Harold Portner

OBITUARY

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Harold (Hal) Portner, 93, of Amherst, MA on April 29, 2024. Hal was born in Hartford, CT on Dec. 5, 1930.

Hal is predeceased by his parents Abraham and Leah (Spector) Portner, his brother Jack (Corrine) Portner, his sisters Tillie (Morris) Ertman and Bessie Portner, and his wife Mary (Henderson) Portner.

He is survived by his first wife, Lucille (Tenenbaum) Portner of West Hartford CT, and their children Gail (John) Slusarski of Newington CT, Amy (Nolan) Anaya of Amherst MA, and Cynthia (Gloria) Portner of Seaford NY, and by his step-daughter Tary (Tom) Coppola of Pelham MA. Also by his grandchildren Steven (Anita) Slusarski, Leah (David) Ajasin, step-grandson Zachary Anaya, and 3 great granddaughters, Kaya, Stella, and Violet, as well as his beloved cousins, nieces, nephews, and in-laws.

Hal grew up in Hartford, CT and graduated from Weaver High School in 1948. He graduated from Hartt College of Music in 1952 with a degree in Music Education. Hal attended the University of Michigan where he was a French hornist in the marching band, and was drafted into the US Army. This led to an opportunity at West Point where he was also a member of the marching band. He holds an MEd from the University of Michigan and a 6th-year Certificate
of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) in education administration from the University of Connecticut. For three years, he was with the University of Massachusetts EdD Educational Leadership Program.

Hal had a long and varied career in education. He taught high school music in Bristol and Rocky Hill, CT and taught private French horn and trumpet lessons. He served as Asst Director for the Summer Math Program for High School Women and Their Teachers at Mount Holyoke College. He was a member of the Connecticut State Department of Education's Bureau of Certification and Professional Development, where he worked closely with school districts to develop and carry out professional development and teacher mentoring plans. Hal developed college courses on topics such as curriculum development and on coaching teachers. He wrote and reviewed grants and worked as a consultant. He is the author of several books about mentoring new teachers.

Hal played the French horn with various bands and orchestras, did a little musical composing, wrote a science fiction novel, painted, was an avid reader and a huge movie fan. He enjoyed time with his family and the many close friendships he had over the years.

One of Hal’s most enduring memories of growing up in Hartford was at the Hartford Circus on July 6, 1944. He and his friend snuck into the huge tent to watch one of his heroes conduct the band. When the infamous Hartford Circus fire broke out they were sitting by the edge of the tent where the band was located and were able to easily escape. It was considered one of the worst fire disasters in US history.

For 40 years, Hal and Mary resided in Northampton, MA. Recently, Hal lived at Linda Manor Assisted Living in Leeds MA, and then at the Center for Extended Care in Amherst MA where he received great care and compassion.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Charter Oak Cultural Center, https://charteroakcenter.org or to the Holyoke Civic Symphony, – https://holyokecivicsymphony.org

*Click here to Send Flowers* to the family of Harold.