

DAVID CHARLES AUTEN
(May 9, 2020)



David Charles Auten, Esq. died peacefully during the early morning hours at his Society Hill Philadelphia residence on Saturday May 9, 2020 from complications from his longstanding Parkinson's Disease.

David is survived by his wife of over 50 years, Suzanne Crozier Plowman, his daughters Anne Crozier Auten, Esq. (James Wyman, Esq.) and Meredith Smedley Auten, Esq., and grandchildren James Auten Wyman, Bridget McKee Wyman and Katherine Crozier Wyman and brother Donald Robert Auten, Esq. (Judith).

David was a Philadelphia icon and the quintessential Philadelphia gentleman. He was known for his intellectual acumen, his quiet dignity and grace, his respect for all points of view, his generosity, his warmth and kindness, his wonderful sense of humor and his selfless service to others. Born in the Frankford section of Philadelphia, David was a lifelong Philadelphian. He attended Frankford High School and earned both his undergraduate and Juris Doctorate degrees with honors from the University of Pennsylvania.

David combined the best parts of an old soul with a voracious interest in life, all things Philadelphia, travel, history, books, the world around him and of course Breyer's vanilla ice cream. David was known for his fashion sense, which usually involved some combination of red and blue – the colors of his beloved alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania - one of his famous ties and one of his funny pairs of socks. There is no holiday for which David did not have multiple memorable tie and sock variations. He was the life of the party, always ready with a corny joke. David also loved to travel and the family went on many cross country road trips in the family station wagon, eventually making it to every one of the fifty states.

David was an accomplished lawyer who practiced for 50 years. He served as the Managing Partner of the Philadelphia Office of Reed Smith LLP for 16 years. He was listed in publications honoring his legal acumen, including Best Lawyers in America, Who's Who in the World, and Philadelphia Leaders and he was a member of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers. He loved the practice of law, which inspired both of his daughters, Anne and Meredith, who spent many a Saturday in the office with him dictating their version of "legal memos" and making copies of their hands on the copy machine to follow in his footsteps as lawyers. His daughters said: "Dad always said he was a lucky man. But it is us who are the lucky ones to have had him in our lives. He lived an incredible life and touched so very many lives. You could find no greater father or man. We will miss him dearly. "

In addition to his distinguished legal career, David was a devoted community man. David was a committed alumnus of the University of Pennsylvania, serving with distinction in many roles over many years, including on the Board of Trustees, as the President of the General Alumni Society, on the Board of Overseers of the College of Arts and Sciences, on the Board of Trustees of the Penn Health System and as Chairman of the Board of Penn Presbyterian Medical Center.

Another of David's great loves was the Union League of Philadelphia. He served as its President. You could often find David at one of his club tables enjoying The League's famous snapper soup, rice pudding and fish house punch. The League remained an integral and beloved part of his life to the end. He was very proud of his daughter Meredith's ongoing involvement there.

Other great loves of David's were Christ Church of Philadelphia where he served as Chair of the Vestry and Rector's Warden, Theta Xi National Fraternity where he served as President, St. Peter's School where he served as Chair of the Board of Trustees (where his youngest daughter, Meredith also currently serves on the Board) and countless other organizations throughout Philadelphia.

David Auten was proud of the fact that he and his family were part of the Society Hill revival and preservation movement in the 1970's. The family loved living in Society Hill surrounded by so many dear friends and historic treasures.

David has been honored countless times over the years for his extraordinary and selfless service to so many organizations. He was the recipient of the Penn Alumni Award of Merit, the inaugural Penn Presbyterian Hospital Hero Award, The Association of Fundraising Professionals Greater Philadelphia Chapter Lifetime Achievement Award, and he was one of the first inductees of The Parkinson Council Dan Aaron Hall of Fame.

Twenty eight years ago David was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. But he never let his affliction stand in the way of his service to others and his passions. As his longtime Parkinson's doctor and one of the founders of the Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center at Penn, Dr. Howard Hurtig said "David lived by the motto I have Parkinson's Disease but it does not have me. He was a role model of courage and resolve." David was blessed to have many dear friends who provided unwavering support and encouragement, particularly in his later years.

David leaves a lasting legacy of loving family and friends, unrelenting love of life, eternal optimism, generosity, kindness, service and dedication and an impish smile with a twinkle in his eye that lit up every room he ever entered.

Burial will be private. The family will be holding a Celebration of Life in the Fall. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent in David's honor to The Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center at the University of Pennsylvania or the Union League Legacy Foundation.

Funeral arrangements entrusted to The Oliver H. Bair Co. (610) 449-8585