



Harold Howard Zeugner

March 9, 1923 - July 15, 2017

(PLEASE NOTE: This obituary has been updated to provide memorial service information.)

Harold Howard “Had” “Zeugie” Zeugner, 94, a citizen of South Buncombe County from the 1930s through 2011, passed away on July 15, 2017 in Cary, N.C. He was also a part-time resident of Oak Island, N.C. since 1986. Zeugie was a tireless volunteer, advocate, and civic and community leader, particularly in the area of recreation, in Asheville, Buncombe County, and Western North Carolina.

Harold Zeugner was born in Saranac Lake, New York to Mildred Brisette Zeugner, who died when he was an infant, and Harry Zeugner. After spending his childhood in Camden, N.J., he came to Asheville with his father, who remarried Mary Katherine Offutt, in 1936. After graduating from Lee Edwards High in 1940 and attending Mars Hill College for two years, he enlisted in the armed forces, flying P-40 and P-51 fighters in China with the 23rd Fighter Group, the “Flying Tigers.” Upon returning from service in early 1946 he married Genelle Marie Peterson, the love of his life for the next 71 years. (Genelle passed away 27 days later, on August 11, 2017 -- see obituary (<http://www.wakefuneral.com/obituaries/Genelle-Zeugner>).)

As a young man Zeugie worked in “The Bracelet Shop” in Skyland, the business of his father who alongside Stuart Nye had learned the art of making hand wrought silver jewelry. After returning from service Zeugie entered the sporting goods business, working for the All Sports Store and later the Sports Mart in downtown Asheville. He sold equipment to schools throughout the area, forming relationships with virtually every coach, athletics director, and principal in WNC. In 1963 he entered the life insurance business with Prudential Life Insurance Co. and in 1967 was appointed Vice President of Wright-Dobbins Insurance, Inc. In 1978 he was named by Buncombe County Schools as coordinator of its new Community Schools program, created to increase community use of public school facilities and broaden the programs offered – a concept he was instrumental in conceiving which is now commonplace across North Carolina. He retired in 1991, he

and Genelle splitting their time over the next 15 years between Asheville and Oak Island, where he was an avid boater and fisherman. The couple moved to Cary, N.C. in 2011.

Zeugie was best known for his staggering array of volunteer activities and positions. In 1947 he was a leader in the formation and management of the first basketball league in Buncombe County. In 1953 he was a key player in bringing Little League Baseball to Asheville, then coached the team that won the first two city championships. He was a leader in arranging an annual Thanksgiving Day high school seniors' football all-star game at Memorial Stadium, and later the Blue-White high school all-star basketball game; and bringing the Southeastern Regional Babe Ruth Baseball tournament to McCormick Field. He was a guiding force in the establishment, and was President, of the Land of the Sky Touchdown Club which brought nationally renowned sports figures to Asheville and hosted the Atlantic Coast Conference's post-season basketball awards banquet in the early 1960s.

In 1968 he was named chairman of the recreation division of the Buncombe County Planning Council, and in 1969 vice-chairman of the newly formed Buncombe County Recreation Commission. His work in these capacities was a major contributor to the establishment of the Buncombe County Parks and Recreation Department . For 14 years he served on the Department's Advisory Council, serving as chairman for much of that time, and was chairman of the Lay Board Division of the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Council. His passion and leadership has produced innovations and improvements in recreational opportunities for the citizens of Buncombe County, too many to cite here.

He was president of the Rhododendron Civitan Club, member of the Valley Springs Lions Club, served on the Citizens' Committee for Better Schools, was vice chairman of the Asheville-Buncombe County Youth Council's adult advisory board, and chaired or served on many other civic committees. He was President of Methodist Men and an Officer of Skyland Methodist Church.

As Community Schools Coordinator, along with the Women's Involvement Council and in answer to a growing community need to address the "latchkey kid" problem, Zeugie in 1985 convinced the Board of Education to implement an After School Program which was installed in every elementary school in Buncombe County. This program became the largest after school program in North Carolina.

Zeugie was a staunch advocate for the schools in the Roberson High district where he lived. He served on the Valley Springs Elementary advisory committee to the School

Board; for years was active in the Roberson Rams Club; was instrumental in establishing Roberson's Graduates of Distinction program; convinced community leaders to locate the Skyland South Branch Library adjacent to the high school, middle school, and elementary school; and on many occasions petitioned the County School Board and County Commissioners regarding various issues on behalf of the district's citizens.

For over 25 years Zeugie was the public address voice for Asheville High football, T.C. Roberson high football and basketball, Western Carolina University football, and high school, college, and pro basketball at the Asheville Civic Center. His final volunteer act was to conceive, arrange an organizing committee, and serve on the committee, for "Roy Williams Day in Western North Carolina" in May 2008.

Zeugie was awarded a Special Citation "in recognition of exceptional service to his fellow men through the medium of recreation" by the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association in 1975. In 1979 he received the National Recreation and Parks Association's Citizen Advocacy Award, its highest honor for non-professionals. In 1984 he was presented the Governor's Award, "the highest designation of appreciation for distinguished meritorious service to the People and the State of North Carolina," by Governor James B. Hunt. In 1988 he received a Lifetime Membership Award from the N.C. Association for Community Education. In 2001 the Mountain Amateur Athletic Club presented him its Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2005 the Skyland Recreation Center was renamed the "Harold H. 'Zeugie' Zeugner Recreation Center."

Zeugie was a devoted and loving husband, father and grandfather, and a loyal friend to so many. He is survived by his beloved Genelle; brother Charles Zeugner (wife Margaret Anne Thomas Zeugner) of Somerville, N.J.; son Michael H. Zeugner (wife Sharon Hurst Zeugner) of Sebastian, Fla.; daughter Jennifer Z. Johnson of Charlottesville, Va.; son Joel F. "Jody" Zeugner (wife Kim Frederick Zeugner) of Cary, N.C.; and grandchildren Chad Zeugner of Sebastian, Fla., Steven Zeugner of Washington, D.C., Veronica Zeugner of Richmond, Va., and Abby Zeugner of Cary, N.C.

A joint memorial service celebrating the lives of H.H. "Zeugie" and Genelle Zeugner will be held at 3:00 on Saturday, September 16 in the auditorium of T.C. Roberson High School, 250 Overlook Road, Asheville. In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Eblen Charities (www.eblencharities.org), SECU Hospice House of Smithfield, NC (www.johnstonhealth.org/locations/secu-hospice-house), or the Alzheimers Foundation of America (www.alzfdn.org).

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

SEP 16. 3:00 PM (ET)

T.C. Roberson High School
250 Overlook Road
Asheville, NC

Tribute Wall



“ Harold Zeugner was a fisherman. He fished for men and boys to help them in sports and life. He knew the blessed example of fishing for fish, and men. Long ago, a Fisherman came to earth, beckoned to go after men. His name was Jesus. He found four men and allowed them to live with him on earth, and in Heaven. Uncle Had fished for all sorts of men. As He brought the fish to shore, He was not taking them to the shores of Lake Lure, or Lake James, but His shores were much larger than other lakes of the mountains Had then loved. Well, the fish in that pond were scared to death! Would they be caught and cut into little pieces for supper for evil fisher people? Maybe their supper would be fish chowder. Or maybe fish sandwiches!

But suddenly the Fisherman appeared up the shore! Wow! Those poor fish were shaking their fins! But they could scarcely believe their gills when the Fisherman went around and gathered up all the fishing equipment and took it back to the Lodge! And the fish trembled, and shut their eyes for dread! That fisherman took all his hooks and told the happily shocked fish that they were making a big change! They were going out of the fishing game! And were going to begin a haven for fish and help them in any way they needed. They were going to start a big fish aquarium! And maybe some beautiful places for the startled fish to live! You know fish drastically try to escape the fisherman and their death at his hands. But instead of destroying the fish, the fisherman suddenly appeared up the shore! He was not taking them to the shores of Lake Lure, or Lake James! He had labored for these fish for many years. Once I caught a fish twice! The fishermen were overcome with joy! What a wonderful fisherman!

Jesus fished for men! He loved them so much that He willingly died for them, that they could choose to live with Him forever! What a Fisherman!

Yes, my uncle Had was a fisherman. He fished for men and boys, and long ago Jesus came to earth to catch you by death of love on the cross! Won't you give your heart to such a Fisherman? And He is coming back again to take all the fish who trust His sacrifice. Won't you meet us there in that beautiful Lake land!

All my love,
David

Richard Harrison - July 31, 2017 at 02:59 PM



“ I am so sorry. Zeugy was the greatest supporter of public schools I have ever known. So many people have benefited from Zeugy's efforts. We all owe him a huge thank you.

Mal Brown - July 19, 2017 at 07:27 PM

BM

“ I am so sorry to hear about your Dad. I always felt like your Mom and Dad were my 2nd parents growing up. My thoughts and prayers are with your family.

Brenda Moody

Brenda Moody - July 19, 2017 at 07:24 PM

TK

“ To the "Zeugie" Zeugner Family,

Please know that all of you are in my thoughts and prayers. "Zeugie" was a true patriot who loved his country, his wife and his children. I cannot say enough about his influence on our community. He was a true friend of mine, and he will be missed by so many people in the Asheville area. May each one of you feel God's presence in the days ahead.

Your friend,

Tommy Koontz

Tommy Koontz - July 19, 2017 at 06:14 PM

JH

“ Uncle "Had" took me in as a lad. Literally. I was such a backward youth and looking back to my childhood I know I had almost no self-esteem. Genelle, my Mom's little sister and Had let me come and stay with the family many glad summers over the years. They knew how much I loved the kids but I think they also realized just how much I needed a stable home where I could catch my breath. My home, ninety miles away, was a place where I was loved but also a place of alcohol-induced chaos. I will always cherish those wonderful summers - always. Thanks Unk!!

Jack Harrison - July 18, 2017 at 05:31 PM

RH

I remember that brother. Uncle Had was very special.

richard harrison - July 28, 2017 at 01:46 PM

BM

“ We are so sorry for your loss. Zeugie and Genelle were our neighbors at Oak Island and we loved them. They would do anything for you. You have our deepest sympathy.

Betty and Barton Michael

Betty Michael - July 18, 2017 at 09:13 AM

AZ

“ We express our heartfelt sympathy for your loss. Our thought's and prayers go out to your family.

Sherry & Andrew Zeugner Franklinville Nj

Andrew Zeugner - July 17, 2017 at 06:21 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Wake Funeral & Cremation Services, Inc. - July 17, 2017 at 08:48 AM

TD

“ As the sons of a Western North Carolina coach growing up in the mountains, you knew that a Saturday morning ritual was tagging along with your dad to the Sport's Mart in Asheville where all the coaches gathered to chat, swap film, and look over the newest equipment. While the coaches chatted, all the kids would swarm through the store playing with the bats, balls and gloves. Gene Wike and “Zeugie” quickly became surrogate dads, herding them into a larger back room to play. Thank you “Zeugie” for touching so many lives and making us better just by knowing you.

*Tom & David Ditt
Raleigh & Marion*

Tom Ditt - July 17, 2017 at 07:07 AM

BW

“ Dear Zeugner Family, My sincere thoughts and prayers go out to you all. I was a good friend of Zeugie since the little league days. Had always had the kids at heart in everything he did. The All- Sports store downtown on Saturday morning, where the Coachs, referees, athletic directors, gurus of sports, you would always find Ed Meadows and Zeugie Zeugner leading the conversation about the games the night before. I always thought Zeugie was quite the "stuff". And many years later, I still feel the same way. Zeugie would call me many, many times at night. Bill, this is 'Had', do you have a minute, to which I would always reply, SURE. I want to to go to City Council meeting or to School Board Meeting or to always something really worth while, usually something for the kids of our community. I am not sure we will ever have another Zeugie in my lifetime, and I will really miss him. He gave us all very many life lessons about serving others!

We were all blessed having known 'Had' Zeugner,

Bill Waddell

Bill Waddell - July 16, 2017 at 06:57 PM

DP

“ A true loss to his family and the community. He was a leader among men and his legacy will live on for generations. I was proud to know him. Very much an inspiration to all. I am very sorry for your loss. Dusty Pless

Dusty Pless - July 16, 2017 at 07:53 AM



“ I came to Skyland community in 1965 and "Had" was one of the first person that became one of my dearest friends. He was a neighbor living on Oakewilde Dr. in Oak Forest. We were both active in Skyland U. M. Church and the Lions Club. Had a full life and was one person that I respected and loved.

Alton Watts - July 16, 2017 at 07:14 AM