Club (now Lakeview). David was preceded in death by these two very dear friends.

Our hearts are heavy during his difficult time. David’s faith carries us forward as well as his ever-present insistence that he lived a great, blessed life. The world has lost a bright star, but we are confident we see him shining from Heaven. Father Louis Vasile, another dear friend of Helene and David’s dating back to their Mt. Carmel High School days, will celebrate a Mass in David’s memory, in Auburn, NY, as soon as it is safe to do so.

David was preceded in death by his parents, Dr. Thomas D. Stapleton and Wilhelmina (Billie) Meagher, as well as his beloved Aunts Anne and Isabel Stapleton, and Helen Demming. He also was preceded in death by son-in-law, Armando Galindo, Jr., and sister-in-law, Kathi Stapleton.

David is survived by his loving wife of nearly 54 years, Helene, and three children: Shannon, Meghan & Eric, and T. David III, as well as four doting grandchildren with whom he loved to play tag, hide and seek and golf: Isabella Helene (12), Meigan Ning Ji (10), Mia Patricia (9) and Michael Thomas (8) Steenburgh. He also is survived by his adoring sisters, Sheila Stapleton (Vince Dean) and Miriam (Kevin) Moynihan, and younger brother, J. William Stapleton; as well as his nieces: Christie (Sean) Montgomery, Trish (Peter) Skoglund, and Caragh (Chris) Lengle and nephew Brendan (Leigh) Moynihan and all their children.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating in David’s name to the T. David & Helene (Karpinski) Stapleton, Jr. Cayuga Community College scholarship fund.