



John M. Heley Esq.

September 23, 1945 - November 10, 2018

John Michael Heley of Bedminster Township passed away peacefully in his sleep after a long illness on November 10, 2018. He was 73 years old. He is survived by his family of which he was an active and beloved member. He and his wife Joyceann M. (Costa) Heley celebrated 44 years of marriage in August. They shared many celebrations in their years together, including his most recent birthday, surrounded by the good friends he loved. In September, he celebrated the first birthday of his granddaughter, Frances, with his daughter Kathryn Heley and her husband Sean Pink. In June, he spent time showing his grandsons Abbot and Mercer the joys of the seashore with his daughter Jessica Heley and her partner Merton Lee. He was surrounded in his life not only by his wife, daughters and grandchildren, but also by his sister and brother-in-law, Mary Lou and Neal Hickie, their children Karyn, Lynne and Craig, as well as his brother-and sister-in-law David and Eileen Costa and their daughters Alexandra and Jacquelyn.

Born on September 23, 1945 in Pittsburgh, Pa., John was the son of the late Kathryn (Zeiler) Heley and the late Michael Heley. He was a graduate of Carrick High School in Pittsburgh; earned a B.A. in English from Bucknell University; attained an M.A. in English from Kansas State University and received his J.D. from Rutgers University, where he graduated as a Dean's Scholar. After graduation from law school, he served as a federal clerk to Judge Edmund V. Ludwig in the U.S. District court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

In his early career, his focus was on helping youth. He taught college students who struggled with basic literacy skills. He was a counselor at The Youth Development Center (Y.D.C.), with the goal of supporting young men in their rehabilitation after entering the juvenile justice system. Inspired by the young people he worked with at Y.D.C., John was motivated to engage young people in meaningful ways that could provide opportunities and training to prevent them from ever entering or reentering the justice system. He became a founding member of Youth Services Agency of Bucks County (Y.S.A.) and pursued his work in youth advocacy and outreach as a case manager and eventually as acting director. Following his tenure at Y.S.A., John entered the job that he believed he would retire from: Executive Director of Big Brothers of Bucks County. In his years in this

position, he was able to mobilize the resources of the community at large to connect them with the children who needed them so much. This work always remained close to his heart.

With a desire to have a broader impact, John's experiences eventually led him to a career in law. Although he had offers to practice in a number of prominent, urban law firms, John chose to stay in Bucks County because he wanted to be a loving and involved presence in his family's lives. After a short stint as a partner in a Newtown law practice, John went out on his own, establishing the Heley Law Office in Quakertown, PA, where he happily practiced for most of his 33 years as an attorney. During that time, he was a Rotarian, President of the Upper Bucks Chamber of Commerce, and was on the boards of Y.S.A. and the United Friends School in Quakertown.

In much the same way he chose to stay close to his home when beginning his career so that he could attend to his family with love and precision, he committed to the place and people of Bucks County through his professional contributions. He took the time to learn and to love the stories of his clients, and to welcome them into his life in a vibrant way. He followed up. He made house visits. He dedicated the full weight of his considerable intellect, humor and creativity to pursuing the best outcomes he could for people who were often experiencing the worst situations of their lives. He truly loved the theater of the courtroom, and he also loved the community of the court. He believed in “doing justice” and he understood that to include the interactions he had with clients, judges, attorneys and all the staff of the courts. He also understood it to include his own commitment to bring all his talent to bear in the preparation and presentation of a case. His love for his clients and for his life's work was evident to all who witnessed any part of this process. His work changed lives for the better.

John was blessed with a commitment to learning and a creative energy that expressed itself in a number of ways. Early in his marriage, despite a lack of formal training, John taught himself woodworking. Starting with small, wooden boxes, he filled the new home he shared with Joyce, moving from bookshelves to hutches to beds to cradles. Next came photography. With the arrival of his daughters, he started taking family photos. Before long he was documenting the world around him, first using film then digital cameras to capture the people and places he saw. Whether it was heading into the office or driving across the country, he was never without a camera and would regularly spend nights and weekends editing his work. John was creative and he appreciated the creativity of others. He particularly loved music and the actions of his life were enhanced with the soundtrack he chose. His family remembers him selecting just the right song to play to help his daughters feel empowered to take on a challenging exam; the perfect tune to get his family dancing

after Thanksgiving dinner; and a fitting score for a drive with the top down to look at the river on a summer night.

John was characterized by his commitment, loyalty and passion to the things and people he loved the most. Outside of his family and close friends, his other great loves were cars and pets, both of which started during his childhood in Pittsburgh. Starting with his first pet beagle, nearly his entire life included a beagle by his side. With a father who was a master mechanic and a mother who loved to drive fast, his devotion to cars was inevitable. He loved Formula One racing and sports cars, particularly Porsches, a love which started when he purchased his first one in Kansas in the late 1960s. Some of his favorite moments were taking long drives, getting lost and finding a new spot to explore with whoever was lucky enough to be his passenger.

Family and friends are invited to commemorate John's life on December 1, 2018 at Naugle's Funeral Home in Quakertown, PA. The family will be receiving visitors from 11-1pm, with a memorial celebration starting at 1pm. Family and friends are invited to a gathering in the Palace Banquet Room at the Proper Brewing Co., 117 W. Broad St., Quakertown immediately following the service. In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations be made in John's name to the Bucks County SPCA (www.bcspca.org), Why Not Me Inc. (www.whynotmeinc.org), or Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bucks County (www.bbbsbc.org). Family and friends are invited to a gathering in the Palace Banquet Room at the Proper Brewing Co., 117 W. Broad St., Quakertown

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Attachments area

Events

DEC

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Public Visitation

11:00AM - 01:00PM

Naugle Funeral and Cremation Service

135 West Pumping Station Road, Quakertown, PA, US, 18951

DEC

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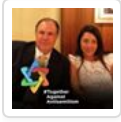
Memorial Service

01:00PM

Naugle Funeral and Cremation Service

135 West Pumping Station Road, Quakertown, PA, US, 18951

Comments



“ Joyce, Jess, and Kate,

Where do you start to express the sadness I felt when I learned today about John's passing. John was more than an attorney to me, he was a friend who loved his family and was the best attorney that ever represented me. We would talk for hours about his love for cars and what his two beautiful daughters were up to. My heart, love, and prayers to you all. He will be forever missed.

Sincerely,

Walter Braithwaite

Walter Braithwaite - December 03 at 06:22 PM



“ Joyce and Family,

I will miss John as a fellow attorney and friend.

He was a wonderful, caring person who made the world better by “passing through.”

My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Sincerely,

Jim Schildt

James M Schildt - November 30 at 10:47 AM



“ Sentimental Dreams was purchased for the family of John M. Heley Esq..



November 29 at 05:11 PM



“ My sincerest sympathy on the loss of your beloved husband and father. Thinking of you with warm and caring thoughts.

Eileen Hirschhorn

Eileen Hirschhorn - November 26 at 12:18 PM



“ Dearest Joyce, Jess & Kate,

My heart breaks for every single one of you for this unthinkable loss. Jess & Kate as you both know I know this loss all too well and it is an unbearable one. Especially this time of year. The pain does not go away but it hurts slightly less. I love you all dearly and I will continue to keep you all in my prayers because this will be a hard goodbye. I find comfort in keeping my dad alive for Sebastian and Keanu and remind them daily how their grandpa was an incredible man. Abbot, Mercer and Frances had a loving kind and caring grandfather and he will watch over all of them and love them now from heaven. I wish this wasn't the case because selfishly we want them here but he is no longer suffering and though you are all suffering now I promise it will get easier.

I remember the first time I met your dad in our lovely home in Collegetown, Ithaca New York. His presence was large and he certainly filled the room with a sense of gentle kindness. I remember how fond Keanu was of him at such a young age. He will be sadly missed and I am so sorry that you guys are going through this unbearable loss during the holidays. I love you all dearly and although I can not be there on Saturday my heart is with all of you.

All of our love,

Pablo, Noelle, Keanu & Sebastian



Noelle Valente-Gaviria - November 26 at 11:38 AM



“ Very sorry to read of John's passing. He was a frequent visitor in my Perkasio courtroom and was always polite, prepared and friendly. My sympathy to your family. Senior Magisterial District Judge Charles Baum, Perkasio



“ Joyce - Vicky and I extend our deepest sympathies to you and your daughters and families. I enjoyed John's friendship at many social events over the years. John always talked family and sports- especially Pittsburgh sports. He was a very proud dad. Rest In Peace

Fred Richter

Fred Richter - November 25 at 07:37 AM



“ My love and condolences come straight from deep down in my heart for the Heley family during this time of sorrow. Mr. Heley was always welcoming and warm towards all those who came into his life, sharing stories and words of wisdom to those who chose to sit by him and soak it all in. Mr. Heley is one very special person that with his loss rattled the whole world far and near because of his great influences and love he shared through his daughters who we love dearly and will carry out his kindness and share his stories with their children to carry forth his memories of the great man He was. May you rest peacefully now and watch over us as you always have.

Keanu Valente-Garcia - November 23 at 08:32 AM



“ John was a presence to everyone who knew him. Even as a goody kid who spent most of her weekends in his home with his daughters, I knew how special a man he was. I remember once driving on a trip from Bucks County with him when I was going to join the family for a trip to the jersey shore. As a teenager I wondered what we would talk about in the car for so long- just Mr. Heley and me. That trip was one of my best jersey trip car rides. We laughed and he told me stories and warned me that my left arm was going to get sun-burned (he was correct.) I can recall him chiding me in a loving way when I first got my license- he had been behind me, unbeknownst to me, eventually asking me if I had a lead foot. Then he smiled and I acknowledged my stupid teenage transgression. I admired and respected him. So many afternoons were spent with the Heleys, and John always knew the best local spots for diner food and the best ice cream roadside joints. He was quiet and almost stoic, and then unabashedly funny and poetic. He had the heart of an artist, and even know at 35 years old, what I didn't know is his incredible history of outreach for people who needed guidance and good advice- and John was the perfect man for that. Those years spent in his home, my time with what became my second family were some of the best of my life. And the world is a little less interesting, and a lot less wonderful with him no longer here. May his memory be a a blessing. My deepest and most heart-felt condolences to my forever friends Katie, Jess and Joyce, with whom he shared a wonderful life.



“ *goofy teenager.... and it was my right arm, not the left

Fay Goldberg - November 19 at 09:11 PM



“ God Bless Mr. Porsche! May God speed John on the highway to heaven. John was a good friend and colleague; Anita and I miss him and will keep him and Joyce in our prayers. Jack & Anita Hetherington

Jack J Hetherington - November 27 at 09:44 AM



“ John was a true renaissance man that was not afraid to follow his passions in life be it cars, the law and photography. He was a wonderful mentor for my husband and I when we were just starting out in our adult lives and careers and was a valuable resource to us to avoid making those "rookie" mistakes in life. He was intelligent, bold, calming and had a terrific sense of humor. Everyone should be so lucky to have a person like John in their lives. He will be missed dearly. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family. Jessie, Jerry and Wyatt Kilhefner

Jessica Kilhefner - November 29 at 08:44 AM



“ God blessed me with a life long friend. I will never get over your leaving. We have always reflected that life long love for each other; always. I know God will hold you high in his arms, forever.

I will be with you soon my brother, my friend. Save a place for me.

Rich

Richard Wiedenheft - November 18 at 02:11 PM



“ He was not only our family lawyer who did so much but felt more like family. Our thoughts and prayers to his family. He was a great man.



Jack James - November 12 at 04:13 PM