



Patrick W. Maher Sr.

April 13, 1930 - March 22, 2021

PATRICK W. MAHER SR., April 13, 1930 - March 22, 2021

Patrick W. Maher Sr. fondly known as “Billy Pat” to his Walla Walla, WA, friends and family, has gone to his eternal rest. He passed away at age 90 on March 22nd in El Dorado Hills, CA.

He was born to Bill and Ann Maher on April 13, 1930, at Saint Mary’s Hospital in Walla Walla. His mother, Ann Donovan, came to America in 1920 via Ellis Island from Skibbereen, County Cork, Ireland. She married William Albert Maher, a direct descendant of Edmond Doty, the 39th signer of the Mayflower Compact, and long-time employee of the Washington State Highway Department.

He is survived by his loving wife, Gloria A. Luzzi Maher of Vallejo; four sons, Thomas Maher (Nancy) of San Francisco, Pat Maher Jr. (Cindy) of South Ogden, UT, James Maher (Tracy) of Grand Coulee WA, and John D. Maher (Tammy) of El Dorado Hills and a brother, James Deven Maher of Fairfield. He was preceded in death by sons Daniel J. Maher (Kate) and Infant Jerry Maher. Also surviving are grandchildren Danny Maher, Sean Maher (Monique), Brendan Maher, Kelsey Maher, Kimberly Maher, Hannah Dessel (Derek), Margaret Maher, Joseph Maher, Kristen Young (Jon), Shannon Taylor (John), Conor Maher and Bridget Maher, and great grandchildren, Madison Aucoin, Caroline VanderKamp and James William Taylor.

Pat attended many schools while living in Washington including Adams School and Marquette School for Boys in Yakima, WA, where the family moved when he was an infant. Moving back to Walla Walla in 1939, he attended Saint Patrick’s, Edison and Green Park elementary schools. His years at Saint Patrick’s High School were active, participating in the radio club, acting, journalism and, yes, cheerleading, leading cheers in uniform on the sidelines of team games. He graduated on May 28, 1948.

At a high school graduation party, a priest in attendance asked Pat what his plans were

now that he had graduated. He planned on working during the summer as he did each year in the local canneries as many youths did, primarily because he had no money. The priest offered him a full scholarship to Saint Martins (Benedictine) College in Lacey, WA, with a promise that someday in the future he would pay his tuition when he had the money. Pat never forgot this and completed his promise by donating many times to the school over the following decades.

While at Saint Martins, Pat also worked as a bookkeeper for Lammers Truck Service. In 1950, Uncle Sam came calling and although he could have taken a medical deferment, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. Pat proudly served during the Korean War after completing basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, TX. Knowing how to type, very well may have saved him from combat duty in Korea. His title of Clerk Typist moved him on to Hamilton Air Force Base in Novato, CA, a sweet first assignment as many of his family from Walla Walla had migrated to the San Francisco Bay Area.

As fate would have it, his fellow "Wa Hi" graduate from Walla Walla, now Sergeant Jim Irby, helped him be promoted to the ranks of PFC and corporal. Some of his best Air Force memories were at Hamilton Field. He came close to going to England, his first choice, knowing he would be close to his ancestral home of County Cork, Ireland. He hoped for a leave to visit the home of the Donovans, his mother's family in Skibbereen, and the Maher family of Roscrae.

However, orders took him to occupied Japan for two and a half of his four-year eventually earning the rank of staff sergeant major. He was stationed at the Nagoya Opera House, then headquarters for the 5th Air Force Division, the Flying 5th. By 1953, he held the position of Base Administrative Sergeant Major at the Nagoya Air Force Base, Nagoya Japan.

After returning stateside, Pat was stationed at Davis Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona, as Chief Clerk Quality Control. Using the GI Bill, he continued his college education as a student at the University of Arizona while attending the Newman Club, meeting other young Catholic men and women and becoming a Knight of Columbus, a fraternal Catholic men's organization devoted to unity, fraternity, charity and patriotism. His honorable discharge was granted in September 1954 when he moved to San Francisco and enrolled in the University of San Francisco and resided in Fisk and Phelan Hall dorms. He worked part time for the Levi Strauss Company, ultimately graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and economics. Pat Maher was classmates and friends with several members of the great 1955 and 1956 national championship basketball team with the likes of Bill Russell and K.C. Jones, Mike Farmer

and Gene Brown and Hal Perry.

His time at Saint Martins, a member of the U.S. Air Force and attendance at USF would leave lasting memories and stories, many of which would be told and retold for his entire life. Lifelong friendships were forged during these years that have continued to this day, many of those he met becoming "Family."

After graduation, Pat's first job was as the administrative assistant to the superintendent of the Catholic schools, Father Francis "Frank" Quinn (RIP), eventual bishop of the Sacramento Diocese. Pat Maher lived at the Prince Valiant and Park Manor Guest House where group dinners were served at 6 p.m. with coat and tie expected.

His bachelor life came to a halt when he met the love of his life, Gloria Luzzi of Santa Cruz, CA, at a spaghetti dinner hosted by his good friend and college classmate, Jack Roddy. Gloria was also finishing her college degree from nearby San Francisco State in business education. After many dates together and meeting each other's family, Gloria always joked that "it took the 1957 San Francisco earthquake to 'shake' Pat enough to ask for my hand." Pat proposed marriage in front of Gloria's godparents' home one night after a date. Prior to their wedding, they continued a long-distance relationship as Pat was in Seattle attending the Insurance Law School to be employed with Crawford & Company Insurance Adjusters in San Diego after their wedding. Many letters were exchanged during this time with the song, "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter," becoming solidified as "their song" and later, "Could I Have This Dance." by Ann Murray, with the former being sung by Gloria to Pat at his bedside during his recent illness.

They were married on April 12, 1958, in Capitola, CA, at Old Saint Joseph's Catholic Church with their reception at Shadowbrook Restaurant where Gloria's father, Joe Luzzi, (RIP) was the head maitre d. Crawford and Company Insurance Adjusters found Pat and Gloria relocating many times from San Diego, back to San Francisco, San Jose to North Hollywood and to Sacramento. By 1965, Pat accepted a job offer in Modesto CA, from Gaarde Insurance Adjusters and worked two years until the jolt of a reduction in force led him, with the insistence of his wife Gloria, to "Put out his own Shingle." He started North Bay Adjusters of Vallejo, a profitable "one-man band" business that continued until his retirement in 1986. Pat worked nights as well as business-education teacher at Benicia High, holding a lifetime Adult Education California Teaching Credential. An active practicing Catholic, Pat and his family attended Saint Basil's Catholic Church and continued as a Knight of Columbus with Council 874, eventually rising to the rank of Grand Knight and to the 4th Degree with honorary lifetime membership. With over 65 years as a Knight, he is now recognized with his name on a Gold Chalice to be given to a

needy Catholic seminarian, whereby his name will be remembered and soul prayed for as long as the Chalice is used. It is an honor reserved only for 4th degree membership.

In 1973, with five young boys attending Vallejo schools and wife Gloria gainfully employed as a business and vocational education teacher at Benicia High School, a business proposition was presented to Pat by his brother Terry Maher (RIP) of American Canyon, CA. After long discussion, prayer and discernment, Pat and Gloria and the boys decided to purchase a two-acre business parcel on the Napa Vallejo Highway with an established money making business, Motor Home Specialists, owned and operated by brother Terry. The move was made "just in time" for the Middle East Oil Embargo and the massive gas shortages and sky-high gas prices of the early and mid 1970s. Pat Maher buckled down, cut expenses and survived for the next fourteen years with the help of his wife, sons and father who worked in the repair shop. In 1986, he sold the business to the surrounding Pacific Auto Salvage and purchased his final home (after moving 40 times) in the new Redwood Estates in East Vallejo.

He spent the better part of the next 35 years enjoying his retirement, writing letters to the editor of the Vallejo Times Herald and Contra Costa Times with over 400 submissions. He also completed a book entitled, Crew 631, the story of Richard Wollstein, a B-24 bomber pilot during World War II. As a result of the book, Wollstein was posthumously awarded heroic service medals in a ceremony at Kitty Hawk, NC, with surviving family members in attendance, most notably the Al and Kathleen (Wollstein) Whitaker Family of Vallejo.

Pat Maher's love for Big Band music surely was a major force with his sons forming Memory Jazz Dance Band of Napa, a nine-piece group playing the hits of the 30s and 40s. Welcoming family, grandchildren and friends to his and Gloria's home was a standard practice for decades. He was a loyal Oakland A's baseball fan taking his boys and Gloria regularly to the half-price Monday night games. He attended the World Series at the Oakland Coliseum in 1972, '73 and '74 with Gloria and his father Bill. One day several years ago Pat got a call from his son John's high school friend, Matt Miller, now retired managing editor of the Vacaville Reporter. Matt was looking for John to take him to an A's game. When his son was not available, Pat chimed in and said he would love to go. Matt later said what a great time the two of them had at the ballpark. His love of reading proved him to become an expert on the Civil War of which his Grandfather William Frederick Kralman served in the Union Army. In 1988 Pat visited the major Civil War battlefields with one of his sons, with no need for tour guides or docents to lead the way. A home library with a collection of over well over 1,500 books including the battles of World War II, political and historical books became constant reading and re-reading over the years. He

also loved classic movies, mostly from the Turner Classic Movie channel, that became a daily obsession with VHS, DVD and ultimately DVR recordings being available to watch at any time day or night for friends and family.

Starting with a small tent trailer and eventually working up to a 35-foot Prowler trailer, Pat and his family would “hitch it up” and head north nearly every summer when school let out for his boys and Gloria. Camping was a love and pastime with the ultimate goal of eventually getting to Portland, OR, to visit his high school buddy, Tom Niebergall, and his seven kids and then East along the Columbia River to his home town in Washington. Family and high school reunions became his motivation to make these yearly “pilgrimages” to his true second love, that of the “Norman Rockwell-like” town of his memorable youth, Walla Walla, WA, which he left in 1948 after that eventful and providential conversation with a young priest. As Walla Walla native, and double cousin Barbara Savage Buttice, once put it, “The family reunion never started until cousin Pat showed up.”

Pat Maher had a “memory like an elephant” as they say. He could tell you the address and street of every one of his 40 places of residence, the name of the original owner of the major homes in Walla Walla, his classmate Bill Anderson’s, (AKA Adam West of the TV Show Batman fame) home, school names, teacher names, major events in the town’s history, who married whom, names of former businesses in this and that building, homes occupied by aunts, uncles, cousins and homes moved by long-time house mover and grandfather “Billy Maher” (RIP) and uncle Jerry Maher (RIP). He also had a knack for announcing the name of any classic car from the early 1900s to the mid 1960s. His secret, later revealed, “All ya have to do is look at the grill.” Inspired by his Aunt Betty Maher Treves, who became the original family historian, researching the family tree back to the 39th Signer of the Mayflower Compact, Edmond Doty, Maher continued to research family history well into his retirement. He and Gloria traveled to Ireland in 1976 to visit the Donovan Family Farm in Skibbereen, County Cork, where his mother was one of fourteen children born to Bridget O’Driscoll O’Donovan (RIP) and Jeremiah O’Donovan (RIP). He kissed the Blarney Stone, drove ancestral roads, met and stayed with first cousins, visited the graves of his grandparents and ancestors and visited his paternal roots of Roscrea, Ireland, original home to the Maher (Meagher) name. His writing and research never stopped, leading to the completion of many binders of photos and written stories of his life and those before him. Since finding these binders and reading his works, his immediate family has responded that this surely was a man, proud of his Irish roots, wife, sons, grandchildren, great grandchildren and Korean War military service. Additionally, he proudly served as the national secretary of the 5th Air Force Veteran’s Group of Japan from 1994 to 2012. His life story and events have also been video recorded over the

years. He was a man who wanted his proud family history to be told, repeated and never forgotten. Some of his last words to his loving wife of nearly 63 years were, "Take care of our sons and pray for our grandchildren and great grandchildren and keep the faith." We pray, hope and ask that his memory and those who came before him shall live on for the ages. Pat's most favorite line when leaving any event or party was, "If ya don't believe I'm leaving, just count the days I'm gone." Patrick William Maher... may his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. In your charity we ask that you remember his soul in your prayers and as the Irish Blessing goes, May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand. And.....may he be in Heaven a half hour before the Devil knows he's dead.

A private family funeral service will be held on Saturday, March 27th, 2021. Donations may be sent in the name of, Patrick W. Maher, Past Grand Knight and member of the Mark G. Thompson 4th Degree Assembly, to assist with the future purchases of new seminarian chalices to: Saint Basil's Parish c/o Mark G. Thompson Assembly, 1225 Toulumne St. Vallejo, CA 94590 with memo: Seminarian Chalice fund OR to Saint Martin's University, Office of Institutional Advancement, 5000 Abbey Way SE, Lacey, WA 98503.

Written by 5th son John D. Maher from years of video recorded oral history, and written short stories from our father Pat with additions by sons Tom, Pat and Jim Maher and loving wife Gloria. Editing assistance from Johnny Lindsay, our dear cousin, and longtime friend Matt Miller.

Cemetery Details

All Souls Cemetery

550 Glen Cove Road
Vallejo, CA 94591
(707) 644-5209

Tribute Wall

RG

“ So sorry for your loss a student of mom at Benicia high class of 76 Roy garibaldi the only guy you gave an A to

roy garibaldi - May 02, 2021 at 12:24 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Patrick W. Maher Sr..



April 10, 2021 at 02:30 PM

JM

“ Dad, you were put on Earth to know, love and serve God, so you could be with him for all eternity. Your work is now complete an every loving wife, sons, grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. We are proud of your military service and will do everything we can to keep your memory and accomplishments vivid in the minds and hearts of our children and theirs. I pray that the last two years of your life shave off many in purgatory and that God calls your name and your hear, "Well done my good and faithful servant." You are worthy. Thanks for all the great memories you helped make as the leader of our family. You shall not be forgotten. Pray for us when you get to the pure love of Christ, the light. (Please have Masses said for our father.)

JD Maher - April 01, 2021 at 02:46 AM

CL

“ I Don't Know Who He Is But He Does Look Like He Has A Caring Heart Like You Mr.Maher And I Hope You Have The Best Memories With You And Your Mother And Your Father

Cong Lor - March 31, 2021 at 11:36 AM

JM

Very kind words Cong. Thank you.

JD Maher - April 01, 2021 at 02:48 AM

CL

You Welcome Mr.Maher

Cong Lor - April 02, 2021 at 12:51 PM

RR

“ Rebecca Riney lit a candle in memory of Patrick W. Maher Sr.



Rebecca Riney - March 27, 2021 at 12:12 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Patrick W. Maher Sr..



March 26, 2021 at 06:03 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Patrick W. Maher Sr..



March 26, 2021 at 04:21 PM

TM

“ Dad, everything that needed to be accomplished was done. Very proud of you. ✨🍀✨

Tammy Maher - March 26, 2021 at 11:23 AM



“ Divine Light was purchased for the family of Patrick W. Maher Sr..



March 25, 2021 at 03:35 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Patrick W. Maher Sr..



March 25, 2021 at 10:46 AM