



Walter H. Kall

February 3, 1927 - November 23, 2016

Walter H. Kall, 89, of Rockford passed away November 23, 2016 in Presence Cor Mariae Center. Born February 3, 1927 in Rockford, son of Walter L. and Ruth (O'Neal) Kall. From the age of 2 ½ to 21 Walt lived on Catherine Street among mostly Polish neighbors whom he soon learned to love. At Kishwaukee School, Walt, whose ancestors were Swedish, Irish and Scots, met many Italians and others who were multi-ethnic as well as his first best friend in Kindergarten who was a Negro. He felt he was fortunate to have met such a wide variety of Americans before he was "6 or 7 of 8". Thus he had formed some of his own opinions before he could be taught "to hate all the people his relatives hate" (courtesy of Oscar Hammerstein II). At Lincoln Jr. and East High Schools, Walt joined lots of Swedes and other mainline students, receiving his diploma in January 1945.

Soon after his 18th birthday, Walt was drafted into the US Army and served his country honorably, including duty in the occupation of bombed out Germany in 1945 and 1946. The GI Bill helped him get a B.A. degree from Augustana College in 1951. Soon after, he travelled on a student trip to Europe and, largely through hitchhiking and staying at youth hostels, toured the continent for 6 months. After running out of money he found work through a hiring office in Paris and worked for Atlas Construction in French Morocco for 15 months in 1952-53. It was Walt's first view of Muslim culture and included the month of the observance of the fasting of Ramadan. Walt found time to visit Fez and Marrakesh. Fez, with its crowded, covered souk was fantastic. The famous square, Jemaa el Fna more than lived up to its reputation. During this time there was a lively independence movement and many of the Americans on this job, including Walt, came to favor Arab independence from French Colonialism. One of Walt's colleagues wrote a letter to a Casa Blanca newspaper favoring independence and with agreement from US authorities, the French gave her 48 hours to leave Morocco. Independence came, but not until after Walt had left. After a visit home, Walt returned to Europe, visiting the UK and Scotland settling in Munich for a couple of years in 1953-54. There he intended to do research and to write but he soon turned to beer and forging friendships. He talked to many Germans who had lived and fought during the war. Some still seemed Nazi influenced. But there were others like Otto, a cousin of Walt's then girlfriend, Barbara who had a change in vision. Otto had been a fighter pilot in Luftwaffe and a devoted Nazi. After returning to civilian life in devastated

Germany he laid around morosely until he had a chance to get some work in Switzerland. There he found art, music and literature that the Nazi's had forbidden. Otto felt resentment that the Nazi years had deprived him of things he loved. When Barbara and Walt visited him and his wife they had modern art in their apartment. Otto loved American music, especially Jazz, and he was almost addicted to the singing of Eartha Kitt. Out of money saved from Morocco, Walt returned to Rockford, worked in factories for a while, then applied for and was granted an Assistantship to study in graduate school at Rutgers University. He received a M.A. from Rutgers in 1958, picked up enough education credits from Yeshiva University and NYC and taught from 1958-1967 in the public school system of the city. Most of Walt's teaching was at a junior high school in East Harlem where the students were either Negroes from a nearby housing project or Hispanics from the neighborhood. Walt felt fortunate that the principal, a demanding white man, insisted that all students could learn and that all should be treated with equal respect. The result was that in this so called tough school the teachers respected the students and received respect in return. Walt's brother Ralph joined him for part of his time in New York. They participated in civil rights marches and huge anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in the city with their friends. Although he attended some opera and stage shows, had some fine dinners with friends and enjoyed visits to Greenwich Village, Walt decided that 9 years in the Big Apple was enough for someone without a big paying job. Walt again returned to Rockford and worked sorting mail at the post office for 20 years, retiring in 1988.

In the early 1990's having temporarily kicked a booze problem, Walt became active in Rock Valley College's Center for Learning in Retirement, including a stint on the Advisory Committee. With his brother Ralph, he led courses in current events in the US and around the world. He remained somewhat active in CLR activities until the end. In Rockford, Walt and Ralph joined demonstrators against the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

During their CLR years Walt and Ralph had maintained subscriptions for several years to the Rockford Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. They also attended concerts at Ravinia for several years. In Rockford they also subscribed to concerts at the Mendelssohn Club and the Bach Chamber Choir.

Aside from much travel in the US, Walt also made several more trips abroad. His first vacation from the PO he spent in St. Croix in the Virgin Islands. Then, with Ralph, there was a Jazz Cruise in the Caribbean organized by Bill Korst; a Rock Valley College sponsored visit to Cuba and a trip to Europe in 2001. They were in Austria when the planes hit New York and the Pentagon. Americans on their tour bus received much sympathy from the people of Prague and Budapest. In 2004 they spent a Rock Valley sponsored and led a 3 week visit to China including the Great Wall, which Ralph climbed. Walt was preceded in death by his parents, grandparents, uncle and aunts, brother-in-law Stanley McCrudden, and until Walt's death he mourned the loss of his brother Ralph E. Kall who died in 2011. Survivors include his cousins, Mike O'Neal, Ruth Dean, and Mike

Frithiof. Very important survivors are Walt's sister Marilyn McCrudden of Thomson; her children Sandy (Al) Dierckman, of Monroe, WI, Sherry (Terry) Fife of Clinton, IA, Stan (Kris) McCrudden of Savanna, and Sean McCrudden of Thomson and their teeming offspring. The family, complying with Walt's request, had the cremation services completed by Grace Funeral & Cremation Services. His ashes will be scatted on a small lake on McCrudden property near Thomson, with which Walt was very familiar. Since all of Walt's relatives live far away from Rockford and most of his friends and acquaintances are in the Rockford area, his family has not planned a memorial service. Share a memory or condolence at www.GraceFH.com.

Comments



“ Thank you for the obituary at the R.R.star from today, in which was reported an outstanding life of an outstanding man! As a German born citizen of Rockford, being 87 years old, I can appreciate his life full of never ending challenges and numerous new adventures around the world. I would have appreciated to listen to his stories during his lifetime and hope, that he will be remaining in your and your children and grandchildren's memory.
God bless all of you!
Robert M. Sudmeyer

robert sudmeyer - December 01, 2016 at 08:34 PM



“ My Maiden name was Charlotte Johnson. My Parents, Florence and Hank Johnson were very good friends of Walt and Ruth Kall.

I remember Walt, Ralph and especially Marilyn and Stan.

My Condolences,
Charlotte Fuller
3911 Hemlock Ct.
Belvidere, Il. 61008

Marilyn Sprague Gigiano - November 30, 2016 at 02:09 PM



“ Thank you Charlotte for taking the time to share. Walts family
Sherry Fife - November 30, 2016 at 05:25 PM



“ Mr. Kall and his brother were patients at Dr. Kelly Moore's office they were very kind and very entertaining telling us about their adventures and travels. I'm sorry to hear of his passing.Kathleen Vecchio

kathleen Vecchio - November 30, 2016 at 09:10 AM