

# Observer News

## Our Town

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# 'Hap' Barnes recalled for service to community

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STAFF WRITER

The city lost a tenth generation descendent of a prominent family last month, after falling to a long battle with diabetes.

Carlyle Fuller "Hap" Barnes died at the age of 87. He was a member of the Barnes family, who founded The Barnes Group, headquartered downtown.

"Hap" Barnes has his own place within the history of the Barnes Group, having served as chief economic officer and chair of the executive committee, before his retirement nearly 20 years ago.

"Hap' Barnes was an individual who served his family and community with distinction and the utmost of moral character," Mayor Art Ward said. "The City of Bristol will continue to benefit from the significant contributions of Mr. Barnes for generations to come."

Barnes became a staff assistant at Associated Spring Corporation, the Bristol division, in 1948, and eventually became general manager and was elected to the board of directors in 1951. Barnes took over as president in 1953, and was elected chairman and chief executive officer, or CEO, in 1964, until he retired in 1994.

Barnes was also a prominent member of the Bristol community, includ-



Carlyle Fuller 'Hap' Barnes died in January at age 87.

ing being president of The Barnes Foundation, which is the philanthropic arm of The Barnes Group that donates to the community. The Barnes Group was founded in 1857. Barnes also spent 36 years as a fire commissioner, eventually becoming a 'Commissioner Emeritus.' Ultimately, his passion for the fire department and his collection of

antique fire memorabilia, evolved into the creation of The Museum of Fire History, at The Carousel Museum.

"His service and dedication to the Bristol Fire Department, and to the present and future safety of the men and women serving as firefighters, was unprecedented," Ward added. "The people of the City of Bristol have been

privileged to be the recipient of his involvement in the Bristol community, and we are appreciative of his family in sharing him with us."

Louise DeMars, executive director of The New England Carousel Museum, said Barnes wanted to "leave a legacy" for the city, and his donation of fire equipment to the museum was his way of paying a tribute to the Bristol Fire Department.

"With the passing of Hap Barnes, the New England Carousel Museum has lost a good friend and colleague," DeMars said in an email. "Since installing his Museum of Fire History in the Carousel Museum building, both Hap and Betty Barnes have become part of the 'Museum Family,' beloved by all."

As far as being recognized by the community, Barnes received The Boy's Club Humanitarian Service Award in 1986, he received the Distinguished Service Award for dedicated service to the business community from the Bristol Chamber of Commerce in 1997, in 1999 he received the John Filer Award for Creative Leadership in Philanthropy from the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy, and in 2007 he received the ACE Award from the Bristol Center for Arts and Culture.

"Hap was a gentleman and a gentle man," DeMars

said. "He treated everyone with kindness and respect, and was a joy to work with. His positive approach to life's trials and tribulations was an inspiration to us all."

She added, "How lucky we were to have him embrace the museum and how lucky I was to be able to count him among my friends."

Barnes also served as parade marshal for the 2007 Mum Festival, and was involved in non-profits, such as Bristol Hospital where he served as president, and was director of The Main Street Community Foundation, and chairman of The United Way.

Tom Barnes, Bristol's city treasurer and member of the Barnes' clan, said "Hap was one of the nicest gentlemen you would ever meet."

He said as a child he would visit Hap Barnes and Betty, Hap's wife of 62 years who survives him, and would be able to see Hap

Barnes's fire equipment and ride in the antique truck he had. Tom Barnes added that Hap and Betty were huge supporters of The Bushnell in Hartford, and Hap was heavily involved in the formation of The Indian Rock Nature Preserve and The Barnes Nature Center.

"We have always been a close family that would work together to promote the family and the Barnes Group," Tom Barnes said, adding that Hap, who was Tom's great-grandfather's nephew, was heavily involved in helping expand The Barnes Group, from a community business, into the worldwide corporation it is today.

"No matter how tough things got, Hap was always upbeat, he was always optimistic about things and always had a smile on his face," Tom Barnes said.

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