

Dr. William T. Haley Jr.



MARBLEHEAD - Dr. William T. Haley Jr., 93, of Marblehead, passed away on Saturday, September 19, 2009 at the John Bertram House in Salem following a brief illness. He was the husband of fifty-nine years of the late Elizabeth Fitzpatrick Haley. Born in Peabody, he was the son of the late Dr. William T. and Mary Louise (Shea) Haley Sr. Raised and educated in Boston, he graduated from The Country Day School for Boys of Boston in 1933 and from Harvard College, Class of 1937. He received his medical degree from the Tufts University School of Medicine in 1941.

Following his internship at Newton Wellesley Hospital, he joined the United States Army during World War II, serving as the medical officer in the 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized.) His unit landed at Normandy on D-Day +2, and proceeded toward Paris. On the outskirts of the French capital on August 25, 1944, his squadron was engaged in a fierce fight with the enemy. Documentation of the events on that day state that with disregard for his personal safety, and armed with only a white flag and his medical kit, Dr. Haley walked onto the "no-man's land" between the lines and began to attend the wounded. He then marched straight to the German line, and demanded to speak to the commanding officer, with whom he worked out a deal - he would be allowed to removed the injured US soldiers for treatment, and in return he would attend to the wounded Germans as well. The bargain struck, the wounded were removed to Dr. Haley's treatment tent, and the battle resumed. For his heroism, he received the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's

second highest military award. He also received the Purple Heart, and on May 20, 2009, at a ceremony at the Massachusetts State House, witnessed by many relatives and friends, the French government awarded him the Legion d' Honneur. Later in the war, his unit was part of the liberating force that freed the prisoners at the concentration camp at Buchenwald, an experience that was to influence his thinking and teaching for the rest of his life.

After his discharge in 1945, he continued his medical career as a general practitioner in Marblehead on the staff of the former Mary Alley Hospital in Marblehead and Salem Hospital, until his retirement in 1984. Dr. Haley was a member of the Massachusetts Medical Society and the Essex South Medical Society, serving a term as its president. He maintained memberships in both the American Medical Association and the American Association of Family Practitioners. He was always a very active member of the Town of Marblehead, serving as a member of the Board of Health; a member, lecturer, and at one time commander of the Marblehead Power Squadron, a member of the Marblehead Yacht Club, the Marblehead Arts Association and a communicant of Star of the Sea Church. He volunteered at CCD, and was a board member of the St. Vincent DePaul Society.

Dr. Haley mentored and guided his children, nieces, nephews, friends and neighbors with gentle advice and many stories. He had wide ranging interests in art, history, music, travel, astronomy, philosophy, poetry, languages, wine and the ocean. He owned a sailboat from the age of 10 until the time of his death, and had an encyclopedic knowledge of the coast of New England, as well as, many friends in various ports of call. He had a special fondness for France and the French language, even traveling to France at ages 90 and 91 to watercolor, despite his advancing years and declining health. His love of travel may have started with a two month bicycle trip throughout Europe in 1939, followed by trips with his wife Elizabeth to Egypt, Greece, Western Europe and the British Isles, as well as, the US and Canada.

Even as his eyesight failed in recent years, he continued his weekly water coloring classes, read voraciously and belonged to the library book club, sometimes utilizing two magnifying glasses to read. He loved to conduct poetry readings at his home.

He had a strong commitment to social justice, volunteering at the Columbia Point Housing Project in the 60's, conducting a methadone program for North Shore addicts in the 70's, spreading AIDS awareness from 1984 onward, and as a member of the North Shore Holocaust Center speakers bureau, through which, and even into his 90's, he would speak at local schools about the Holocaust and what he had witnessed at Buchenwald.

Dr. Haley is survived by his sister, Elizabeth Litten of Hilton Head, SC; his sister-in-law Lois L. Haley of Marblehead; his two children; Eileen Haley Mathieu and her husband Owen of Marblehead and Peter Haley and his wife Sara of Newton; five grandchildren, Melanie, Eric and Maura Mathieu, Matthew Krane and Rebecca Haley. He also leaves many beloved nieces and nephews,

and one great-grandchild. His brothers, Paul and John Haley, pre-deceased him. Visiting hours will be on Tuesday from 4-8 PM at the Eustis Cornell Funeral Home, 142 Elm Street, Marblehead. A Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10 AM on Wednesday at Our Lady Star of the Sea Church, 85 Atlantic Avenue, Marblehead. Dr. Haley will be buried with honors at Star of the Sea Cemetery, Marblehead, and there will be a memorial reception afterward. Please visit the online guestbook at www.mem.com.