

DR. BERNARD "PEPPER" MALLINGER



On July 20, 2023, the world lost a true Pittsburgh icon and a beloved member of the community when Dr. Bernard "Pepper" Mallinger peacefully passed away at the age of 95, surrounded by his loving family. Pepper was a man of many talents, roles, and accomplishments, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of those he touched.

Pepper's journey began in Pittsburgh, where he was born and raised. He attended Colfax Elementary School, Allderdice High School, and the University of Pittsburgh. His family's roots traced back to Europe, as his parents had emigrated to America in the late 1880s. At the age of 18, Pepper enlisted in the Army Air Corps during World War II and was stationed in China, where he flew C54 transport planes through Asia.

Upon his return from service, Pepper pursued a career in optometry and attended The University of Pennsylvania Optometry School. Over the next 60+ years, he made significant contributions to his field and the Pittsburgh community. He was named Alumni of the Year in 2023. Pepper served as the Pittsburgh Penguins' Optometrist for over three decades, offering his expertise to the team and nurturing their vision. He played a pivotal role in developing advanced contact lenses, making them more comfortable and effective.

Beyond his professional achievements, Pepper was passionate about visual training, helping children hone their learning skills. Together with his late wife, Stephanie, he played a crucial role in establishing Pace School for Children with Learning Disabilities, a legacy that continues to impact young lives positively.

Pepper's warm and caring personality made him a favorite among children. He appeared on Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood as the friendly optometrist who put the puppet's fears at ease during eye exams. His bond with the beloved television personality extended beyond the screen as they became close friends in real life. Pepper accompanied Mr. Rogers during Congressional testimony for public television funding.

Pepper's involvement in the community extended beyond his work in optometry. He served on the Pennsylvania Optometry Board, coached his sons in ice hockey, played baseball at Pitt, and had a love for football and skiing, though he humorously shared the tale of breaking over 100 bones due to his enthusiasm for sports. Pepper was also an accomplished artist who loved photography, woodworking, and watercolor painting.

Throughout his life, Pepper's kindness, thoughtfulness, and caring nature touched the hearts of many. His devotion to his family, his patients, and the Pittsburgh community made him a cherished figure in the hearts of all who knew him.

As we bid farewell to this exceptional man, we take comfort in knowing that his legacy will live on through the countless lives he has touched.

In honor of his memory, donations may be made to The Pace School (paceschool.org), a cause dear to his heart, at Mallinger - Pace School Donation. This link goes directly to the credit card donation page: <https://paceschool.salsalabs.org/mallinger>.

A Memorial Service to celebrate the life of Dr. Bernard "Pepper" Mallinger will be held at a later date.

Arrangements are entrusted to **RALPH SCHUGAR CHAPEL, INC.**, a family-owned and operated funeral home, where memories of Pepper's remarkable life can be shared at www.schugar.com.

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