



Joseph R. Daughen

June 12, 1935 - February 18, 2021

A legendary newspaperman and doting father/grandfather ...

Joseph R. Daughen, age 85, husband of the late Joan P. Daughen, of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, formerly of Glenside, passed away on Thursday, February 18, 2021 after several years of difficult health challenges. Born on June 12, 1935 in Philadelphia, he was a son of the late Laura (Sandone) and John J. Daughen.

Joe grew up in South Philadelphia and graduated from South Philadelphia High School, which later inducted him into its Hall of Fame. He went on to Temple University and graduated with a degree in Journalism in 1956. A writer of remarkable talent and skill, Joe soon landed a position as a reporter at the Philadelphia Daily News, a job which launched what would become a legendary 50-year career in Philadelphia newspapers.

During his time as an investigative journalist at the Daily News and later The Bulletin (which had the largest evening circulation in the country), Joe covered city politics, crime and corruption, and other important local issues, as well as five presidential campaigns, the Vietnam War, the Philadelphia Mob, Watergate, and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

His talent for always getting the story and conveying it to readers with fairness and accuracy was revered among journalists. But Joe was a humble and unassuming man. Although he took great pride in his own work, he also loved mentoring countless fellow reporters and editors and watching their careers thrive.

In 1964, The Bulletin gave Joe a special assignment - to create an in-depth report on what life was like for Black residents of Philadelphia. At the time, major newspapers did not cover the Black community, echoing the segregation in all other areas of life. Joe spent over six months creating a special section for the paper that covered topics such as housing, education, employment, and health. He later noted that no one mentioned the obvious irony of having a white reporter write about the city's Black population. The book-

length feature was a groundbreaking work at the national level and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize (the first of two Pulitzers for which he would be a finalist during his award-winning career).

During the turbulent 1960s, Joe spent two years working in The Bulletin's Washington D.C. bureau and then became the paper's de facto civil-rights correspondent. While traveling this beat throughout the South, he interviewed prominent Americans such as the mayor of Selma during the time of the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

In 1968, he was in Alabama to cover George Wallace. He was in the bar at the Jefferson Davis Hotel when the TV broke in with news of Martin Luther King Jr's assassination and Joe recoiled when the bartender started cheering. Joe flew to Memphis that night to cover the tragedy and then attended Dr. King's funeral in Atlanta. A photograph of Joe interviewing Reverend King a few months earlier is one of the only items he framed from his illustrious career.

In 1971, Joe and colleague Peter Binzen co-authored their first book together, *THE WRECK OF THE PENN CENTRAL*, an examination of what was the largest bankruptcy in the history of the United States. The book was an instant national bestseller and became a business-school staple-it still sells copies fifty years after publication.

In 1977, he and Binzen wrote the bestseller *THE COP WHO WOULD BE KING*, an investigative report on Frank Rizzo, then mayor of Philadelphia. The book was widely praised, except by Rizzo himself, who sent an angry letter on the mayor's letterhead stating his displeasure. Joe enjoyed the review.

Two decades later, Joe published *FEARLESS: THE RICHARD A. SPRAGUE STORY*, a biography of one of the nation's most successful attorneys. He also contributed an essay to the anthology *NEARLY EVERYBODY READ IT: SNAPSHOTS OF THE PHILADELPHIA BULLETIN*.

Joe retired from journalism in 2005 after filing fifty years of investigative reports on national and Philadelphia issues and after countless awards and accolades the humble man never focused on.

Those, as Joe would say, are the facts. But every good story has a heart too.

Despite all his professional success and acclaim, the heart for Joe - the thing he treasured above all else - was family.

He met Joan, the love of his life, at Temple and they were married for 59 years. Joan passed away just four days before Joe and to those who knew them, it is fitting that he did not want to stay here without her by his side.

Joe and Joan raised their daughter, Joan Patrice, in Glenside where he taught her how to throw a curve ball and to never do anything she wouldn't want to see on the front page of the newspaper. When JP worked in Philadelphia, she and her dad had a standing lunch date at SPQR once a week. Kind and supportive, he was a tremendous father, always in awe of his daughter.

When JP married, Joe accepted her husband Robb Cadigan as the son he never had. And when his grandchildren were born, he was over the moon. The hard-boiled cynical reporter suddenly lost all objectivity and was convinced that Ryan and Caroline were perfect children; he was amazed at anything they did, from playing little league and tennis, to creating art, to earning stellar report cards and excelling in their educations.

He talked to his brother and best friend John almost every night, until John's untimely passing. He and Joan enjoyed traveling, with Joan's sister and brother in law, with dear friends, and on their own. For several wonderful years, they owned a bayside cottage on Long Beach Island next door to their good friends Pat and Tom and enjoyed some of the best summers of their lives at the shore.

Joe traveled so much for work that when he was home he was quite happy to sit on the patio listening to the Phillies game while doing the crossword puzzle.

In later years when he reflected on his distinguished career, Joe was asked if he ever regretted turning down the promotions he was offered along the way. "No regrets," he answered. "I'd do it all over again." Joseph R. Daughen pointed to the title of editor Ben Bradlee's memoir and noted, "Like Ben says, 'A Good Life' - I've had a good life."

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Joe Daughen is survived by a daughter: Joan D., wife of Robb Cadigan, of Phoenixville; grandchildren: Ryan and Caroline Cadigan, both of Phoenixville; and many dear nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his loving wife, Joan; by their two infant daughters: Susan Joy and Carol Maria Daughen; and his brother John (Rita).

The family would like to thank the staff of Spring Mill Senior Living for caring for Joe and

Joan, especially during the past year's lockdown. The staff provided love and care to them at a time when their family was unable to visit or see them in person.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend a joint memorial service for Joseph and Joan on Friday, July 16, 2021 at 11:00 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 120 N. Easton Road, Glenside, PA 19038. Friends will be received from 9:30 - 11:00. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Joe's name to St. Paul's Lutheran Church at the address above. Arrangements are being handled by the Campbell - Ennis - Klotzbach Funeral Home, Inc., Phoenixville. To offer condolences to Joe's family, please visit www.PhoenixvilleFuneralHome.com.

Comments



“ Matti lit a candle in memory of Joseph R. Daughen



Matti - September 06, 2021 at 02:47 PM



“ Joe Daughen! Joe and I were rather close as kids; and when I say "kids" I'm talking about 8 to 18. I think he was the first kid in our group that started to smoke cigarettes. He was always on the thin side and when he would cough, one of our gang - I don't remember who - would say, "There goes consumption Joe."

I don't think there was another kid in our crew who measured up to Joe's intelligence. We all knew he was very smart and could match wits with anybody. When I organized a basketball team to play at St. Martha's Settlement House on 8th & Snyder, I knew nothing about coaching basketball - I still couldn't. My forte has always been organizing and enrolling sponsors. I named the team the "Whirlwinds," designed a team logo consisting of a basketball with wings, and then solicited neighborhood businesses to pay for our jerseys. Joe actually took charge of the team's efforts on the court.

I quit high school (Southern) in 1951 and enlisted in the US Air Force for 4 years. During that time, I had no contact with Joe, but I grew up a lot. After I was discharged in 1955, I found out that Joe had grown up a lot, too. I think he was a senior at Temple, majoring in journalism and our meetings for a while were purely by chance and for very brief periods. After Joe went to work for the Philadelphia Daily News, I would sometimes get on his case about the media schmoozing with big, powerful entities. Naturally, Joe was able to put me in my place and get me to see that totem poles also exist in the field of journalism and he was still at the bottom of his.

Joe went on to do great things in his professional career. Our paths led us in different directions and after seeing him 2 or 3 times when we were about 24, he had no reason to think about me, but I exuded with pride in Joe each time I read an article or especially about 22 years later when he wrote "The Cop Who Would Be King." Wow!!!

I offer this memoir of my friendship with Joseph Daughen in the hope of shedding a little light on a portion of his early life that might have been obscured by his brilliance as an adult. The kids in our neighborhood might have been a scraggly crew, but in our own unique South Philly way... we really loved each other. Rest in Peace, Joe.

Ben Dati - June 06, 2021 at 07:53 PM



“ What can you say about a friendship that spans so many decades? With Frank's passing just a year ago, I know he and Joe are together again sharing stories of life and politics in Philadelphia. Frank had such tremendous respect and admiration for Joe - not only as a great reporter, but as a great friend. Frank used to say, "There are no reporters around like Joe Daughen anymore." He was right. Joanie - I'm so very sorry to hear about your mom, as well. I know these last years have been difficult ones.

- Jean and Mary Wallace

Jean Wallace - February 23, 2021 at 07:31 AM



“ Jean - I had no idea Frank passed. I was looking for contact info in dad's files. He was a good friend to dad.

jscadigan - February 24, 2021 at 02:02 PM



“ 12 files added to the album Joe Daughen



jscadigan - February 20, 2021 at 10:43 AM