

Eugene S. Stanley

Beloved Husband & Father

Eugene S. Stanley (ne Strzyzewski) died of heart failure November 7, 2020, in San Antonio, TX, at age 89, concluding a life well lived, a life of passion and purpose.

Gene, as he preferred to be called, was born October 19, 1931, in Milwaukee, WI, the first son of Stanley and Anna (Masztaleska) Strzyzewski. He was close to his brother, Thomas Strzyzewski, who survives in Greenfield, WI.

Growing up on Milwaukee's South Side, Gene attended St. Vincent de Paul Elementary School and gained notoriety at public pools for his unorthodox attempts to learn how to swim. A few too many times, he jumped in the deep end and life guards had to fish him out, rendering him unwelcome at the pool and unable to swim.



As a boy, he demonstrated a penchant for skipping that led to his nickname "Skippy," later shortened by his family to "Skip." More than anything, this nickname aptly epitomized Gene's enduring optimism and zest for life.



Gene (right) and his brother Tom hang around together.

He relished being a "paperboy" for the *Milwaukee Journal* during his early teen years and, already a news aficionado, he devoured the World War II articles that filled its front pages. Reading this history as it happened helped nurture his love of country and of democracy.

Influenced by his strong Catholic faith, Gene left Marquette University High School in his mid-teens to attend a Maryknoll Seminary in Clarks Summit, PA, with the intent to serve as a missionary to China. After about four years, he realized that his true desire was to be a family man. So, he returned to Milwaukee and attended Marquette University.

A stint in the U.S. Army intervened, when he was drafted for the Korean War. He remained stateside at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, and Fort Sheridan, IL. He left the service with a love for Army boots, because they fit his feet so well, and the ability to avail himself of the G.I. bill. He used the latter to enroll in Marquette University Law School.

It was around this time that he met his future wife, the former Sylvia J. Miley of Sheboygan, WI. Sylvia was attending college in Milwaukee, and she and Gene met through one of her roommates. They were married June 7, 1958, at St. Clement's Catholic Church in Sheboygan and shared 62 years of marriage. Sylvia survives in San Antonio.



Gene and Sylvia celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in 2008 with a family cruise to Alaska.

Life brought a number of changes in quick succession. Gene graduated from law school in 1959, and the young couple moved to Park Falls, WI, for him to embark in private practice. The following year came the birth of their first child, a girl, followed by two sons over the next several years. His children also survive, Mary Stanley-Larsen (Glenn) of Las Vegas, NV, John (Myra) of McAllen, TX, and Paul of Austin, TX.

Meanwhile, Gene discovered that private law practice was not to his liking, and his brief employment at the Veterans Administration similarly did not prove satisfying. True to his nature, he wanted a position in which he could be of more service to others.

He found his niche in 1965 when he began working at Allis-Chalmers, where he was in charge of workers compensation for the large manufacturing plant in suburban Milwaukee. He loved his job and took immense pride in the company's products, whether it was the famous orange-red tractors or lesser known massive electric generators.



Gene shares a photo moment with sons Paul and John.

Besides work, family and nature formed the hub of Gene's life at this time. He reveled in the outdoors, and he loved to share it with those dear to him. One of his favorite haunts was Milwaukee County's Whitnall Park. There, he would stroll appreciatively through its beauty during family outings or guide the kids along its designated nature trail, stopping to discuss each highlight along the way.

In addition, he made regular pilgrimages with John, and later Paul and his brother Tom, to canoe the wilderness waterways of Quetico Provincial Park in northern Ontario.

When solitude beckoned, his refuge was to head to Lake Michigan early Saturday mornings, put on his waders, and cast his line for the lake's prized coho salmon. The fish that didn't get away found themselves in Gene's well-used wood smoker. Even more well used was Gene's charcoal grill, where brats and burgers could be found frying even in the dead of a Wisconsin winter.

Gene put the fanatical into fan when it came to several area sports teams. Foremost were his beloved Green Bay Packers, to the point it could be said that he bled green and gold. UW Badger football games would blare from the garage radio on fall Saturday afternoons as he worked in the yard, and he eagerly followed the Marquette University Warriors men's basketball team back in the day.

But the economic downturn that devastated the Upper Midwest in the 1980s took its toll, and Allis-Chalmers closed its doors in 1985. Gene relocated to San Antonio, TX, to continue his highly specialized career. He landed at Randolph AFB in a similar position in which he managed self-insured workers compensation for all civilian employees of the Air Force around the world.

He remained there until he retired in 1997. With his retirement he also put away his signature bow ties that he sported everywhere he worked, preferring them because they didn't flop around or get in his way.



Gene beams at daughter Mary's wedding.

Retirement opened up new opportunities. Gene took on several volunteer positions, including working with second graders to improve their literacy skills, a move inspired by several week-long visits to his daughter Mary's fourth-grade classroom in Las Vegas. He also stepped forward to help the Child Advocates of San Antonio and the Eucharistic Ministry to the Sick and Shut-Ins through Holy Spirit Catholic Church.

This new phase also provided him with more time to indulge in his many passions. Always an avid reader of diverse topics, Gene continued to pursue his lifelong interests in history, theology, and sciences, especially astronomy and archaeology. A true Renaissance man, he partook of various musical genres, theater, opera, and art throughout his life. His passion for food persisted, as well, as he enjoyed nearly everything with gusto. Of course, he still cheered on his Packers from the heart of Texas.

Most of all, Gene spent countless hours pleasantly putting in his backyard garden, a huge source of pride and joy that he dubbed "little Whitnall Park." In keeping with his kind and gentle nature and way of life, his family encourages people to celebrate Gene by performing acts of kindness, random or otherwise. As Mother Teresa reminds us, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." In lieu of flowers, his family asks that a Mass be sponsored in his memory.

Gene's ashes will rest at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio. A funeral Mass in his honor will be celebrated when conditions allow.



Gene lovingly tended his backyard garden, which he proudly called "Little Whitnall Park." This image was in one of his many albums of flower photos.