

EDWARD A. LESSER



Edward A. Lesser, passed away on November 5, 2023. He was born July 5, 1936, in Pittsburgh, PA, the eldest child of Robert and Molly (Klein) Lesser.

A graduate of Allerdice High School, Ed began his career in Public Accounting in 1955 while in college at the University of Pittsburgh earning his CPA in 1962. He was controller and treasurer for two multi-state retail chains. He served in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard from 1958 to 1964. Ed followed his passions throughout life including classical music, opera and the promotion of well-functioning government as well as initiatives for peace and justice. Over his lifetime, Ed enjoyed travel to 22 countries. He was a lifelong Steelers fan, an avid reader, a news junkie, and a great conversationalist with a quick wit.

When in Pittsburgh, Ed was a member and chairman of the Y Music Society. He was a board member of the Hebrew Free Loan Association, a board member of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh, County Committeeman for the Democratic Party and Treasurer of the 14th Ward Democratic Party Committee.

In 1982, Ed moved to Erie to join the Joseph B. Dahlkemper Co., Inc. as Corporate Controller. He was promoted to Vice President of Finance for the 14-store chain, a position he held until 1992. Ed then worked for 20 years as the first administrator for the Erie Area Council of Governments (EACOG) retiring at age 79.

In Erie, Ed served the Erie Philharmonic for 40 years in various capacities: Board of Directors, Board of Governors, Music Director Search Committees, and the Artistic Advisory Committee. At Mercyhurst University, Ed created and hosted a Summer Opera Series on WMCE-FM and represented the college at the annual Metropolitan International Opera Broadcasters Meeting in NYC. His participation initiated Mercyhurst as the first college in the USA to feature HD Live Met Opera broadcasts. Ed loved mentoring many friends and family on the joy of music and opera.

He was a founding member of the Erie Regional Peace and Justice Center and an active member of the Erie County Committee for Nuclear Weapons Freeze and a representative to the State and National Nuclear Freeze Campaigns. He was an activist who practiced civil disobedience protesting the nuclear arms race.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his sister, Judith A. Bales; and his first wife, Arlene Serbin Wagner, the mother of his surviving children, Richard Lesser (Gabrielle) of Hastings on Hudson, NY and Dr. Susan Carey (John) of Belmont, MA. He is survived by his wife of 26 years, Mary Ellen Dahlkemper, and his three stepsons, Edward, Philip and James Razanauskas. He is further survived by his brother, Stanley Lesser (Myra); as well as seven grandchildren; and nieces, nephews, and cousins. The family extends our sincere gratitude to the exceptional caregivers at Sarah Reed Senior Living.

Per his wishes, Ed donated his body to medical research. A memorial service will be held at a future time. To honor Ed's memory, donations may be made to The Erie Philharmonic, 23 West 10th St., Suite 3, Erie, PA 16501 or to the Edward Lesser/Arlene Wagner Scholarship at The University of Pittsburgh, 4200 5th Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-9972. Arrangements made through the **BURTON QUINN-SCOTT CREMATION & FUNERAL SERVICES**, send condolences at www.BurtonQuinnScott.com.

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