



Whitney Elliott Saidla

January 7, 1942 - June 23, 2016

Stratham - Whitney Saidla "Whit" passed away peacefully in his home on June 23, 2016. He was born January 7, 1942 in Brooklyn, NY, son of the late Leo Erval Alexandre and Mary Fayette (Driggs) Saidla.

Whit grew up in Sherman, CT and Huntington, NY. He was a long time resident of Stratham. He received his undergraduate degree from Tarkio College in MO, and graduate work continued at the Aix-Marseille Université, France and the New School, NY.

Whit spent his early professional years as the owner of his own company building the first "unsinkable" sailboats. Regarded as a pioneer in the composite industry, he went on to build the 78 gate valve buildings for the Alaska Pipeline and modernize the shipping industry by inventing the first filament wound refrigerated cargo containers that could later be converted to refugee housing. Whit also developed new composite materials that are widely used in the automotive and aeronautical industries and in many household products today. During his lifetime of innovation he acquired more than twenty US and international patents.

Over the past 35 years living in New Hampshire, Whit became a real estate developer and designer of custom homes. He was a proud member of the American Institute of Architects. His creativity in all things was appreciated by

those who had the privilege of knowing him. He enjoyed helping his friends and always had an innovative solution at the ready.

Sailing meant the world to Whit, having raced numerous times to Bermuda and spending many months sailing "Pyewacket" in the Caribbean with his family. He was a member of the Portsmouth Yacht Club for 40 years. Whit was also an avid gourmet cook, having studied at the Cordon Bleu in Paris. He loved to entertain, much to the delight of his friends and family.

Whit's family is very proud of his lifelong accomplishments, and he will be remembered as a true renaissance man. Whether it be traveling to his favorite spots in France, applying his scientific mind in the kitchen or the laboratory, or pursuing his passion for sailing, Whit lived his life to the fullest! He will be missed dearly!

Whit is survived by son Adam and his wife Christine of Arlington, MA, son Christian and his wife Katie of Epping, grandchildren Olivia and Reid, his former wife and good friend Pamela Saidla of Manchester, sister Josephine Morse of Center Harbor, and several nephews.

A memorial service will be held at 1:00 PM Sunday, July 31, 2016 at the South Church, 292 State Street, Portsmouth. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited. Assistance with the arrangements was by the Remick & Gendron Funeral Home-Crematory, Hampton.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUL 31. 1:00 PM (ET)

South Church
292 State Street
Portsmouth, NH

Tribute Wall



“ *Whitney Elliott Saidla*

September 18, 2022 at 12:49 AM

LK

“ I was honored to speak at Whit's memorial service today. Here is the eulogy I presented. Whit my friend, I am going to miss you dearly.

A Memorial to Whit

I first met Whit about 18 years ago when Betsy and I were moving back to the US after being on relocation in France. We were house hunting in the greater Portsmouth area, but not satisfied with anything we saw, so expanded our search to include new or under construction houses. The RE agent showed us a house under construction in Stratham. But we couldn't talk to the builder as he was away sailing! Yes indeed, the builder was Whit. The day before we had to leave to go back to France, Whit returned to Stratham and discussed the house with us. The ground floor was framed but the second floor was just flooring at this point. Whit and I climbed a ladder up to the second floor and Betsy followed us up the ladder to the second floor too. I think he always loved her for that!

At one point in the 90's when the economy tanked Betsy moved to Seattle to work for Microsoft. I stayed behind with the house and Whit and I became friends not just business associates. Soon Whit became one of my closest friends, if not my closest friend.

I learned that Whit was a true Renaissance man having many talents and areas of knowledge in plastic, sailing, designing and manufacturing sailboats, refrigerated railroad containers, designing special buildings and parts for the Alaska pipeline, designing and building houses, developing real estate, gourmet cooking.

Over time, and by example, Whit truly shaped my life in many ways

He always had “I will do” attitude – He would put his mind to anything and do it. No waffling in Whit's life!

He was a true gentleman with honor. Wonderful host, polite in ways

that have been forgotten. His handshake was his word.

He was a great dancer, which we learned when dancing with Betsy at our son's wedding in Newport.

He completely surprised me at my 60th birthday party in France.

It was always great when he stayed with us in France or even by himself as we knew the house would be well taken care of. Like when he built a loft in our garage!

Whit loved France. He went to school there in Aix-en-Provence and developed his culinary skills at le Cordon Bleu in Paris.

He appreciated European culture and history. He made many friends there, told us lots of stories and loved to travel

He was a great chef

Dinners with him were always something special.

While staying at our house in France he would invite our neighbors over and they told me the dinners were always extraordinary and delicious. We have a small villa with a small kitchen stove.

Perfectionist: He calibrated the oven using his electronic thermometer!

Encouraged me by example to raise my level of cooking, which I did, but never to his level. He got me into sous-vide cooking.

I already miss him a lot. I avoided writing this until last night as writing it meant he was gone, and I didn't want to come to grips with that. But just a few days ago I heard something that embodies Whit and that I will remember him by:

*"Everybody dies alone. But if you mean something to someone, if you help someone, or love someone, if even a single person remembers you, then maybe you never really die at all."***

I'm sure Whit will live on through all of us.

***Person of Interest (CBS).*

Lee Knoch

7/31/2016

Lee Knoch - July 31, 2016 at 08:15 PM

FS

Beautiful eulogy speech! Whit was my roommate at Tarkio college! He was an unforgettable person and I really regret not staying in touch with him!! Fred Schmitt 630-917-4217 Bolingbrook, Illinois

Fred Schmitt - June 03, 2023 at 02:41 PM

HO

“ I worked next door to where Whit lived and had the pleasure to see and visit with him often. He was always here if we ever needed anything, always wanting to help or offer advise, and always made us laugh. What a great guys and he will truly be missed.

Holley - July 01, 2016 at 08:55 AM

SR

He was my first love , Im truly sorry he died so young . A great smarts

sandy de Clairville Rath - July 08, 2016 at 10:25 AM

PB

“ I met Whit through Portsmouth Yacht Club.. I enjoyed his company terrifically. He was interesting and bright and you could always guarantee to learn something from him...I will miss his kind and gentle smile and his intellectual banter.. It is such a huge loss for those of us that knew him...

*“hark, now hear the sailors cry,
smell the sea, and feel the sky
let your soul & spirit fly, into the mystic...”*

— Van Morrison

I'll miss you...

Phyllis Breitman - July 01, 2016 at 08:19 AM

SK

“ Whit you truly lived an amazing life. Who you were still lives on in Christian and Adam .Thank you for giving me my best friend and sharing your wisdom, experiences, and love of life with me .You will be missed. Rest in peace.

Sean Kyle - July 01, 2016 at 05:07 AM

AM

“ Whit was always kind and generous with me; a true sweetheart. He would come over and cook dinner and drink wine with Christian and I and it was always a pleasure. Not only was he an amazing chef and guest, but he was also a great teacher and a wonderful story teller. I admired him for the life he'd lived, the talent and intellect that he possessed, and his infectious joie de vivre. Thank you, Whit, for everything. Rest in much deserved peace.

Aaron McCarthy - June 30, 2016 at 09:29 PM

DO

“ Always loved seeing Whit...so many good conversations ..will miss him. Love Donna

Donna - June 30, 2016 at 05:42 PM

BS

What began as a business relationship (Whit built our house in Stratham) became a deep and true friendship. His joy in life was evidenced by his many interests and we were privileged to share in many; his love of cooking, sailing and France. Even when we moved to Seattle we remained closely connected. He will be greatly missed here and in the south of France where we shared mutual friends.

Bon Voyage our dear friend!

Lee and Betsy

Betsy Steele - July 01, 2016 at 11:15 AM

JH

I met Whit in 1997 after I moved back to the Seacoast. It was the start of a long and wonderful friendship. We could talk about everything - and he taught me a lot about life. He always made me think more deeply.

I visited him in France and we had a wonderful week visiting all the medieval towns around Nice and the Riviera.

I will always remember his jovial laugh and the love he had for Adam and Christian.

Sail on, my wonderful friend! <3

Joni

Joni Hinterhaeuser - July 01, 2016 at 11:50 AM

GR

Marie-Annick and I had the privilege of meeting Whit here in the South of France, via Betsy and Lee Knoch. He was a good friend and a very interesting person.

We miss him.

Our sincere condolences to his family and friends !

Nannique & Geoff.

Geoff Robb - July 03, 2016 at 03:48 AM