

Obituary: Col. Jack E. Daniels, lifelong oenophile

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Col. Jack E. Daniels

Lifelong oenophile Col. Jack E. Daniels died peacefully at Norwalk Hospital on July 25th from natural causes at the age of 96. Born in Salt Lake City July 7, 1920 he attended East High School in Salt Lake City, Utah and graduated from Stanford University in 1944. He joined the Air Force and served in World War II as a supply sergeant climbing the ranks and retiring as a full bird Colonel. It was during his service time that he acquired the nickname Hot Lips, and his sense of fun(!) and derring-do, not to mention his ready access to scarce items like stockings, wine and chocolate, led him through many escapades in postwar Europe with intellectuals and artists of the time.

After the war he worked for Nation Association of Manufacturers and as a fundraiser for Westminster College. He became increasingly involved in wine education, joining the Chaine des Rotisseurs and becoming President of the local chapter. He was the Director of the Society of Wine Educators and traversed the country with his wife teaching about and enjoying wine and food. He continued to write and publish articles about wine and food until his death.

In 1998 Jack moved to Ridgefield, CT, where he was an active member of Ridgefield's Men's Club and Wine Wizards. His sense of joie de vivre and love of poetry are legendary — at his 95th birthday party he flawlessly recited Casey at the Bat.

Jack is survived by his wife of 63 years, Julienne, two sons and a daughter: Janus Daniels of Salt Lake City, Utah; Lance Daniels of Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania; and Zelig Pforzheimer of Wilton, CT. Also surviving him are his grandchildren, Tucker, Jack and Ross Pforzheimer, Gavrielle Price and Kelli Nicholas; and his great-grandchildren Dahy (6), Nia (4) and Ani (born July 10 three days after Jack's 96th birthday). The word that is used most when speaking of Col. Jack is gentleman. He embodied it completely.

One of his favorite poems was Invictus by William Ernest Henley:

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance

I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

His kindness and quiet intelligence continue to inspire and inform those he has left behind, and we “thank whatever gods may be for his unconquerable soul.”