

Chadwick Funeral and Cremation Service

Paul Abbe Bidwell

(January 9, 1931 - February 12, 2024)

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Paul Abbe Bidwell passed away on February 12, 2024. He was 93 years old. Paul was well-read, always ready to share a title. He was orderly and tidy, always keeping his clothes and home shipshape. He was funny, always ready with a witty quip and loud laugh. He loved ice cream with an unparalleled passion. He adored his family and friends.

Born in Hartford, Connecticut, Paul was the son of the late Robert and Susan Bidwell of Windsor Locks, Connecticut. In 1944, Paul and his father survived the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus fire in Hartford—his father was livid that Paul ran back into the burning tent to retrieve his program. He graduated from Vermont Academy in 1948, Harvard College in 1952, and during the Korean War, from the U.S. Naval Officer's Candidate School in 1953. His school years resulted in deep life-long friendships that nourished Paul through good times and hard.

Paul served in the U.S. Navy aboard minesweepers for three years. He achieved the rank of lieutenant and was Executive Officer of his last ship. Upon his release, he was employed by the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company in Bloomfield, Connecticut. In 1972, he opened a Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company sales office in New London, New Hampshire, after moving his family of four there. He retired in 1996 having become a Chartered Life Underwriter and Life Member of the Million Dollar Roundtable.

Paul was a member of the New London Rotary Club from its founding in 1978 and was instrumental in opening the Rotary to women in 1987. He was a Rotary charter member, a Paul Harris Fellow, held all major offices, and was a key recruiter of new members to the club. He was chairman of the Boy Scout Committee for Troop 71 in New London, which included, among other exciting adventures, overturned canoes on the flooded Saco River. Paul was the founder of the "Ha Ha" Club, a group devoted to encouraging laughter, and a founder of Colloquy, a men's discussion group. He was a trustee of the Chapin Senior Center, a

member of the County Squires, and a member of the Boys' Club of New London.

Paul took great pride in completing, at age 67 in 1998, the Hurricane Island Outward Bound Sea kayaking program in Maine. The excursion included a week of island-to-island kayaking, camping, and a day of belaying and a high ropes course. He was, by far, the oldest of the cohort of 12, and one of nine who completed the program. Around the same time, he trekked through Nepal and attended Kripalu meditation retreats. It was a remarkable period of personal growth that was inspirational to all who knew him.

He was truly grateful for his rich and rewarding life. He was especially grateful for good meals with close family and friends.

Paul is survived by his son John and his wife Kris of Florence, Massachusetts, and their sons Aidan and Liam; his son James and his wife Ruth of Penacook, New Hampshire, and their daughters Emma and Rachel; and his long-time best friend and companion Virginia (Ginger) Milord of New London. He was predeceased by his brothers Robert and John, and sister Doris Johnson. He will be dearly missed.

Friends may call at the Chadwick Funeral Home, 235 Main Street, New London, NH on Thursday, February 15, 2024 from 4:00-6:00 P.M. There will be a gravesite service at a later date. If inclined, please donate to a group of your choice in Paul's honor.