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ENFIELD

Growth Company
167 Hazard Ave. 860-749-9237
www.thegrowthco.com

SOMERS

Growth Company
167 Hazard Ave. 860-749-9237
www.thegrowthco.com

Colonial Flower Shoppe
611 Main Street 860-763-0082
www.thegrowthco.com

SOUTH WINDSOR

Broad Brook Gardens
938 Sullivan Ave. 860-432-8900
broadbrookgardens.com

WINDSOR LOCKS

Growth Company
167 Hazard Ave. 860-749-9237
www.thegrowthco.com

RECEPTION ROOM

ENFIELD

Figaro Restaurant
90 Elm St. 860-627-7774

EAST WINDSOR

LaNoite Weddings & Banquets Facility
17 Thompson Rd. 860-627-7774

SYMPATHY LAMPS

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Growth Company
167 Hazard Ave. 860-749-9237
www.thegrowthco.com

SOMERSVILLE

Somersvillage Gifts & Gourmet
111 Main St. 860-265-2282
www.somersvillagegifts.com

FUNERAL HOMES

ENFIELD

Browne Funeral & Cremation Services
43 Shaker Rd. 860-745-3115

Leete Stevens Chapels & Crematory
61 South Rd. 860-749-2244

STAFFORD SPRINGS

Introvigne Funeral Home, Inc.
51 East Main St. 860-684-2538

Life Tributes

ENFIELD

Nicholas Anthony Duray

HOPE VALLEY

Allan Thomas

MANCHESTER

Mary Blish

Obituary Information:

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Manchester Journal Inquirer. Due to space and deadline limitations,
inclusion in this index is not guaranteed.

Mary Blish

Mary (Wilson) Blish, 89, of Manchester, CT, passed away peacefully on December 23, 2023, in Bridgeport, CT.

Mary was born in Manchester, CT to George Wilson and Elizabeth (Poole) Wilson Krob. She graduated from Manchester High School in 1952 and went on to earn a bachelor's from Hillyer College Hartford Conservatory of Music in 1956. Mary was a lifetime member of the Manchester Historical Society and was an active member of the Manchester Arts Commission. She was a founding member of Little Theatre of Manchester and served on its Board of Directors in a variety of capacities. She performed as musical director and costume designer for countless productions. She was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from LTM. Mary was the principal initiator of the restoration of Cheney Hall, a national historic building at the gateway to the Cheney Brothers Historic District.

Mary will join her soulmate and late husband, Fred T. Blish III. She was predeceased by her children, David Blish and Margaret Bloom, her brother George Wilson II and his wife Lori Wilson, and brother, Thomas Wilson.

She is survived by grand-



children Emily Shufirin, Sarah Hann and her husband James, and Zachary Bloom. Along with her great-grandchildren Noah, Ethan, Thea, Alexia, and Zachary. She leaves behind her sister-in-law, Lynne Wilson, and a number of beloved nieces, nephews, and their spouses.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Little Theatre of Manchester, 177 Hartford Road, Manchester, CT. The family wishes to extend their gratitude to the compassionate staff of Bridgeport's Jewish Senior Services and former caretakers from Care For Me at Home.

Calling hours will be held at Manchester Funeral Home at 142 E Center Street on January 12, 2024, from 5pm - 7pm. Funeral services will be held privately.

Nicholas Anthony Duray

1/30/1921 - 1/2/2024

In loving memory of Nicholas Anthony Duray, 102, born on January 30, 1921, in Johnstown, PA.

A dedicated patriot, he served in the U.S. Navy during WW2 as a Radarman 3rd class aboard the NTS Sampson, NY and the USS LST 776. His contributions in the Pacific during the battle of Iwo Jima helped secure America's freedom. He earned the Pacific Theater Ribbon, Victory Medal, and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon. Shortly after the war he worked as a machinist, then later as an aircraft draftsman for Pratt and Whitney for 35 years.

We cherish the memories of a man who loved to laugh, tell jokes and was faithful to Holy Family Church in Enfield, CT. Nicholas's commitment to community service was evident through his membership in Saint Vincent DePaul, where he selflessly helped the disadvantaged. His passion for golf, sports and unwavering support for the Red Sox and Penn State reflected his vibrant spirit. He was an avid letter writer to family and friends.

Nicholas is survived by his devoted spouse of 73 years, Mary Elizabeth (Kehl) Duray, and leaves a legacy in his children: Paul, Thomas (predeceased), Elizabeth Luena, Nicholas, Gregory and daughters-in-law Marty Duray, Fe Duray, and Tammy Sorensen Duray. He is predeceased by his siblings Mary, Andrew, Michael, Helen Balog, Joan Ditko,



and is survived by Marge Murray of Johnstown, PA.

His memory lives on through his grandchildren, Christie, Thomas, Brandon, Danielle, Jeremy, Christopher, Joshua, Sarah, Nathan, Katharine, great-granddaughter Emma Fay and a host of nieces and nephews.

We will miss his many selfless acts of kindness and charity. As we bid farewell we remember Nicholas Anthony Duray for his love, and the indelible mark and impact on all who were fortunate to know him.

His funeral Mass will be celebrated on Wednesday January 10, 2024 at 11:00 a.m., in Holy Family Church 23 Simon Rd., Enfield, CT. The Family will greet attendees at 10:30 a.m. prior to services at the church. Burial following services with military honors will take place in St. Patrick's Cemetery, King St., Enfield, CT. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations may be made to the St. Vincent DePaul, Holy Family Church, Enfield, CT.



*Place a memoriam
to remember a loved one*



Call 203-330-6306 or email obituaries@hearstmediact.com

Benjamin F. Aleks

Benjamin F. Aleks, 76, of Somers, died January 10, 2024, at Johnson Memorial Hospital in Stafford Springs, CT. He was the beloved husband of Candace (Crand) Aleks for 37 years.

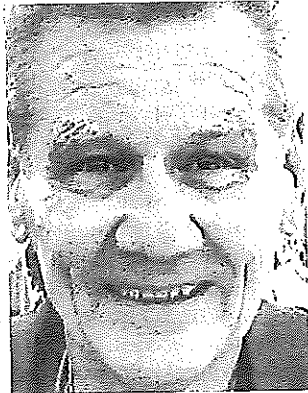
Born Jan. 16, 1947, in Dorchester, Mass. Ben was the son of the late Benjamin and Victoria (Kotarba) Aleks. He grew up in Longmeadow, MA, and developed into an outstanding athlete early on.

Following in the footsteps of his dad, a 7-time New England AAU wrestling champion, Ben began competing in the sport as a teen, and it quickly became his lifetime passion. As a freshman at Cathedral High School, Springfield in 1961, he became the first competitor to take the mat when the Purple Panthers started a wrestling program. He won his match in the 103-lb. weight class despite tipping the scales at just 95 lbs., and eventually won the city championship.

He attended from Curry College in Milton, MA, which had no wrestling team, so he hitchhiked daily to Attleboro to wrestle for a YMCA team. He won the 1967 New England Championships at 125 lbs. and was runner-up in the National YMCA Championships in Toledo, Ohio.

Upon graduation from Curry in 1969, Ben began giving back to the sport he loved by taking his first coaching job at Milton Academy. A year later at age 23, he again followed in his dad's footsteps and began coaching at Cathedral. In eight seasons, his teams compiled a 118-27-4 record, winning 94 straight matches against western Mass. opponents and capturing three western Mass. championships.

After a brief hiatus, he came to Enfield, CT in 1983 to take the helm of the wrestling program at Enrico Fermi High School. He immediately instilled a winning tradition, directing the Falcons to a runner-up finish in



the 1985 Class LL tournament, then taking second place at the State Open in 1987.

Ben stepped down from the Fermi post following the 1993-94 season, after amassing a record of 171-71-2 for a .705 winning percentage. His overall coaching record was 289-98-6, a .743 winning percentage, and following his official retirement, he continued to work as a volunteer assistant for another 25 years. He also assisted in reviving the Enfield youth wrestling program, which had been dormant for many years.

His tireless efforts to establish a dedicated wrestling center came to fruition in 2019, when the former Fermi band room was converted into a practice facility. On Dec. 16, 2019, the Ben Aleks Wrestling

Center was officially dedicated in his honor, and since 2023, an annual multi-team meet at Enfield High School is named the Ben Aleks Duals.

Ben earned induction into the Enfield Athletic Hall of Fame in 2016, and his State Open runner-up team was honored in 2022. He received the John Wentworth Good Sport Award from the Connecticut Sports Media Alliance in 2021 and was inducted into the Connecticut chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum in 2022.

He was a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves, and later became a proud volunteer

for the In Case 1 Firing Detail at the Massachusetts Veterans Cemetery in Agawam.

Ben's primary career was in the food distributing business for 49 years as a food broker, food distributor, sales representative and manager of Aleks Distributing Company, East Longmeadow, Mass. and R. L. Schreiber Foods, Inc. of Fort Lauderdale, FL

He and Candy enjoyed traveling worldwide. A particular thrill for Ben came when he set foot on the hallowed ground of the original Olympic Games in Olympia Greece.

Besides his wife, Ben is survived by his daughter, Jennifer (Aleks) MacDonald, (Bryan), grandchildren Sarah, Paul and Sean MacDonald of Longmeadow, MA. Sister-in-law Patricia Aleks and niece, Kathy Aleks of East Longmeadow, MA. Nephews Allen and Jason Tourville of Florida. Cousins Carolyn Shost of Manchester, NH and Dian Doyle of La Jolla, CA along with many dear cousins in the Boston area.

The funeral is scheduled for Monday, January 15, 2024, at 9 a.m. at Browne Memorial Funeral Chapels, 43 Shaker Rd. Enfield, CT followed by a Liturgy of Christian Burial at 10:30 a.m. at Holy Family Church, 23 Simon Rd., Enfield, CT.

Rites of Committal and Military Honors will follow at Somers Center Cemetery, 81 Battle St., Somers, CT.

Visiting hours at Browne Funeral Home will be Sunday, January 14, 2024, from 2:00 -5:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Ben's memory may be made to the ALS Association, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22209 or ALS UNITED Connecticut, 4 Oxford Rd., Suite E4, Milford, CT 06460. For more information, please visit Brownefuneralchapel.com.