



Edward Williams Stephens Neff II

February 10, 2025

Edward Williams Stephens Neff II, a resident of Willow Street, PA, died at his home on Monday, February 10, 2025, at the age of 83, due to a rare disease, cardiac amyloidosis. He was born on April 6, 1941, in Wheeling, WV, the son of Thomas Jackson Neff and Rachel Rettew Hicks, and was a graduate of Mercersburg Academy and Miami University.

Following an early career with IBM, Ed became president of the family business, Independent Insurance Service, Inc. in Wheeling. In 1982, he sold the agency and established The Compass Company, Inc., a risk management consulting practice. He proceeded to develop a broad clientele in the Northeast, following his wife Jeanne as she moved to senior higher education positions in Pennsylvania and New York.

In 1976, Ed received the CPCU (Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter) professional designation and later served on the board of the National Society of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters. He also received the ARM (Associate in Risk Management) designation and was a life member of the National Society of Risk Management Consultants. He was a member of Rotary International and a Paul Harris Fellow. A 32nd-degree Mason, he was a member of the Osiris Shrine for more than 50 years.

In 1995 Jeanne Neff became the president of Russell Sage College with

campuses in Troy and Albany, New York. As the first male spouse of a president at Sage, Ed was dubbed “First First Man” by students and enjoyed that role within the campus community and beyond. He expanded his practice as The Compass Company Consultants, LLC, with the acquisition of a similar business in Albany.

In 2007 the Compass Company Consultants was sold to Park Strategies, LLC of New York and upon retirement in 2008, the Neffs moved to their long-time home at Deep Creek Lake, MD. There Ed served as a board member of the Deep Creek Lake Property Owners Association, helped to establish the Deep Creek Watershed Foundation, and was a member of the Mountain Hosts at the Wisp ski resort. A longtime member of St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, he volunteered for many years with “It’s In the Bag,” a weekend food program for needy schoolchildren. Ed and Jeanne were also members of the Deep Creek Lake Yacht Club at Turkey Neck, where he sailed Flying Scots and rode with the Chain Gang bicycling group, serving in later years as its leader.

In 2015, the Neffs moved to Willow Valley Communities in Lancaster, PA, where Ed’s Neff ancestors settled in the early 1700s. At Willow Valley he was a founding member of the leadership team of the Apple Users Club, now numbering over 600 individuals. He served on the Steering Committee for the capital campaign in support of an innovative Memory Center, for which ground was broken in the spring of 2024. Ed was also a member of the Camera Club and Bicycle Club and organizer of several social bridge groups. He was a member of St. Edward’s Episcopal Church.

A dedicated community volunteer, Ed was chair of the Wheeling Symphony Society board and helped establish what is now the Valley Hospice. For many years he served on the board of Presbyterian Senior Living (Dillsburg, PA), with senior services and continuing care retirement facilities in five states. In Troy, NY, he was a board member of The Eddy, a senior services division of

Northeast Health, and a member of its Ethics Committee. He was chair of the Arts Center of the Capital Region and WMHT Public Media board and later a board member of WQED Multimedia in Pittsburgh, PA, and WITF Public Media in Harrisburg, PA. Understanding that “philanthropy is not a spectator sport,” he made substantial gifts to the non-profits and other organizations with which he was involved.

Ed pursued activities that challenged him physically and mentally, including tennis, golf, racquetball, scuba diving, bicycling, skiing and sailing; he was also a licensed small plane pilot. He loved the game of bridge and was an excellent player. Infinitely curious about the world around him, Ed was never satisfied with mere surface knowledge or minimal competence, especially where technology was involved. His colleagues and friends could trust that he would follow through on his commitments and his love and support for his family was unwavering.

Ed was recently predeceased by his wife of 42 years, Jeanne Henry Kammer Neff. He will be missed by his daughter Carrie A. Mitchell (William) of Belle Mead, NJ and grandchildren Rachel and Wes; son Edward W.S. Neff III (Tina) of Gulf Breeze, FL and grandson Will (Edward W.S. Neff IV); and stepson Brian Kammer (Meltem Alemdar) of Decatur, GA. He is also survived by his sister Rachel Ann Neville of Batavia, IL and nephews Eric (Dema) Neville, Andrew (Eileen) Neville and Jon (Susannah) Neville and their children.

A joint celebration of Ed and Jeanne’s life will occur on Saturday, March 1, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. beginning with a Luncheon Visitation and proceeding with a 1:00 p.m. Memorial Service. The celebration will be at Willow Valley in the Spring Run Auditorium on the fifth floor of the J building. When entering the main gate of Willow Valley (100 Willow Valley Lakes Drive, Willow Street, PA), follow the “Celebration of Life” signs. The service will be live-streamed for

remote viewing at <https://www.youtube.com/@theepiscopalchurcingarret734>
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Generous to the end, Ed has donated his body for medical research; his ashes will eventually be inurned in the St. Matthew's Columbarium in Garrett County, MD.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Edward W.S. and Jeanne H. Neff Endowment Fund supporting operations at the Memory Center. Gifts to the Fund should be made payable to Willow Valley Communities Charitable Foundation, 100 Willow Valley Lakes Drive, Willow Street, PA 17584. Gifts may also be made online via foundation.willowvalleycommunities.org (no www. prefix). Please note "Neff Endowment Fund" in the comment section of your donation.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 1. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Spring Run Auditorium at Willow Valley
950 Willow Valley Lakes Drive
Willow Street, PA 17584

Memorial Service

MAR 1. 1:00 PM (ET)

Spring Run Auditorium at Willow Valley
950 Willow Valley Lakes Drive
Willow Street, PA 17584

Tribute Wall

JM

“ During my short time of residency in Wheeling, Ed became a friend and social contact. Invited me to play tennis with him at the local country club and double dated with me for evening concerts at Wheeling Park and Oblebay Park. After moving out of Wheeling we lost contact. A valued friendship from my days in Wheeling. J. R. Meek, formerly of Williamsburg Condominiums.

J. R. Meek - February 26, 2025 at 08:19 PM

AJ

“What a sad, sad time for the Neff family. And for the Jackson family. The Neff- Jackson connection, of course, goes back a hundred years. Tom and my dad knew each other in Wheeling when they were young, and my mom and Rachel were friends as far back as Philadelphia in the 1930s. By chance they all ended up in Wheeling. My earliest memory is of dogs. Tom had an English setter named Belle, and Belle found a boyfriend while on vacation on Florida, as I recall. The boyfriend was an Irish setter, and the offspring were these gorgeous black puppies. Tom and Rachel kept one, Butch, and gave another one, Tippy, to us. I was about four. Tippy was the love of my early life, and I've always been grateful that Tom and Rachel shared their litter. Tippy was a roamer, and she traveled miles. One day she ended up in Rachel's back yard, filthy dirty. Thinking that the dirtball was Butch, Rachel bathed the dog, only to find Tippy beneath the crud. We laughed about that for years. From time to time Kathy and I got invited to Rachel's house for dinner. She was a great chef and a perfect hostess. Later, when Kathy and I were young parents, we went on a Caribbean vacation with Rachel, Peg Harris and my folks. Our means of exploring the island was by pickup truck. Peg and Rachel, who were no longer young, always crawled into the truck bed, and Kathy, the baby and I sat up front. Very spunky ladies, and Ed was a go-getter too--skiing, adventuring, biking, always on the go. He was a good friend for life, and I always enjoyed seeing him and Jeanne on visits to Wheeling. And Jeanne was incredible--so kind and gentle and so accomplished. What a great pair they were. What a loss to your family and to all who knew them. May time heal. Andy and Kathy Jackson.

Andy Jackson - February 20, 2025 at 09:59 PM



“ *Ed was such a positive, helpful, insightful insurance professional. He added so much to the CPCU experience, volunteering hours and hours of his time to the organization he loved. We all attended so many national and regional CPCU meetings together. The twinkle in his eyes is my greatest memory of him. He was happy to be there, to be part of something bigger than himself, and happy to contribute his insight and wisdom. I always felt that he worked for the good of the organization, industry and his friends. He was one of a kind. And a kind one at that... RIP Ed. --Marsha Egan*

Marsha Egan - February 12, 2025 at 11:38 AM