



Erland Alfred Cutter

October 6, 1947 - November 23, 2020

GORHAM –

Erland A. Cutter, 73, passed away peacefully at home on the morning of November 23 with his loving wife at his side. Earl had been bravely fighting Multiple System Atrophy (MSA) for over nine years and had made peace with his illness by living a remarkable life surrounded by love and laughter. His spirit remained strong despite the impact of the disease on his body.

Erland Alfred Cutter was born October 6, 1947, the third son of Clifford and Dorothy (Rousseau) Cutter. He grew up in Westbrook where he was an Eagle Scout, A Little League catcher, an accordion player, Valedictorian and Class Wit of the Westbrook High School Class of 1965. As a student he was active in Key Club, served as the school correspondent for the Westbrook American, played in a student band called the Six Situations, and won an S.D. Warren Scholarship to attend Bowdoin College.

At Bowdoin, Class of 1969, Earl majored in French Literature and was a James Bowdoin Scholar. Upon graduation, he considered entering the priesthood and spent a summer living and working at Bowdoin's Newman Center. Always deeply religious, Earl never missed Mass and served as a lector at St. Hyacinth's in Westbrook for many years. He served in the U.S. Army, then began a distinguished 37-year career as a teacher at his alma mater, Westbrook High School. He served as the language department chairman for many years, mentoring fellow teachers, until his retirement in 2008.

As an educator, "Mr. C" was revered by his students who later in life sent him letters expressing affection and deep appreciation. He taught French and Latin but he always used language instruction and literature as a means of inspiring students to be intellectually curious. As Jeff Stone, WHS '73, wrote recently, "Earl was a fantastic teacher, so smart, funny, engaging, irreverent, a true lover of literature and language who also clearly loved his students. He was definitely the coolest, wittiest teacher at WHS." For many years, Earl served as the Voice of the Blue Blazes, announcing basketball, soccer and football games. When he retired, the broadcast booth at Westbrook High School's Olmsted Field was named for him. Former student-athletes have shared their fond memories of his distinguished voice during their time on the field.

In 1980, Earl married Judy LeBel, and created a beautiful family and life together. A

devoted father, he experienced the joy of coaching and teaching all three of his children, Ben, Drew and Megan, and supported all of their academic and athletic endeavors. Earl held dearly in his heart those moments that included his family, such as trips to his beloved Paris where he met and fell in love with Judy, ice fishing at his brother Warren's camp, and simply sitting around a Sebago campfire sharing stories and laughter, all with the music of Dylan and Kristofferson playing in the background. He was a passionate Boston sports fan, and family trips to Fenway Park remained some of his most cherished memories.

Earl was happiest spending long summer days at the family camp at Sebago Lake surrounded by family and friends, or sitting quietly on the beach working on a NY Times crossword puzzle. After a family meal, his signature farewell to his children was always, "I love you, come again."

Earl remained close to his childhood friends, who created their "Out to Lunch Bunch". This loyal group of friends included Edgar Beem, Roland Quinlan, Bob Smyth, and the late Chris Couch. They enjoyed each other's company every week over lunch in a variety of locations throughout southern Maine. Earl and Judy were grateful for such supportive and loyal friends.

"Earl's determination and courage in the face of such a terrifying disease was truly amazing," wrote Bob Smyth. Despite this ugly disease, Earl never complained and never allowed his disabilities to define him. A true inspiration to all, Earl maintained his positive attitude and irreverent wit right to the very end. When asked how he was coping with his illness, he never said "Why me" but always humbly responded, "Why not me". Even years after retiring, Earl continued to teach us important life lessons in the way he carried himself.

Earl is survived by his wife Judy, who lovingly cared for him at home during his illness, the couple's three children; son Ben and wife Marissa of Standish, son Andrew and wife Laura of Portland, and daughter Megan and fiance Anthony Savino of Windham. He was the loving Papa to Grady, Haley, Hazel, and Dominic. Earl is also survived by his older brothers Wayne of Muskegon, MI, Warren of Limerick, ME, and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his parents.

The family would like to extend special thanks to Beacon Hospice for their compassionate care.

The family will be holding a private Mass of Christian burial at St. Anthony's Parish in Westbrook. A Celebration of Life will be held next Summer. In Lieu of flowers donations may be sent to: Westbrook School Department Attn: Earl Cutter Memorial Scholarship Fund 117 Stroudwater St. Westbrook, ME 04092. To view the live stream of Earl's Mass of Christian Burial on Wednesday December 2nd at 10am, please click: <https://zoom.us/j/99051898817>

Comments



“ I had Mr. Cutter for three years at WHS --I was an abysmal French student, but he was an amazing teacher! He was always ready with a quip and allowed us to joke around with him and during class. I learned more about tenses in his class than any other language class. What a wonderful teacher and human being!
-Sagan Clifford

Sagan Clifford - January 01, 2021 at 01:32 PM



“ Earl and I crossed paths in 1971 in the barracks of Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas where we were being trained to be medical specialists in the US Army. We were one of the last batches of people to be drafted. It is easy to form friendships quickly in that environment and we did. When we were not learning how to give shots by sticking each other with needles or making a bed with a patient in it or tying good square knots in bandages, we shared Sinatra lyrics, titles of short stories we would never write, baseball anecdotes, bits of Bob Newhart routines, or pitchers of beer while playing Botticelli at the Spunky Monkey, a student hangout near Trinity University. He left the army after training as a conscientious objector while I was sent off to Germany. When I returned I visited Earl in Portland. On a day that threatened to be too foggy for baseball he took his position behind the steering wheel, put on his sunglasses, declared that it was going to be a great day for baseball and drove us to Fenway Park in Boston. It was a great day for baseball in that lyrical little bandbox as most days are, but this one was especially good. It is a story I have shared with my family. Over the years of moving from here to there I lost touch with Earl. I tried a few times as the internet became a resource but never succeeded until I found his obituary. The man I knew for a few months in Texas was visible in everything I read. Put a set of fatigues on him and the photo I found looked just as he did as we stood around doing what you had to be good at in the army, wait. I am glad I found him. I am sorry I found him again too late. He was a friend and will be remembered.

Stephen Brown, Santa Cruz, CA

Stephen Brown - December 28, 2020 at 04:31 PM



“ Mr. Cutter was an inspiration to me personally and academically. One of my favorite memories was listening to songs by Edith Piaf in his French class and trying to figure out the lyrics. I think of him every time I hear her. Of particular note was the day my class acted out “Milord”. My deepest sympathy to Judy and the kids (who I had the pleasure of babysitting from time to time). Love, Nikki (Plourde) Connolly

Nikki Connolly - December 11, 2020 at 06:30 AM



“ Dear Judy and family,

What a challenge to begin this note. I have many precious memories of Earl and your family. From my first encounters with Drew in kindergarten (the cutest five-year old on the planet) to Earl’s outstanding French classes at Westbrook High where two of our kids blossomed amid his brilliance as a teacher and human being.

Our third received encouragement and recognition for his efforts on the soccer field when Earl was in the announcer’s booth or on the sideline. We loved the hilarious commentary during WHS soccer games. “Westbrook puts another one in the old onion bag!” Those games were made special by his clever words and good sportsmanship. Collectively, we were the lucky ones to have Earl, Judy, Ben, Drew and Megan as friends and neighbors.

Earl’s gifts were many. Whip smart, friendly, accessible, able to connect with teenagers, patient, funny, loving. That he impacted hundreds of students by opening their minds to a bigger world, is a contribution that goes on in time. He had faith in his students that they had what it takes to be good hearted and successful in life. He believed in them and they knew it. We count ourselves as fortunate to have been a part of Earl’s tenure at WHS.

Going forward, how he will be missed! I am thinking of you all and send love and good wishes across the miles. Be well and know that he is remembered. With sadness and gratitude, please accept my condolences for your loss.

Nancy Perkins

Nancy Perkins - December 06, 2020 at 01:42 PM



“ So sorry for your loss. Erl was one of my favorite teachers in high school. I left the area after high school so I haven't see him since then but I have fond memories of him as a teacher. I remember him taking us all out to a French restaurant one evening to immerse us all in the French culture. Such a great guy who obviously cared about his students. One of the good guys.

Bruce Smyth

Bruce Smyth - December 01, 2020 at 09:30 PM



“ Judy, it saddens me to see this. Mr C meant a great deal to me. He always pushed us hard, probably because we had four years of advanced french. He took a bunch of us to Paris in the spring of 1980. He just seemed to know us teenagers and always gave it all. He was amazing in French class when he spoke Italian and German. I remember Erl and I went golfing on New Year's Day 1980.... It was an odd winter with no snow that year. So many memories. God bless you and the family, heaven has taken it up a notch since Mr C came knocking. Love to all.

Kevin - December 13, 2020 at 05:34 PM



“ Very sorry for your loss. I saw first hand what wonderful caregivers his entire family & extended family were.

steve scontras - December 01, 2020 at 11:51 AM



“ Oh my gosh. I have so many wonderful memories of working with Erland in the Foreign Language Department at Westbrook High School for over 30 years. Fortunately our philosophies on education were similar. We also saw many other things through the same lens. This did not make for a boring relationship. Interacting with Erland was always informative, engaging, and very often most amusing. I am hoping the family will be uplifted by the many heartfelt and genuine tributes being posted. He was a wonderful man. Vaya con Dîos, amigo.

Bradley Snow - November 29, 2020 at 02:14 PM



“ Judy, Ben and all the Cutter family,
Earl was such a class act at WHS and I fondly remember working on school projects with him. He lead by example always and could find the good in most everything. He was taken too early and leaves a huge void in so many lives. Bless you all with fabulous memories and lessons his life taught so many of us.
Roxanne Wheeler

Roxanne Wheeler - November 29, 2020 at 10:29 AM



“ Dear Judy and family,
We were sorry to learn of Earl's passing. Earl was a remarkable human being who will never be forgotten. The courage and fortitude he showed throughout his illness was truly amazing. In addition to his friendship, we will always remember him for his great mind and keen sense of humor. Our thoughts and prayers go out to you all at this very sad time.
Rick & Leanne Christensen

Rick Christensen - November 29, 2020 at 10:10 AM



“ Dear Judy. So sorry to hear About Earl. We had lots of fun with you at Lorraine and Lou's camp over the years. You have a wonderful family. God bless you all. Ed
williams

Ed Williams - November 29, 2020 at 07:57 AM



“ Dear Judy and family, Patti and I just want to say how sorry we are for your loss, words certainly can't do it justice. Earl and I have been good friends since our high school days, a person I always admired and respected. He was the very definition of courage, grace, and dignity. Judy, and your entire family, did everything in your power to aid and comfort Erland over the past ten years. We know how much he loved you all.

Paul LaChance - November 28, 2020 at 11:45 AM



“ I had Mr. Cutter for Honors French. He always had amazing ties so one day I wrote "Rate A Cravat" in the upper right hand corner of his chalk board. When Mr. Cutter entered class I would assess his tie and then score it from 1 to 5. He laughed and appreciated my review. For the remainder of the year Mr. Cutter invested in different ties in order to get getting a 5! He was a great educator and he will be sorely missed!

Dan Blake - November 28, 2020 at 11:43 AM



“ Some of my favorite times in High School were during Yearbook meetings, Mr. Cutter was the advisor and I was the Editor my Senior year. His smile was warming and true. Sorry for your loss. He definitely is one of the good ones!

Tonya Pratt Skidds - November 28, 2020 at 11:17 AM



“ I had the privilege of getting to know Earl during my tenure at Westbrook High School. I especially enjoyed the random teachers' room conversations that Rick Solomon and I would have with Earl. Known for both his rapier wit and his infectious smile Earl would always bring out the best in people.

Finally, I must add that Earl would always add an extra dimension when it came to announcing athletic events. Possessed with a soothing and confident voice, Earl was never redundant and left me leaving a game a smile on my face.

'Requiescat in pace' my good friend!

John Fitzgerald

John E Fitzgerald - November 28, 2020 at 10:52 AM



“ Judy,my sincere condolences over the loss of Earl. You are in my thoughts and prayers. May your memories and family give you peace and comfort. With my deepest sympathy,Sue Muzzy

Susan Muzzy - November 28, 2020 at 09:44 AM



“ Loved Monsieur Cutter’s French class. He made everyone feel special. Received the “monolague de la semaine” a good majority of the time! Always remember his voice at games at WHS. Such an wonderful man and an inspiration. My sympathies to the family. Very sad, he will be missed! Lisa Blais Manning

Lisa Blais Manning - November 28, 2020 at 09:29 AM



“ I was a good friend of Erland back in Bridge street grammar school, along with our other musketeer Robert Smyth. We all played flag football together on the Bridge street school team. I lost touch with him as he grew older. But it does my heart good to know that he became a beloved teacher to many.

Ed LaBrecque - November 28, 2020 at 08:45 AM



“ I was so blessed to have known Earl. I am grateful for the time I was able to spend with him... my thoughts are with his family

Tabatha Watson



Tabatha Watson - November 27, 2020 at 07:26 PM



“ Earl's friends and family could write a book on how wonderful he was, what he accomplished in his life, his great sense of humor, and his fabulous attitude about life. Earl was truly one-of-a-kind. Anyone that met Earl, loved Earl. He will be missed by so many of us. Many hearts are broken right now but memories of his sparkle will last forever and he will never be forgotten. Sending lots of love to Judy, his children, and grandchildren. Marcia & Alan Carr

Marcia Carr - November 27, 2020 at 06:55 PM



“ I never lucky enough to have him as a teacher , do remember meeting him when I was home on leave at Deering Ice cream. and with the way he acted with the kids I was very impressed,not many teachers in those days would incorporate themselves with their students at the level I observed, He was well liked and respected, so that alone tells me what kind of teacher he was. R,I.P. Mr Cutter, and My Condolences to your Family and friends.

Ronald Cargill - November 28, 2020 at 09:16 AM



“ I had Earl as a teacher during his first year teaching at WHS. He was my favorite teacher. Over 25 years later, I was working as a substitute teacher at WHS and saw him. He still remembered me. I actually covered some of his classes as a sub also. His class in Japanese was the only time I got stumped working as a sub. It was the only subject that I was of absolutely no use to his students.

Cecile (Thuotte) Libby - November 28, 2020 at 06:50 PM



“ When I think of Earl I always smile, Back in 69 he was my favorite English teacher. Well respected loved by all.
I enjoyed going to his class it was always interesting, informative,
I am very sad at hearing of his passing.I lost track of him when I joined the Marines. Gods speed my friend we shall meet again

Michael O'Donal

Michael O'Donal - November 29, 2020 at 07:49 PM



“ Great friend growing up in Westbrook, spent a lot time over his house, blood brothers, hid time capusal behind his garage wonder if it's still there ?

Michael Powers - December 02, 2020 at 02:08 AM



“ Sue and I couldn't have made a better choice for best man at our wedding. He was my best friend at age 4, and we've shared many memories over the years. He was the brother I never had. We'll dearly miss him.

Bob Smyth - December 04, 2020 at 01:39 PM



“ I will miss Earl greatly. I have many memories of Earl going back to the 4th grade at Bridge Street School, trading 45 rpm records with him, taking some high school kids to see BB King at Lennie's in Massachusetts, going to see Jerry Lee Lewis at the Palace in OOB, running into him at ball games, conversations at Deering Ice Cream, lunch with a bunch of friends at Stockhouse Station. Earl had a great sense of humor. I remember heartily laughing when he told the story of how his mom cancelled Christmas one time. Classic. He was just a wonderful person.

