

Walter W. Shuham

Jan 20, 1918 - July 3, 2005



Walter W. Shuham was born on January 20, 1918 in Waitsburg, Washington to Walter G. Shuham and Anna Ennis Shuham. He and his sisters, Elizabeth, Erma, Margaret & Mary, grew up in Walla Walla, Washington enjoying the rolling wheat fields and countryside. His father worked in the banking industry at the Baker and Boyer National Bank. Walt attended school in Walla Walla and graduated from high school in 1935. In 1939, he graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a Bachelors of Science degree in Economics. Living in San Francisco and working for the Wells Fargo Bank, he enlisted in the United States Army in 1942. After officers training and work at the Pentagon, he was commissioned an officer and was

deployed into service during WWII.

Operating as a message center officer, he administered and supervised stations in Biak Island and Finschhafen, New Guinea. He was responsible to send, receive, code and decode cryptographic messages, (this is where I believe the love of numbers was cultivated). He was responsible for 2 radio Teletype circuits, 3 radio circuits and 4 Teletype landline circuits. He supervised and guided 67 enlisted men who acted as trained technicians.

Upon his release from active duty in January 1946, he received the WWII Victory medal, Asiatic Pacific Service medal, the Phillippine Liberation ribbon and the American campaign medal. During the service he “took a few books along to study” and passed his CPA examination. In 1947 he moved to Ketchikan to work for Marshall Crutcher. In November 1948, he met his wife Palmina Albertini Ziller and they soon married at Holy Name Catholic Church.

The adventurous couple briefly lived in Pelican, AK where Walt worked for Standard Oil; however his wife strongly recommended they return to Ketchikan. In 1954 he opened his own practice; he was the 28th person to pass the state CPA examination. In 1970, he was a partner in the building Alaska Forest Association, now called the Jernberg building. Together, Walt and Polly made a home with their two children, Walter “Peter” and Anne “Margaret” Shuham, where he resided until his death.

Walter Shuham was a humble gentle man who would never talk about his accomplishments. In addition to his accounting practice, Walt was an adjunct faculty member teaching accounting and business at the Ketchikan Community College for 40 years. On May 19th 1992, he received the Meritorious Service award by Chancellor Marshall Lind of the University of Alaska Southeast. In January of 1995, he earned the Citizen of the year award from the Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce. Ernesta Ballard stated, “He is a kind and gentle man. He has given so much and expected so little in return. We should study this man’s life admirably.” Then in 1996, he was bestowed the states highest business honor, the William E. Egan outstanding Alaskan award. His other accomplishments include: Founding Member & Charter Director of the Ketchikan Pioneers Home Foundation, Ketchikan General Hospital Advisory and Governing Board member for over 30 years, Board of Directors for First Bank 1956 – 1990, Holy Name Catholic Church Advisory board and financial advisor, Involved in the Alaska Forest Association and founding member of the Ketchikan General Hospital’s Foundation Board.

Walter enjoyed his work until the day he died; he said if he had it to do over again, he would not do anything different. He stepped down as Senior Partner for Shuham, Milner, Schaffer & Howard in 2003. In his later years, after the death of his wife Polly, he found new adventures in traveling. Often times, with his grandson Jimmy, the two would adventure through the West Coast by air, sea and car. Walt was a mentor to the many CPAs currently practicing. He was also a philanthropist, known to bestow his prosperity to hundreds of charities. He was particularly interested in the areas of social justice and education. A lifetime member of Holy Name Catholic Church he committed his time, energy and financial resources to the ongoing programs of the church and school.



Walter is survived by his sisters Margaret A. Shuham of Seattle, WA and Mary Shuham Dore of Bellevue, WA, his daughter Anne Margaret Shuham Hardy, her husband William S. Hardy, their daughter Zoey A. Shuham Hardy of Ketchikan, his grandson Walter James Shuham, of San Antonio Texas and numerous nieces and nephews of New Jersey and Washington State. He will be sorely missed.