

Local

Obituaries

Ex-Mayor Humphrey Donnelly III dies

NEWPORT — Former Newport Mayor Humphrey J. Donnelly III, 66, of 39 Bateman Ave., known to generations of city residents as "Harp," died Thursday, March 6, 1997, at his home after a battle with liver cancer. He was the husband of Barbara Herrick Donnelly.

Mr. Donnelly served five terms as Newport's mayor, the longest tenure of any mayor under the city's present form of government.

Born in Newport on Aug. 13, 1930, he was the son of the late Humphrey J. Donnelly Jr., an emigrant from County Kerry, Ireland, and the late Edna Winters Donnelly, a Newporter. He was the second child and oldest son in a family of two girls and seven boys. His father supported the family by working as a gardener at the James estate and later as a worker at the Naval Torpedo Station.

Like most Irish-American children of his generation, he attended parochial schools. After attending St. Mary's grammar school, he went on to De La Salle Academy and spent two years there before transferring to Rogers High School, the public school from which he graduated in 1948.

He served in the Marine Corps Reserve from 1947 until 1949 and with the Army from 1951 until 1953 during the Korean Conflict.

In 1952, he married Barbara Ann Herrick, the only child of the late Harold Otto Herrick and Margaret Haggerty Herrick.

After his discharge from the Army, he joined the Newport Electric Corp., now Eastern Utilities, where he worked for 38 years until retiring in 1993. He was then appointed clerk of the Canvassing Authority of Newport, a position he held until illness forced his retirement.

In 1969, with the late Daniel McCarthy as his mentor and the belief that the working man should be involved at City Hall,



Donnelly

Mr. Donnelly made his initial foray into the political ring, handily winning election to an at-large City Council seat. He was first elected mayor in 1971 and held that office until 1981.

During his tenure, Mr. Donnelly saw Newport transformed from an economically depressed city abandoned by its principal employer — the Navy, which abruptly withdrew its fleet from Newport in 1973 — to a thriving tourist destination with a bustling waterfront and a rich architectural history.

Even after the fleet's departure, Mr. Donnelly remained committed to maintaining good relations with the naval operations still remaining on Aquidneck Island. For his efforts, he was awarded the Meritorious Public Service Award from the Chief of Naval Operations in 1976, and was made an honorary graduate of the Officer Candidate School's 30th anniversary class in 1981.

In 1975, Mr. Donnelly became the first mayor to visit Shimoda, Newport's "sister city" in Japan. In 1976, the Irish immigrant's son welcomed the Queen of England for the dedication of Queen Anne Square, helped bring the Tall Ships to Newport Harbor as part of the Bicentennial celebration, and served as grand marshal for the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The question concerning casino gambling, which arose in the early 1980s, divided the city. Mr. Donnelly's advocacy of a referendum on the question was — rightly or wrongly — interpreted as support of the issue. His stance was considered instrumental to his defeat in the City Council election in 1981. Mr. Donnelly remained a strong supporter of the citizens' right to vote on the issue.

He had lectured extensively on coastal resource management, community redevelopment, and arts and cultural events as they relate to tourism. He was a licensed real estate broker in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and was president of the James L. Maher Center.

He was a communicant of St. Augustin's Church.

Mr. Donnelly was president of the Board of Directors of Newport County Chapter Association of Retarded Citizens, James L. Maher Center and served as a member of both Rhode Island Arc and the National Arc organization.

In addition, he served as two-term president of the R.I. League of Cities and Towns, as president of the Aquidneck Island Development Corporation, as board chairman of the East Bay Chapter of American Red Cross, as board member of the East Bay chapter of American Cancer Society and of the Rhode Island Diabetes Association, and as a member of the Newport Democratic Committee and the New-

port 350th anniversary committee.

He was a member and former county president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Dennis Collins Division 1; past vice president of the Brotherhood of Utility Workers of New England, Local 335; past board member of the Rhode Island Division of the American Cancer Society; past treasurer of the Newport Irish Heritage Association; board member of the Newport County Council of the Navy League; former board member of the Preservation Society of Newport County; past vice president of the Newport County Chapter of Arc; and a corporation member of the Newport County Health Care Corporation.

He was also a member of the following organizations: American Legion Post 7; Newport Historical Society; the Point Association; Friends of the Waterfront; NAACP; Newport Public Education Foundation; the Fort Adams Trust; Friends of the Newport Music Festival; Friends of Swanhurst Chorus; Friends of Touro Synagogue; the U.S. Racing Union; the Newport Artillery Company; the Idle Hour Club; the Admiral's Club of Newport; and the Sons of Irish Kings.

Also, the Rogers High School Alumni Association; Friends of the Newport Library; Friends of the Robert Potter League; Elks Lodge 104; the Hill Association; the Col. Rich Higgins Detachment of the Marine Corps League; Shake-a-Leg; Friends of Child and Family Services; Save The Bay; the Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation; the Newport Council For International Visitors; Friends of Seamen's Church Institute; and the Newport Art Museum.

Besides his wife, he leaves three daughters, Marilyn A. Donnelly, Sandra J. Henderson, and Maureen E. Cotsoridis, all of Newport; three sons, Humphrey J. Donnelly IV, Stephen H. Donnelly and Patrick K. Donnelly, all of Newport; six brothers, Donald J. Donnelly and Francis W. Donnelly, both of Middletown, and Thomas W. "Fox" Donnelly, Michael Chad Donnelly, and John F. "Jack" Donnelly, all of Newport, and Brian P. Donnelly of Portsmouth; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

He was the brother of the late Lorraine Lewis and Diane Colella.

A Mass of Christian burial will be celebrated on Monday, March 10, 1997, at 10 a.m. in St. Augustin's Church, Carroll Avenue.

Burial will be in St. Columba Cemetery in Middletown.

Donations may be made to the James L. Maher Center, 120 Hillside Ave., Newport, R.I. 02840.

Arrangements are by the O'Neill-Hayes Funeral Home, 465 Spring St.

Deaths

CALLAHAN — In Middletown, March 4, 1997, Ruth Byrne Callahan, wife of the late Dr. James Corcoran Callahan. Residence 651 Indian Avenue, Middletown. A Mass of Christian Burial Saturday, March 8 at 9 a.m. in St. Joseph's Church, Broadway, Newport. Relatives and friends are most kindly invited. Visiting hours are omitted. Donations may be made in her memory to the Visiting Nurse Health Services, 1184 East Main Road, Portsmouth, R.I., 02871. Funeral arrangements by the O'Neill-Hayes Funeral Home.