



Peter H. Sprague Sr.

August 5, 1931 - January 24, 2025

Peter Hale Sprague, Sr., 93, of Asheville, NC, passed away on January 24, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. He made it to the 24th, a special day for his late wife and family. Affectionately known as “Pop” or “Peter Rabbit,” Peter will be remembered for his warm heart, generous hospitality and natural gift of conversation. His life was often centered around the table, where he shared countless meals and cherished memories with those he loved.

Born in Bryn Mawr, PA, on August 5, 1931, he was the youngest child of John Frederick Sprague, Jr. and Norma Stewart Freeman Sprague. He was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Mary Ida Brown Sprague, and his brother, John “Jack” Frederick Sprague III.

Peter attended Friends School, Wilmington, DE; Montclair Academy, Montclair, NJ; and The Haverford School, Haverford, PA (Class of 1949 & 1950). Peter’s time at The Haverford School was marked by some of his fondest childhood memories. It was there that he forged lifelong friendships, excelled in sports, captaining the basketball team and playing tennis and football—and enjoyed the camaraderie of his teammates. After the passing of his father, Peter returned to Haverford for a post-graduate year, where he once again led the basketball team as Captain. Over the years, Peter made a point of returning to Haverford for milestone reunions, on a few occasions with children and grandchildren in tow. He stayed deeply connected to the school

and the bonds he had formed with his classmates.

Peter began his collegiate years at Princeton University where he played on the freshman basketball team. He soon transferred to UNC-Chapel Hill and graduated in 1955 with a degree in Economics. While at UNC, under the leadership and fatherly influence of basketball coach Frank McGuire, he became manager of the men's basketball team and delighted in the opportunity to play in a few games. He also worked part-time at the Carolina Inn, served as President of the Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternity, and was a member of the Order of Gimghoul. Most notably, Chapel Hill is where Peter met Mary Ida, his future bride, on a blind date. They went on to share two fulfilled years together – attending dances, basketball games, and playing tennis. The two often returned to Chapel Hill for reunions and alumni luncheons.

Peter and Mary Ida were married on November 24, 1956, and went on to spend two memorable years in Tokyo, Japan, where Peter served in the Army CIC. During their time there, they made lifelong friends with Japanese and American families. After returning to the US, they lived briefly in Bryn Mawr, PA before settling in Asheville, Mary Ida's hometown, where they built a life together and raised five children.

Peter committed his life to his family, church, work, and community. He fostered a close-knit and supportive home and encouraged and uplifted his loved ones in all their endeavors. Peter found joy in sports, music, the camaraderie of mealtime, and in keeping a tidy yard – passions he shared with those around him. He taught his children to shoot hoops and play tennis, danced to swing music with Mary Ida in the living room, amused his children with the camel walk dance move as they doubled over with laughter, and had all the neighborhood kids over for leaf-raking projects. Peter and Mary Ida loved spending time at home, keeping an "open house" with a constantly

revolving door, where family and friends of all ages were always welcome.

Peter spent most of his career at Three Mountaineers, Inc., becoming General Manager and then President. After 20 years with the company, he recognized the rapidly changing business world and, eager to stay “up to speed,” earned an MBA from Western Carolina University in 1978. His low-key, soft-spoken leadership style, combined with his commitment to integrity, quality, and a touch of fun, shaped both his work ethic and his relationships. He took great satisfaction in saying, “Three Mountaineers was a good place to work.”

Peter instilled in his children the values of generosity and service, leading by example through his deep commitment to his community. He dedicated countless hours to organizations such as the United Way, the Boy Scouts, the Heart Fund, Asheville City Schools, and Grace Episcopal Church – often bringing his children along to help. At Grace Church, he served on the Vestry as Junior Warden, Senior Warden, and Campaign Chairman of the Committee of 1000. He also enjoyed the church’s Country Store, showing up yearly in the Three Mountaineers’ Ragtop truck full of ponderosa pine kindling.

In his later years, Peter found joy in driving around town, reminiscing about old memories, and staying connected with neighbors and friends. Peter’s mind remained sharp as a tack, and his natural gift for conversation never faded. As the central hub of his large, 20+ member immediate family, he effortlessly and remarkably kept track of everyone’s news and whereabouts and shared these updates across the family to keep everyone connected. In his final days, he continued to chat on the phone with family and dear friends, always making sure everyone was doing okay.

Peter is survived by his five children Peter H. Sprague, Jr. (Leslee) of Asheville, Mary Stewart Sprague Duffy (Scott) of Charlotte, Eleanor Sprague

Grady Jameson (Randy) of Asheville, David B. Sprague (Diane) of Boone, and Sallie Kate Sprague Winter (Paul) of Raleigh; his 14 grandchildren Allison, Morgan (Robert Martin) and Natalie Sprague; Genevieve Duffy; Monica, Myles, Shannon, and Claire Grady; Eleanor, Mary Louise, and David W. Sprague; and Thomas (Amber), Peter (Kristie), and David Winter; great-grandchildren, Lincoln and Lainey Winter, plus another on the way; and many nieces and nephews.

Our family is sincerely appreciative of the staff and residents of Brooks-Howell Home, Mission Hospital, and Asheville Pulmonology.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 2:00 pm on Saturday, February 8, 2025, at Grace Episcopal Church (Asheville).

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests remembrances be made to Grace Episcopal Church, 871 Merrimon Ave, Asheville, NC 28804, or The Haverford School (Basketball Program Fund), 450 Lancaster Ave, Haverford, PA 19041.

To access live stream:

<https://youtube.com/live/yoqP4m9XM54?feature=share>

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

FEB 8. 2:00 PM (ET)

Grace Episcopal Church
871 Merrimon Avenue
Asheville, NC 28804
graceparish@bellsouth.net
<http://graceepiscopalchurch.us/>

Tribute Wall

HW

“ We remember the breakfasts we enjoyed with Peter at McDonald's for many years and enjoyed his family members when they joined us. Our prayers are with you.... Bob Stepp and Helen Wright

Helen Wright - February 16, 2025 at 03:32 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Peter H. Sprague Sr..



February 07, 2025 at 05:50 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Peter H. Sprague Sr..

February 07, 2025 at 05:50 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Peter H. Sprague Sr..



February 06, 2025 at 03:55 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Peter H. Sprague Sr..

February 06, 2025 at 03:55 PM



“ To all the Peter Sprague family,
How do we express our feeling about Peter. He was one of Bill's special friends. We have so many special memories of our time with Peter and Mary Ida. They both had the ability of making everyone that spent time with them feel that you were the most important friend they had.
We are looking forward to heaven even more now, as we think of seeing them again. We love you all, Bill and Mary Dot Waddell

Bill Waddell - February 06, 2025 at 02:09 PM



“ Dear Family,

It was a pleasure to serve your Dad, Grandfather as Chaplain of Brooks Howell Home. I surely miss hearing his television blaring as I walk down the hall from my office to the front door. I miss his smile and I miss the meals we shared together. I am holding all of you close in prayer as I know you have a giant void right now. Grace Episcopal is a wonderful congregation and I am certain you are receiving wonderful pastoral care from them. Know that you can add me to your team of those who are surrounding you in your time of grief.

*Pastor Kelly Dotson
Chaplain, Brooks-Howell Home.*

Rev. Kelly Dotson - February 04, 2025 at 01:08 PM

JS

I was an employee of Three Mountaineers for 16 years and worked directly with Mr Peter H. Sprague, Sr. And others in the Office. He was the kindest man, always pleasant and never saying a harsh word to anyone. He always gave compliments for good work and the moral in the office was always high due to his excellent managerial skills. My condolences to his precious family. May God comfort and hold them close .

Janice Storey - February 21, 2025 at 03:37 PM

JS

Morale

Janice Storey - February 22, 2025 at 07:14 PM



“ *A grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Peter H. Sprague Sr..*

February 04, 2025 at 08:49 AM

CY

“ *I was so fortunate to spend much time with Pop as a welcomed guest into the Sprague family. Those many dinner parties at his gorgeous & inviting home were a highlight of my youth. I always felt at home and well taken care of in his presence. And when I would see Pop buzzing around Asheville in his van, it brought a wide smile to my face. What a guy. A pillar in the Sprague family that will never be forgotten.*

-Caleb Y.

Caleb Y - February 03, 2025 at 03:11 AM

RB

“ Peter

This is Ron Brown your high school history teacher at Asheville High. I wanted to say that I will certainly be thinking of you and your family during these difficult days!! Your Dad lived a wonderful Life that he was so proud of his family so just a word to say that we will certainly be thinking of you in these days!! God bless you and your family and we will know that your Dad is in heaven with no suffering or pain!!

Ron Brown - February 02, 2025 at 11:20 AM

NF

“ *Such a wonderful family "The Sprague's" have lost a great man! Our hearts and prayers are with Peter and his whole family.*

Nate & Brenda Fisher - February 02, 2025 at 08:03 AM

SH

“ *To David and Family, I am so sad to hear of the loss of your dear father. Growing up in North Asheville, I feel all our classmates are family of sorts. I didn't know your father personally, but I always associate him with Grace Church, Three Mountaineers, and The Country Store at Grace. Our family always looked forward to the activities at the event, and we bought many bags of the "kindling" that we enjoyed using as building blocks. I know it may seem a small thing to remember about someone who was so active in education, sports, and the community, but his work made a difference to our family. Sending thoughts of love and peace to the whole family.*

Sarah Hudson - February 01, 2025 at 09:23 AM

PH

“Eleanor, I am so glad I met your parents at BHH. Mary Ida was a joy to be around. Peter was kind to her during the pandemic and seemed to enjoy our activities. They were an example of a loving relationship. You and your family were so supportive of them. I was honored to know them. I know you will all miss Peter's physical presence in your lives, but you know that he and Mary Ida will always live in your memories. Prayers for peace and time to adjust to Peter's absence. Patty Higgins

Patty Higgins - January 31, 2025 at 09:19 PM

SH

“I am sorry for the Sprague family's loss of such a wonderful and fun father, grandfather, great-grandfather, father-in-law, and husband to Mary Ida.

While I didn't know Mr. Sprague, his son, David, was my classmate at Asheville High School, and I could tell by David's character that his parents must be great people.

Praying you all find comfort and keep your precious memories close to your hearts.

—Susan Thurman Houchin

Susan (Thurman) Houchin - January 31, 2025 at 10:00 AM

DB

“Peter: I'm sorry to learn of your Dad's passing. I'm sure he will be greatly missed. May you truly cherish his memory and your time together.

Derrick Bailey - January 30, 2025 at 09:50 PM

CH

“ We had such a lovely visit with Peter Sr. at Thanksgiving. My thoughts and prayers for strength and comfort to the Sprague family.

Carol LedBetter Holder - January 27, 2025 at 05:40 PM

FA

“ Peter. and I had almost daily discussions as he would stop as I was on my daily walk. Often the subject would be his family he cared for deeply. Next would be Tar Heel basketball. I feel fortunate to call him friend. My condolences to the Sprague family.
Fred Ayers

Fred Ayers - January 27, 2025 at 04:08 PM

RH

“ Peter, Sr. was one of the kindest, most caring people I've ever known. Our paths first crossed in United Way fund raising where he was a stellar proponent of "the cause" always yearning to help those in need with his generous gifts of his time and financial support. Our Boy Scouting bond provided another avenue to interface, and I always looked to him as a mentor to me. My sincere condolences to Peter, Jr. and the family during this difficult time. Mr. Sprague left a positive mark in our community!

Richard B. Hurley - January 27, 2025 at 02:56 PM

KH

“ Sending heartfelt condolences to the entire Sprague family! Papa Pete was so special and I always enjoyed catching up with him on his drives through the neighborhood.



Kate Henry - January 25, 2025 at 03:44 PM

BB

(Young) Peter, I am so sorry for your loss. I have fond memories of your Dad, dating back to when you and I were kids at Ira B. Jones elementary, and continuing through Troop 8 days. I also recall that my Dad (Bob Beard) and yours shared a special bond and mutual respect. There was no one better than Mr. Sprague, a true pillar of the Asheville community. You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers as you go through this difficult time.

Bill Beard - February 07, 2025 at 06:05 PM