

# OBITUARIES



**PHYLLIS ELLA SKEFFINGTON**

OLD TOWN - Phyllis Ella Skeffington, 73, died peacefully August 29, 2016, at a local hospital with her family by her side. She was born October 25, 1942, in Woonsocket, RI, a daughter of Michael Joseph and Ella Ottila (Rohr) Leduke.

She grew up in Rhode Island and studied business classes at Bryant College. After marriage she and her husband moved to Fort Bragg, NC, and then to Houlton, ME, before settling in Old Town, ME, in 1970, where she worked as a bookkeeper for several local businesses including R.M. Flagg Co., The Hasey Co. and 3-E Co. A Notary Public, for several years she also owned and managed Old Town Redemption Center. Phyllis, or as she was affectionately known by - "Big Phyl," "Bubby," "my bride," "Mom," "Auntie FiFi," "Frugal Phyl," "Gummy Dirt" and "Grammy," always put family first. When her children were younger, she would knit them sweaters and mittens. As her children had children, she frequently traveled to southern Maine to attend their various concerts, competitions, recitals and sporting events, including support of the South Portland Music Boosters. Phyllis' passions were yard "sailing" and her garden. Three seasons a year you could find her out in her yard tending to her various flower and vegetable gardens. She was always on the lookout for bargains, most often presents and clothing for her 4 grandchildren. She was also known for the beautiful baskets and wreaths that she made. Upon retirement she enjoyed traveling with her husband and friends on Caribbean cruises. In recent years she

developed a special bond with her youngest son, Keith, and they became best friends. She will be fondly remembered by all her children and grandchildren for her "Phylisms" - "What goes around, comes around," "That's the ticket," "When I get a round tuit," "I'll get right on that" and many more.

She is survived by her high school sweetheart, her husband of 50 years, Edmund G. Skeffington Jr.; and their three children: son, Craig Ryan Skeffington and his wife, Carrie Ellen (Stewart), of South Portland and their children, Hannah Grace and Molly Elizabeth; daughter, Sheila Lynn Myhaver and her husband, Daniel Paul, of Gray and their children, Casey MacMillan and Riley Elizabeth; and son, Keith Aaron Skeffington of Bangor; sister, Beverly Ann Sweet and her husband, David, of Seekonk, MA; several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brother, Donald Michael Leduke.

A time to celebrate her life will be Sunday, September 11, 2016, from 1-4 p.m. at the Birmingham Funeral Home, 438 Main St., Old Town. As a way to celebrate Phyllis, we invite guests to wear something in her favorite color yellow if they so choose. Private interment will be at Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Augusta. Memorial contributions may be made to CancerCare of Maine, care of EMHS Foundation, P.O. Box 931, Bangor, ME 04402 [www.emhsfoundation.org](http://www.emhsfoundation.org) or to Alpha One Independent Living, 127 Main Street, South Portland, ME 04106, [www.alphaonenow.org](http://www.alphaonenow.org).

## Death Notices

**BILODEAU, Maurice A.**, 94, Belgrade & Zephyrhill, FL., Sep. 2, 2016. Service Wednesday, September 7, 2016, 11 AM, Notre Dame Church, 112 Silver Street, Waterville. Gallant Funeral Home, 10 Elm Street, Waterville.

**BRIGGS, Albert (Jimmy)**, Mattawamkeag, Sep. 2, 2016. Service 1 p.m., Thursday, Matawamkeag Cemetery, Mattawamkeag.

**COCHRAN, Thelma M.**, 96, Caribou, Sept. 3, 2016. Service 3pm, Tuesday, Sep. 6, 2016, Mockler Funeral Home, Caribou.

**FREEMAN, Henry E. "Hank"**, 74, Millinocket, Sep. 3, 2016. Service 2pm, Thursday, Sep. 8, 2016, Lamson Funeral Home, 11 Tamarack St., Millinocket.

**LAFRANCE JR., Joseph James "Joe"**, 78, Old Town, Sep. 1, 2016. Service 10 a.m., Wednesday, Sep. 7, Parish of the Resurrection, Holy Family Church, Old Town.

**LANDRY, Charles Louis Landry**, "Charlie", 56, East Millinocket, Sep. 3, 2016. Service Thursday, Sep. 8, 2016, 2pm, St. Martins Reception Hall, Millinocket.

**MAILLET, Jacqueline B.**, East Millinocket, Brewer & Bangor, Sep. 3, 2016. Service 11 A.M., Thursday, Sep. 8, 2016, Christ the Divine Mercy Parish, St. Peter's Catholic Church, 58 Cedar Street, East Millinocket. Lamson Funeral Home, 11 Tamarack Street, Millinocket.

**MESSIER, Richard C. 64**, Old Town, Sept 2, 2016. Birmingham Funeral Home Old Town.

**NORMAN, Clayton Norbert**, August, Aug. 27, 2016. Service Sep. 24, 2016, 2:00pm, United Pentecostal Church 10 Lamson Rd. Jonesport ME.

**POWERS, Lorena J.**, 91, East Millinocket, Sep. 3, 2016. Service 2pm, Wednesday, Sep. 7, 2016, Lamson Funeral Home, 17 Western Avenue, East Millinocket.

**SKEFFINGTON, Phyllis Ella**, 73, Old Town, Aug. 29, 2016. Service 1-4 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 11, at Birmingham Funeral Home, 438 Main St., Old Town.

**SMALL, Mary Eva**, Milford, 67. Service 6:00 pm, Sept. 10, 2016, Birmingham Funeral Home, 438 Main Street, Old Town.

**SMITH, Etta Pearl**, 75, New Limerick and Georgetown, FL., Aug. 7, 2016. Dunn Funeral Home, Houlton.

**SPEARING, Matthew Ralph**, 69, Bangor; at Boston, Sept. 1, 2016.

**SPRAGUE, Robert Merlin**, 98, Jamestown & Falconer, NY, Sep. 3, 2016. Service 10 am, Tuesday, Sep. 6, 2016, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Falconer, NY. Falconer Funeral Home, Falconer, NY.

**TALON, Albert J.**, 84, Glenburn, Aug. 25, 2016.

**TARDIE, Laurette M.**, Winterville & Eagle Lake, Sep. 1, 2016. Service 11 am., Friday, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Eagle Lake. Daigle Funeral Home, Fort Kent.

**THIBODEAU, Richard W.**, 71, Caribou & Portland, Aug. 31, 2016. Service 12pm, Parish of the Precious Blood Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Caribou. Mockler Funeral Home, 24 Reservoir Street, Caribou.

**WHITNEY, William E.**, 85, Westbrook and Union; at Portland, Aug. 26, 2016. Service 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 10, at Oak Hill Cemetery, Camden. Long Funeral Home & Cremation Service, 9 Mountain St., Camden.



**MATTHEW RALPH SPEARING**

BANGOR - Matthew Ralph Spearing, 69, died September 1, 2016, following complications from a

long and strong battle with cancer, at a VA hospital in Boston. He was born March 31, 1947, in Bangor, the son of Harry and Vivian (McGarigle) Spearing.

Shortly after graduating from Bangor High School, Matt joined the Army serving during the Vietnam War in the 198th Light Infantry Brigade. He also was a recipient of the Bronze Star. Matt retired from the Bangor Daily News as a pressman. He enjoyed camping, gardening, and fishing at the Togue Bait Hotel, BBQ and grilling all seasons, rain, snow, hail, tornado, or sunshine. He loved reading, music, and spending time with family and friends. He will be greatly missed and loved by many for his good humor, trouble making pranks at home and work, his love of life, and family, including the love of his life, his wife of 40 years, Cindy, and his newest grandson, Oscar. He also enjoyed time with grandchildren Parker and Alexis and watching them grow up.

In addition to his parents, Matt was predeceased by his 3 brothers, Danny, Mike and Tom Spearing; and his sister -in-law, Karen Cole. He is survived by his wife, Cindy Spearing; sons, Nathaniel, Matthew and Luke Spearing, and Jason Everett; grandsons, Oscar Spearing and Parker Everett; granddaughter, Alexis Everett; and daughter-in-law, Heather Adams.

Services will be private for the family. Family and friends are invited to share memories and condolences at

[www.BrookingsSmith.com](http://www.BrookingsSmith.com).

## Music executive Heller dies at 75

BY MATT SCHUDEL  
THE WASHINGTON POST

Jerry Heller, a once-powerful music executive who helped take gangsta rap mainstream as a record-company founder and the manager of the group N.W.A., but who was later pilloried as a caricature of the greedy, exploitative manager who takes advantage of young music stars, died Sept. 2 at a hospital in Thousand Oaks, California. He was 75.

He had a heart attack while driving and was involved in a car crash, his cousin Gary Ballen told The Associated Press. He had a history of heart problems and diabetes.

Heller had been a manager of musical acts since the 1960s, working with such major performers as Creedence Clearwater Revival, Marvin Gaye, Pink Floyd and Elton John. But he had his greatest impact when he joined forces in the late 1980s with a group of young hip-hop artists in Los Angeles.

The teenaged rappers who formed N.W.A. — most notably Eazy-E, Ice Cube and Dr. Dre — became the first major stars of West Coast gangsta rap. Their boastful, intensely profane lyrics depicted a world of sex, violence and racial tension, with frequent references to guns and an overt hatred of the police.

In 1987, Heller and Eazy-E (Eric Wright) launched Ruthless Records, an independent label devoted to the emerging genre of gangsta rap and, in particular, N.W.A. Eazy-E wrote the rap tune that, in some ways, came to define the gangsta culture: "Boyz-n-the-Hood," which later became the title of a movie directed by John Singleton.

The group's anti-establishment point of view was reflected in its defiant name, which stood for Niggaz With Attitude. With the release of the group's first album, "Straight Outta Compton" in 1988, N.W.A. "introduced some of the most grotesquely exciting music ever made," wrote a Newsweek reviewer. The recording sold 3 million copies and became immensely popular with young listeners of all backgrounds.

Gerald E. Heller was born Oct. 6, 1940, in Cleveland. His father was a scrap-metal dealer.

"My dad wasn't a gangster and he wasn't a criminal, but he sure liked to rub padded shoulders with them," Heller wrote in his 2006 memoir, "Ruthless." "He was a high roller, interested in nightlife, horses, organized athletics, dice, bookies, touts, and card games."

Heller shared some of the same interests. He graduated from the University of Southern California in 1963 and began working in Los Angeles entertainment circles, managing musical acts that included, at various times, Otis Redding, Van Morrison, Black Sabbath and Ike and Tina Turner. By the early 1970s, his booking agency was taking millions of dollars a year.

He looked the part, wearing tinted glasses and colorful shirts and driving sports cars with customized license plates. He was married and divorced two times.

After the breakup of N.W.A. in 1991, Heller sought to regain his foothold in the music business, but he had a hard time escaping the reputation, deserved or not, as something of a shakedown artist.

He managed several other groups and moved toward Latino hip-hop without duplicating his earlier success.

N.W.A. was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this year.

Heller ended up living in a modest prefab housing development in Westlake Village, California.

"It's perfectly comfortable, if a bit unassuming," reporter Amos Barshad wrote in Grantland last year. "The thought does come to mind: If Jerry Heller stole money, perhaps he didn't steal enough."

## Actor Hugh O'Brian, TV's Wyatt Earp, dies at 91

BY DENNIS MCLELLAN  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Hugh O'Brian, the star of TV's "The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp," died Monday. He was 91.

O'Brian died in Beverly Hills, California, according to a statement on the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Foundation website.

Handsome, square-jawed and athletically fit, the dark-haired O'Brian appeared in a string of movies and TV anthology series in the years before he became a star portraying the real-life Old West peace officer on "The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp," which ran on ABC from 1955 to 1961.

"Wyatt Earp" became a top 10-rated series and made O'Brian a household name.

Portraying a man the show's theme song described as the "brave, courageous and bold" frontier lawman, O'Brian wore a black frock coat, a gold brocade vest, a string tie and a flat-brimmed black hat — and he kept the peace with the help of a "Buntline Special": a .45-caliber revolver with an extra-long barrel.

In portraying Earp, O'Brian became known for his fast quick-draw.

"I didn't want to force them into having to cut away whenever that happened; I wanted it to be realistic," the actor said in a 2005 "Archive of American Television" interview.

He spent hundreds of hours practicing the quick draw, the result of which, he said, "became a very big promotional tool ... and everybody talked about the quick draw."

During the series' run, O'Brian received an Emmy nomination and became so identified with his TV character that he did his best to keep the name O'Brian separated from Earp.

He did it by doing a lot of outside acting — on anthology series such as "Playhouse

90" and "Desilu Playhouse" — and with guest appearances on TV variety shows and a stint on Broadway starring in the musical comedy "Destry Rides Again."

Decades later, O'Brian showed up as Earp in two 1989 episodes of the TV western "Paradise." He also appeared as Earp in the 1991 Kenny Rogers TV miniseries "The Gambler Returns: The Luck of the Draw." And he starred in "Wyatt Earp: Return to Tombstone," a 1994 TV movie that included flashbacks to scenes from his old series.

Among his post-"Wyatt Earp" movie credits were "Come Fly With Me," "Africa — Texas Style," "The Shooter" and "Twins." He also starred in the 1972-73 NBC adventure series "Search," did more stage work and made guest appearances on series such as "Fantasy Island" and "The Love Boat."

But O'Brian's most enduring legacy is off-screen.

More than 375,000 high school sophomores selected by their schools have gone through his Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership organization, which was founded "to inspire and develop our global community of youth and volunteers to a life dedicated to leadership, service and innovation."

The nonprofit organization grew out of an invitation to O'Brian from Dr. Albert Schweitzer to visit the medical missionary, a 1952 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, at his hospital in Africa.

O'Brian spent nine days working as a volunteer at the hospital on the banks of the Ogooue River in Gabon during the summer of 1958.

For O'Brian, it was a life-changing experience.

After dinner each evening, he and Schweitzer would spend hours talking.

As O'Brian was getting ready to depart down river, he later recalled, Schweitzer

took his hand and asked, "Hugh, what are you going to do with this?"

On his flight back to the United States, O'Brian reflected on Schweitzer's comment that "the most important part of education is teaching young people to think for themselves."

O'Brian was born Hugh Krampe in Rochester, New York, on April 19, 1925. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1943 and was assigned as a drill instructor in San Diego.

With hopes of becoming a lawyer, O'Brian was scheduled to begin attending Yale University on the G.I. Bill in the fall of 1947. He spent the spring and summer in Los Angeles, working to earn enough money to buy a car to drive East, but had an unexpected change of plans when the actress he was dating began rehearsals for the Somerset Maugham play "Home and Beauty" at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre.

"If I wanted to see her, I had to go to rehearsals," he said in a 2009 interview with The Los Angeles Times.

When the leading man didn't show up on the second or third night of rehearsals, O'Brian was asked to read the leading man's role.

"After about four days, they realized the guy wasn't going to come back ... so the director asked me if I would do the role. ... We did the show and a reporter for the L.A. Times came down to see it and the next day, he wrote a tremendous review. ... That's how I got started."

The show's playbill, however, misspelled his name.

"They left the 'm' out of Krampe," he said in a 2013 Times interview. "I decided right then I didn't want to go through life being known as Huge Krape, so I decided to take my mother's family name, O'Brien. But they misspelled it as 'O'Brian' and I just decided to stay with that."



REUTERS FILE

Russian President Vladimir Putin (right) talks to Uzbek President Islam Karimov during a signing ceremony following their meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow, in April.

## Uzbekistan strongman Islam Karimov dies

BY ANDREW ROTH  
THE WASHINGTON POST

Islam Karimov, the Communist Party apparatchik who transformed post-independence Uzbekistan into a brutal personal fiefdom while reaping political and economic benefits from the U.S. war in Afghanistan, has died in Tashkent. He was 78.

His death was announced on Friday by state television after days of official silence about his health. His daughter, Lola Karimova-Tillyaeva, wrote on verified social media accounts that he had suffered a "cerebral hemorrhage" on Aug. 27.

His death threatens instability but offers slight chance of change in Uzbekistan, a landlocked, mostly Muslim country in Central Asia that Karimov ruled even before independence from the collapsing Soviet Union in 1991. At least publicly, he had not named a successor.

A wily political survivor who emerged unscathed from Uzbekistan's Soviet-era corruption purges, Karimov maintained iron-fisted stability over his 31 million people during the 1990s while neighboring countries were roiled by political turmoil and even civil war.

To maintain his grip, he fostered Uzbek nationalism,

harassed the political opposition and targeted independent religious centers of power, justifying mass arrests of Muslims as necessary in the struggle against Islamist radicalism.

Although he eschewed the golden statues and other trappings favored by some post-Soviet dictators in his region, Karimov's domination of his country's politics for a quarter-century was no less complete, nor less savage.

As parliament considered a 1998 law to place tighter restrictions on religion, ostensibly to combat extremism, Karimov exhorted: "Such people must be shot in the forehead! If necessary, I'll shoot them myself!" Reports of macabre methods of torture, including the boiling of prisoners to death, followed.

Karimov's brand of stability found support in Moscow and in the West as a bulwark against Islamist radicalism — Uzbekistan shares a border with Afghanistan to the south — but he also led his country into economic stagnation. Although Uzbekistan is Central Asia's most populous nation, rich in hydrocarbons and valuable minerals such as gold, 16 percent of the country lives below the United Nations poverty line of \$1.25 per day.