

Dr. Ralph D. Heister, Jr.

October 17, 1931 - September 11, 2022

Dr. Ralph D. Heister, Jr. (90) – Son of Ralph D. Heister Sr and Elsie Holt Heister of Narberth PA passed away on September 11, 2022. He is survived by his brother Dr. John Heister (Sharon), wife Theresa Heister, his four children – Gretchen (Marshall), Kristina, Ralph (Kristin), and Kurt (Leigh) and 10 grandchildren, Sarah (Ryan), Erin (Carl), Liesl, Jessica, Susannah, Emma, Meghan, Kate, Ben, and Madeline and one precious great grandchild – Jacob.

In addition to being a loving husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather, he was also an award-winning science teacher and environmental advocate. After earning his B.A. In Agricultural Science at The Pennsylvania State University in 1953, he served in the U.S. Army Medical Corp. He returned to Penn State in 1955 to earn a Master of Science and later a Doctoral degree. He began his teaching career in Freeport, Long Island and then spent the next 35 years as a teacher and Head of the Biology Department at Conestoga High School/TE School District in Berwyn PA. Awards from the Green Valleys Association, Trout Unlimited, PA Legislature, PA Medical Assoc. and many others followed including a PA Biology Teacher of the Year award and the first Penn State Alumni Association award for Outstanding Teaching.

He finished his career working for the protection of watersheds and water resources in Chester County PA as President and Executive Director of the

Green Valleys Watershed Association. His last years were spent at Cornwall Manor, Cornwall PA. Relatives and friends are invited to join us to celebrate his life on October 22, 2022 between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm at Paoli Presbyterian Church. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to The Green Valleys Watershed Association, 1368 Prizer Road, Pottstown, PA 19465 or online at www.greenvalleys.org/support

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

OCT **22**. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Paoli Presbyterian Church
225 S. Valley Road
Paoli, PA 19301

Tribute Wall

AB

“*Dr. Heister was a favorite teacher. His teaching technique was hands on through the use of creatures and their development. Dr Heister was gentle, kind, understanding and smart. I wish that I had been there to let him know from an old student that “Yes, he made a difference!” He probably remembered that, but it is always nice to hear again! I live in Maine now and taught art for about four decades. It was kind, hands on teachers like him that made me want to go into teaching. He kept the frogs and chick embryos coming, and I kept the paints and nature materials in the hands of kids. I am forever indebted to the difference he made in my life. (... and working with those chick embryos sealed my thoughts on the beginning of life) I wish I could have been at his celebration of life and the 50th of our Conestoga Class. Just know that all over America and beyond, Dr. Heister’s wonderful spirit and teaching are making a difference. Annie Winkler Beauchemin*

Annie Winkler Beauchemin - October 27, 2022 at 02:17 AM



“*Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Dr. Ralph D. Heister, Jr..*



September 26, 2022 at 12:31 PM

CG

“*Ralph and Harry Graham were like two peas in a pod. Sledding at Valley Forge, trips on Delaware River, Rehoboth Beach in Delaware and the list goes on. Loved his kids and wife a bunch. He can now catch up to Harry and play ball!*

Christopher Graham - September 24, 2022 at 09:01 AM

MS

“ *Dr. Heister was such an important teacher in my time at Conestoga. I took both 10th and 12th grade biology and loved every minute of it. I remember vividly going to Valley Forge park to sift for benthos in the stream there. He gave me both a love for science and the confidence to know I could do it. He also really seemed to care about me as a person who would go out in the world to do good things. I am grateful for his commitment to science and to high school students.*

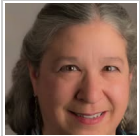
Gretchen Schwarze, CHS class of 86

margaret schwarze - September 22, 2022 at 12:30 PM

LH

“ *Dr. Heister changed the course of my life. His wisdom guides me every day. May his memory be a comfort to all whose lives he touched.*

Lawrence Husick - September 22, 2022 at 06:23 AM



“ *I have fond memories of my 10th grade Biology class with Dr Heister... The fact that there were 5 Sue's in the class... his Invertebrate Dinner... interesting & engaging experiments. I'm sure he will be missed by family & friends. RIP.*

Susan Griffith - September 21, 2022 at 06:17 PM

SM

“ I am so very sorry to hear of Dr. Heister's death. Dan always enjoyed working with him. Ralph's contributions to the preservation of open space in this part of Chester County are almost immeasurable. He has left a legacy for many generations to come, and we are grateful.
Thinking of all with happy memories and affection.
Sandy Mannix

Sandy Mannix - September 21, 2022 at 02:08 PM

CB

“ My condolences to your family for the passing of Dr. Heiser. As a graduate of Conestoga I had the honor of taking Dr. Heiser's Biology class. His was one of the most engaging, exciting classes I took at Conestoga and I am most appreciative to have had him as my educator. I hope you find comfort in the pride of being a part of a life so well lived.
Sincerely, Catherine Blades, Class of '69

Catherine Blades - September 19, 2022 at 08:21 PM

JD

I echo Catherine's sentiment. I am the co-chair of the CHS Class of 1971 50th Reunion (delayed by Covid) and several classmates mentioned fond memories and gratitude for Dr. Heister long before we learned of his sad passing. He will indeed be missed. He made a huge impact on hundreds of students during his career. Godspeed Dr. H.

Jim DeWolf - September 21, 2022 at 05:36 PM