

Richard Helge Hemingson

Born in New Haven, CT on Aug. 11, 1929
Departed on Nov. 6, 2011 and resided in Colebrook , CT.

RICHARD HELGE HEMINGSON

Richard Helge Hemingson (known to friends, family and colleagues as "Dick") passed away peacefully on Sunday, November 6, 2011. He was born in New Haven, CT, on August 11, 1929. He grew up in Hamden, CT, attending the Church Street School and Hamden High School.

At 15, Dick began a sea-faring career that spanned six decades. He worked oyster boats off New Haven harbor and was a deckhand on ships plying the Great Lakes before joining the Merchant Marine in late 1944. Dick served as an Able Bodied Seaman on cargo transports known as "Liberty Ships," seeing service in both the Atlantic and the Pacific during World War II. Following the war, he continued in the Merchant Marine, reaching the rank of Deck Officer in 1949. He sailed continuously as a Deck Officer from 1949 to 1954, including service in Korea. He was commissioned an Ensign in the United States Navy in 1954 and served as Navigator aboard the USS Muliphen, attaining the rank of Lieutenant before concluding his naval service in 1956. He was awarded all of the World War II Theatre Ribbons, the Victory Medal, and the Korean War Ribbon.

Dick entered Yale University in 1956, although he continued to sail in the summers throughout college and graduate school. In 1960, he graduated Yale College with a B.A. in English Literature, magna cum laude, High Honors and High Orations.

Dick earned a National Defense Fellowship and attended Graduate School in English at the University of Buffalo from 1960 through 1961. Thereafter, a Yale College Fellowship brought him back to his hometown. He earned a Masters Degree in English Literature and a Masters in Philosophy from Yale, and wrote a dissertation on the life and work of the poet Byron. Ironically, due to his service as a Merchant Mariner in World War II, Dick didn't receive his high school diploma until 2000, when he was seventy-one years old, in accordance with a U.S. Government program for veterans whose education has been interrupted by war. His youngest son Nathan received his high school diploma the same year, at the age of eighteen.

Dick taught English at the University of Hartford, where, for a brief time, he was also faculty advisor to the Students For A Democratic Society, or the "SDS." In 1974, Dick joined the faculty of The Watkinson School in Hartford, an independent private day school, where he was Chairman of the English Department, Director of Studies and College Counselor. He is remembered as one of the most beloved and respected teachers in the school's long history.

Dick returned to service in the Merchant Marine full time in 1980, earning the rank of Master in 1988. He commanded the Sea-Land Adventurer, the Sea-Land Commitment, and finally the Sea-Land Explorer, each a thousand-foot vessel. He was awarded the rank of "Master Mariner" by The Council of American Master Mariners in 1988. Dick retired from the Merchant Marine in 1998. On his last voyage, he was accompanied by his wife Joyce and his youngest son Nathan as far as Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

A forty-year resident of Colebrook, CT, Dick was a member of the Colebrook Congregational Church, the Colebrook Historical Society, and the Saint Andrew's Masonic Lodge, A.F. and A.M. Number 64, in Winsted, CT, where was a Past Master. He was also a member of The Sons of the American Revolution, The Boston Marine Society, the Master, Mates and Pilots Union, and The Sandy Brook Gin & Chowder Society.

Dick was a remarkable man of great intelligence, honesty and good humor. He enjoyed music and was a voracious reader, devouring books on a myriad of subjects, from romantic poetry to history to religion. He will be remembered by those who loved him – and there are many – as a completely unique and compelling person full of charity and quiet authority. We will not see his like again.

He is survived by Joyce Canfield Hemingson, his wife of 39 years; sons David Byron Hemingson (late mother Loretta Gora Hemingson; wife Victoria Disraeli Morsell Hemingson) of Los Angeles, CA and Nathan Canfield Hemingson of Avon, CT; sister Elizabeth Hemingson Blau (husband Harvey Blau) of DeKalb, IL; grandsons Nicholas Cahail Hemingson and Ian Magnus Hemingson of Los Angeles, CA; niece Amy Blau of Walla Walla, WA and nephew Eric Blau (wife Amanda and children Ezri and Ivan) of Downers Grove, IL; sisters-in-law The Rev. Celeste Hemingson of Hopkinton, NH, Susan Robbins of Suffield, CT, and Jeanne Brousseau (sons Christopher, Sean and Craig) of Penobscot, ME.

He was predeceased by his brother Peter Hemingson and his parents, Harold and Kathryn Hemingson.

Friends may call on Thursday, November 10, 2011 at Montano-Shea Funeral Home, 922 Main Street, Winsted from 6 -8 PM with a Masonic Service at 8PM. A memorial service will be held on Friday, November 11, 2011 at the Colebrook Congregational Church, Colebrook at 11 AM. Burial will be at the convenience of the family at Center Cemetery,

Colebrook. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his memory to the Scholarship Fund of St. Andrew's or to the Colebrook Land Conservancy, PO Box 90, Colebrook, CT 06021. Visit an online guestbook at Montano-shea.com.