



Daniel George Brophy

October 24, 1940 - March 15, 2022

What does one write about a man who spent his whole life in service and friendship to family, neighbors, coworkers, comrades, and even those for whom he worked? To fully appreciate him is to know his history; someone who was tough on himself but had a great self-deprecating sense of humor, never judged, and rarely had a harsh word to say about anyone.

Daniel George Brophy was born October 24, 1940, in New York City. Dan was the oldest of three boys: himself, Joe, and Jim. His parents Daniel Francis Brophy, and Veronica Cecelia Brophy (nee Brown) were distinguished medical professionals and academics in New York City. Dan took pride in and respected them and their many accomplishments which inspired his own work ethic. The family eventually relocated to Westport, Connecticut where the “Brophy Boys” soon established a reputation of being dominant athletes in little league baseball, soccer, and especially swimming. All three of them would go on to earn athletic scholarships in swimming to their respective universities. Dan cherished his life in Westport. Spending summers pulling duty as a lifeguard, working as a caddy at Longshore Country Club, swim meets at the YMCA, school days at Staples High School, and associations with friends and neighbors were some of the happiest memories from his youth. Years later there wasn’t a corner on the Post Road, nor stretch of Compo Beach, or nearby field that didn’t hold some memory that he was all too eager to share... repeatedly... with anyone who would listen.

Dan attended the University of Denver in Colorado, where he established himself as an integral member of their swimming team. He would continue to remain active and supportive of his alma mater all his life. There was absolutely no living with him when Denver won the national championship in Ice Hockey as recently as 2017. You’d think that he had personally been out there on the ice scoring the winning goal. Even so, he earned a degree in Hospitality Management, which would be the cornerstone of his career for the remainder of his professional life.

Dan accepted a commission as an Officer in the United States Navy and, after graduating officer candidate school at the top of his class, he was assigned to Mayport Navy Base in Jacksonville, Florida where he was responsible for running the Officers’ Club. On May 28th, a recently retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Donald Chinnock took his daughter

Merrie Elizabeth (Bets) to the club to celebrate her birthday. While sitting at the bar waiting for their table and growing increasingly annoyed at the boring golf tournament being shown on the TV, Don Chinnock would ask the bartender questions about various club issues. The bartender would then walk down to the end of the bar to relay the question to the young Naval Officer who was watching the golf game. The officer would answer the question for the bartender who would then relay that back to the Chinnocks. Impressed and curious about this young Ensign who knew so much about the club goings on, the Chinnocks introduced themselves to him. And that was where Dan met Bets who would go on to be the love of his life.

Dan and Bets were married in November of 1964 and would establish themselves as a vital part of the Mayport social scene. In 1965, Dan's world changed forever with the birth of his first child, Lisa Joayne. Becoming a father gave him an outlet for love, pride, and affection that stayed with him for the rest of his life. Within weeks after the birth of his second child, Daniel Donald, the young family moved to Rota, Spain where he assumed duties as the club manager as well as additional duties in communications security, handling classified transmissions being sent to and from the ongoing military operations in Vietnam. Dan, Bets, and their two young children thrived in Spain and, as usual, he developed friendships with coworkers and neighbors that he would think of fondly always. In 1970, Dan and family moved to New York City where he had been assigned to take over as the club manager at the prestigious Brooklyn Navy Yard... and two liquor stores (as he liked to remind everyone). Once again, Dan's expertise and professionalism established him as an invaluable element of that club, which hosted high level social events that were key to the US Navy in its support of diplomatic efforts in conjunction with the United Nations. Dan felt such pride and honor in his humble role, that in 1972 he decided to reserve his commission as a Navy Officer in order to continue on as the manager of the club and transitioned his position to that of a US Government employee. No longer serving as a member of the active military, Dan moved his family from base housing to Staten Island where they would establish friendships that would last through the rest of their lives.

Eventually, Dan and family moved to his childhood home in Westport, Connecticut. Not long after, Dan and Bets welcomed their third child Colleen Kimball. He really enjoyed being back in his hometown and was thrilled that his children were attending schools, church, and activities at the YMCA that he had attended in his youth. He was closer to the rest of his family and was able to enjoy many family get-togethers and cans of Budweiser with his brothers at various holidays and special occasions. Life is funny sometimes, though, and Dan and Bets went their separate ways.

Dan commuted to the Brooklyn Navy Yard daily via Metro North and enjoyed many evenings in the bar car playing cards and establishing enduring friendships. Several of whom shared Dan's passion and talent for singing and became members of the

prestigious University Glee Club of NYC together. Dan eventually left his position at the Brooklyn Navy Yard to pursue positions as general manager at various city and country clubs throughout the New York City metropolitan area and continued to expand his circle of friends through his membership and increasing leadership roles in the New York Chapter of the Club Managers Association. It was around this time that Dan met and married Christine Cali. They made a home in Fairfield, Connecticut and soon after welcomed his fourth child, Andrew Daniel.

In 1988 Dan took on a new position as the general manager of Birchwood Country Club. So proud of this modest club in Westport, he threw his heart and soul into making it the best home away from home for all its members. The feasts, parties, and spreads that he oversaw along with his friendly and engaging relationship with his staff served to make it one of the best small-scale private clubs in the northeast. To anyone who would listen, he would brag that his club was ranked in the top ten of Golf Digest's list of nine-hole golf courses in America. Dan continued to remain active in the Connecticut Chapter of the Club Managers Association and eventually served as its president. He and his fellow members of "AAA" (not what you think it means) supported each other and remained friends throughout their careers as club managers.

Sadly, Dan and Christine parted ways and he decided to retire from Birchwood not long after to embrace a new passion; that of being a doting grandfather and supportive dad to all his children. He moved to Florida, where two of his children and all of his grandchildren were living. His five grandchildren: Saylor, William, Cali, Cillian, and Theodore brought joy to his heart any time he saw them, talked about, or even thought of them. Dan and Bets also, matured and more experienced, found their way back to one another and remained together until Bets' passing 5 years ago.

In his final years, he took up wood working, which proved to be an unrealized talent of his. One of his last projects, a doll house for his granddaughter was a masterpiece. Dan enjoyed taking nature walks and showed that he had a true eye for its beauty with some amazing photography. He enjoyed raising vegetables in a small backyard garden and watching the various critters that would come to eat them because he forgot to pick them when they were ripe. He never met a gadget he didn't like and could always be seen tinkering with some new electronic gizmo until he would break it and had to go buy another one. A prankster at heart, Dan was always up for a good practical joke. Having two younger brothers trained him well and he could give as well as he could get. Whether it was showing up in a silly outfit or locking the car windows shut after passing gas, he always was looking for an opportunity to laugh. However, it was never at the expense of anyone's pride or self-esteem. He had an odd fascination with showtunes and an impressive collection of musical soundtracks from many Broadway plays; none of which he could sell to anyone at any price at his yard sale.

Dan was loyal almost to a fault. In his youth, when his beloved Brooklyn Dodgers moved

to Los Angeles, he remained a diehard fan for the rest of his life despite there being many other hometown teams to root for. It was this character of loyalty that illustrates how he would gladly travel to see any one of his children, Bets, his niece and nephews (Chris, Corinne, and Sean) or to visit old friends, attend reunions, or personally accept accolades for his role in the 2017 NCAA National Championship for the University of Denver Hockey Team ;).

His kids used to tease him because they felt that he used the word "friend" too loosely. If Dan met someone once, they were referred to as "friend" - even if he would never again see them in his life. But it became apparent to them that he actually meant it. To him, they were friends. And Dan had a very broad circle of friends: neighbors became cherished lifelong friends, along with the people he used to play cards with on his commute, the guys in his Westport softball league, the folks at Port 5 in Fairfield where he liked to reminisce about his Navy days, the club members he joyfully worked with and for every day, the good people at Winner's Circle in Lakeland, Florida, where he enjoyed trivia challenges. He stayed in touch with people from his high school and college days and even his children's friends became his friends. The people he enjoyed spending time with the most, however were his family. He considered his younger brothers, Joe and Jim who preceded him in death, to be his best friends and then later, Bets, whom he adored, and his four children and their spouses, Lisa, Dan, Kim (Bill), and Andy (Meagan) became the people with whom he most enjoyed spending a day.

Daniel George Brophy passed away on March 15, 2022, in Gainesville, Florida. He was surrounded by his children while one of his favorite things, Turner Classic Movies was playing on the television. They spent those final moments expressing love, laughter, and joy at having been with the finest person they have ever known.

A celebration of this remarkable life is being planned for some time later when everyone that was touched by him will be able to attend. In the meantime, the family would ask that you remember him through a gift to your local YMCA, which had such an impact on his formative years.

A memorial service is planned for Saturday, November 26, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. with more details to follow.

Tribute Wall



“ I have many fond memories of our 22 year marriage and raising our child Andy together, Blessings as you spend eternity with our Lord.

Christine Cali - April 02 at 07:35 PM