



## Howell Aloysius McConnell

December 8, 1935 - February 11, 2023

Howell Aloysius McConnell passed away on February 11, 2023, at 87 years old. Born on December 8, 1935, in Chester, PA, he was the son of the late Mary Desmond McConnell and Percy Howell McConnell, Jr., and direct descendant of Samuel Howell, Jr., a member of the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution and the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry.

Howell was a proud alumnus of Villanova University and a member of the Navy ROTC. Upon graduating from Villanova, he accepted a position with the National Security Agency, married his beloved wife, Theresa Gallagher McConnell, and welcomed four children, Mary Theresa, John Howell, Ellen Meghan, and Jennifer Ann. He retired in 1992 after a decorated career and dedicated himself to the community.

Howell was a devout Catholic and Franciscan who was deeply involved in his parish duties at St. Bernard's Catholic Church in Riverdale, MD, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Edgewater, MD, before moving to Kent Island where he and Theresa were members of St. Christopher's Church. In the 1970's, he was instrumental in starting the Community of Reconciliation (C.O.R.) at Hope Haven and spent decades working with his fellow C.O.R. members, Bob & Anne Kershner, David Sifferman and Bob Eaton, sharing the teachings of Christ and inspiring a life of faith.

In his retirement, he donated his time to the NSA Museum and hosted NSA Museum tours, he also volunteered at the Greenbelt Police Department Cold Case Unit and assisted with solving cold cases. He was a proud historian and traveled to Ireland often with his wife, children, and grandchildren.

Howell is survived by his three daughters, Mary McGee of Chestertown, MD, Ellen Yunger of Kent Island, MD, Jennifer Henderson and son-in-law, Kevin Henderson of Kent Island, MD; twelve grandchildren Melissa, Kristin, Elizabeth, John, Jennah, Brendan, Theresa, Meghan, Fiona, Katie, Mac, and Liam; eighteen++ great-grandchildren; and a niece and nephews.

Howell is predeceased by his beloved wife, Theresa; his son, John Howell; his parents, Mary and Percy; and in-laws, John and Anne Gallagher & Dan and Sharon Ratcliff.

A visitation will be held on Monday, February 20, 2023 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. with a service beginning at 12 p.m. at Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home, 106 Shamrock Rd., Chester, MD 21619.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Visitation

FEB 20. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Fellows, Helfenbein, & Newnam Funeral Home, P.A.  
106 Shamrock Road  
Chester, MD 21619

## Memorial Service

FEB 20. 12:00 PM (ET)

Fellows, Helfenbein, & Newnam Funeral Home, P.A.  
106 Shamrock Road  
Chester, MD 21619

# Tribute Wall



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Howell Aloysius McConnell*



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**Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home** - February 17, 2023 at 03:13 PM



“ *Howell Aloysius McConnell*

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October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM

“ I hardly know what to say. Everything that has already been said here about Hal is roiling in my own heart. I feel as if all the beautiful words already written here about this amazing human being have been sucked out of me before I had a chance to even open my mouth. My tribute is late since I had not heard about Hal’s passing until just 3 weeks ago. And since then, I have been reliving so many memories and recalling so many precious conversations, trying to find just the right words, but it has felt nearly impossible.

*Hal McConnell is the most amazing, intelligent, spiritual, vibrant, genuinely good, kind, loving, and accepting person I have ever known. I know he still is because he lives on, and not in the least sense, of living on in the hearts and memories of all who knew him.*

*Up until I saw Hal’s obituary at the beginning of August, I was still trying to find a way to visit him. Although it didn’t happen, I am so grateful I was able to speak with him by phone and send him a heartfelt letter.*

*I have so many wonderful memories of Hal and Terry. I was one of the teenagers who crowded into Hal and Terry’s living room back in the late 60s. Hal opened my mind and heart up to things I could never have imagined. He opened my mind and spirit up to God at a critical point in my life, which changed me forever. I believe Hal was the first person who saw me for who I was and called it out. He made me feel truly seen and heard, truly known, and truly accepted. In 1974 my husband and I had the opportunity to attend a retreat at Hope Haven just before we were married, and Hal prayed a powerful prophetic prayer over us and our marriage that steeled my determination to hang on through some very difficult times. The last 9 years of our 44-year marriage were the best of all, and we might not have made it, but for Hal’s prayers over us. I would not be the person I am today were it not for Hal’s influence and prayers. I am extremely grateful that Hal and Terry gave me the opportunity to be a part of St. Bernard’s parish’s 50th Anniversary celebration in 2000. It was so wonderful to see them there and to see so many*

*friends!*

*I am forever thankful to have known Hal and Terry and their warm hospitality. Hal truly made a difference in my life because of who he is. He still is. Thank you, Howie. To his family, I pray for the Lord's comfort and I extend my warmest sympathy.*

*Linda White King*

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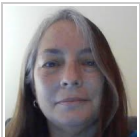
**Linda White King** - August 27, 2023 at 05:07 PM

JC

“ *I first met Hal in 1968 as a new hire at the National Security Agency. Hal taught a portion of the class given to all new college hires and made his description of that aspect of the agency's mission so interesting that he convinced me to select that discipline for my career focus. I had extensive contact with Hal up to his retirement and enjoyed his conversation and humanity to no end. Hal genuinely cared about people and would go to any length to help other employees. I can honestly say that in the over 20 years that I knew Hal I never heard a harsh word out of him; Hal was one of the finest persons I have ever known. I look forward to seeing him again in heaven one day. My deepest condolences to his family and many friends, God bless you all and God bless Hal.*

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**John Capece** - June 08, 2023 at 03:29 PM



“ *How, was always a funny storyteller and a great historian of Catholic facts. I have missed not seeing him over these last few years and am sorry that I could not pay tribute to him in person. I know that he is missed but he and his wonderful wife will never be forgotten. Love them very much. My condolences to his many family members and friends.*

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**Kelly Kraft Passero** - May 09, 2023 at 11:13 AM

CK

“*Mr. McConnell was one of the nicest people. He was always understanding of everyone he met. He will be missed. I have very fond memories of him.*

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**Cynthia Kranz** - February 27, 2023 at 05:04 AM

KI

“*October 9th, 1971 was my 18th birthday and my mother had a birthday party planned. She ended up in the hospital. My younger brother, Michael, invited me to a party held at the home of his CCD instructors. At that party I met Howell. I remember talking to him for a long time. I don't remember what we talked about but I know it was deep and spiritual. He invited me to come to the CCD 12th grade group that he and Terry held. I did and dragged my group of rowdy, rebellious friends with me. We were all out of high school but the McConnells graciously and lovingly welcomed all of us. Howell and Terry were my “parents” when my own family was so dysfunctional. They loved me unconditionally. Howell influenced me more than any other person in my life. He helped me form my spiritual beliefs, my sense of ethics, my ability to love others unconditionally, my belief in kindness. He once told me I was a contemplative. He truly influenced who I am today, 51 years later. We went on many powerful retreats to Journey's End and to Hope Haven.*

*Howell sat in the front seat of my little car as I drove from St. Bernard's to Gate of Heaven for Hilda's graveside service. The entire drive he talked to me about all manner of deep mystery, God, love, the cosmos, the meaning of life and loss. I remember thinking that I was surprised I could drive, because of the intensity of his words.*

*I loved Howell, and to me, Howell is immortal.*

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**Kitt** - February 23, 2023 at 10:28 AM

SF

“ *Hal McConnell was a natural mentor, who brought a gentle sacred jolly incisive mind as a fascinating friend and a healing presence. None who met him will forget him. All who knew him loved him. He left the light of the blessed for us to follow, by which we will tell his stories, and under which we will learn to accept the uplifting of his legacy.*

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**Steve Fleischmann** - February 22, 2023 at 10:13 AM



“ *From Dad sang to Mom...[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_KPfB\\_PRYIY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KPfB_PRYIY)*

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**Mary McGee** - February 21, 2023 at 11:01 PM

MD

“ I first met Hal at the St. Bernard's bible study/prayer meeting. My mom and my sister used to attend and one day they got me to come along for the ride.

I was probably seventeen yrs. old and the only real education that I had were my zillions of Superman and Batman comics. Well Hal quickly changed all that.

Not only was he brilliant and 'charismatic', but he was a gifted teacher. First, of course as the teacher of the bible study, but as time went on, his wide range of interests influenced every aspect of my young mind. He opened my mind to theology, philosophy, history, literature, science and cosmology and finally, psychology.

It was Hal's influence that got me to go to college, and that influence has only grown with the passage of time. Literally all of the things I find fascinating about life were first highlighted by Hal. But his biggest influence on me was as a Christian man. Hal, over the years of our association, taught me the real heart of being a Christian. He didn't just talk about Christianity, he showed it to me. He modelled it. And in all the years since, (I am now 68) I have tried to imitate Hal's version of Christianity. He is very simply the most brilliant and outstanding man I have ever had the pleasure to know.

--Michael Delaney

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Michael Delaney - February 20, 2023 at 05:37 PM

JD

“ Love blessings and the Peace of Christ be to the McConnell family.

*Both of my parents became of friends of Howell and Terri early in my life. Almost all of that time was at the Saint Bernard's Parish in Riverdale, MD.*

*My earliest memories are of accompanying my Mother to the contemplative bible study Howell led, as the youngest participant. The Lord's gift and presence in Howell's teaching first crystallized for me in his expression of and passion for the scriptures. The inexplicable way Howell could read and "unpack" a single scripture verse, it's ties throughout scripture, historical language and underlying meanings otherwise unseen always lead to a profound truth and sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit that we all shared (and share!).*

*With all of his obligations, personal, professional and liturgical/spiritual, Howell still accepted my request for him to be my confirmation sponsor. I will never forget that, nor the incredible journey of preparation as he also instructed my CCD class.*

*Howell saved my Father's faith, after his having been inflicted with doubt by reading different subtly and not-so subtly anti-Christian thinkers, philosophers, and theologians. Howell accomplished this with gentle love and encouragement, not trying to "divert the river". Over the years and with many hours of suggested reading, conversation and guidance from Howell, my Father, was able to truthfully believe again and participate in that faith.*

*To paraphrase from a recent conversation with my Father, at a difficult time he found the sudden desire to do something good... That good was to write Howell a letter outlining all of the wonderful*

*and uplifting things He'd directly and indirectly lead my Father to discover.*

*I believe he said page count was at 67. Sadly, it was not delivered.*

*Though the powerful reminder of that spiritual journey Howell had walked through*

*with my Father was renewed, it would instead fortify him through an even more difficult time, and very soon after it's completion.*

*Howell and Terri were there to pray with and encourage my Mother as she traversed persevering difficulties that faced her, often stealing the joy from her.*

*She never left even as much as a conversation with Terri or Howell seeming as if her "batteries had been charged".*

*(Maybe there really is something to that concept Howell would mention about being "Radioactive with the Holy Spirit")*

*I am so grateful to have known Howell and Terri in my life and been imprinted by their example and merciful outpouring of love to all of God's children.*

*I hold dear the memories and many Wisdoms of the Holy Spirit Howell shared with me and I am truly still in awe... My life remains completely changed, having known Him and Terri.*

*As we mourn the loss of this shining light Brothers and Sisters, I humbly entreat you to think not that we have lost A Father, Friend, Role Model, Teacher, Guide or Counselor:*

*Instead, I encourage you to hold fast in faith, knowing the unknowable:*

*That we have seen the Lord keep his UNBREAKABLE word and take his servant into the place He has prepared for him.*

*As well I encourage you to rejoice, for we have gained an advocate in the Church Victorious!*

*-Julian Delaney*

RK

“ 2 files added to the album Hope Haven



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**Robert Kershner** - February 19, 2023 at 03:20 PM

“ Our prayers are with Mary T, Ellen, Jennifer, and their families.

*For us, it is difficult to reflect on our relationship with Hal without also including Terri. For Anne and me they were a team of one in both their marriage and their ministries. We first met Terri & Hal in 1974 when we took our Senior High youth group to Hope Haven on the Rappahannock River in Center Cross Virginia. We immediately bonded with Terri, Hal, and the brothers (Bob Eaton & Dave Sifferman). In 1975, Anne and I were invited to become part of their community (Community of Reconciliation, COR). By that time, Hope Haven had moved from the facility on the Rappahannock river to a late 18th century plantation home called Woodlawn at Center Cross Virginia. That is where our relationship with Terri and Hal truly began.*

*The brothers moved on to begin a new ministry in Anchorage AK while Terri & Hal remained at Hope Haven to continue the retreat ministry that had grown over a few short years. They invited Anne and I to become involved in the retreat ministry, which for both of us was the beginning of a new franciscan journey and a lifetime friendship as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Anne and I learned much about franciscan spirituality and community through our beloved brother and sister. We continued retreat ministry there for several years until the 200-year-old house became too much for us to maintain. We were all sad when we had to say goodbye to Hope Haven at Woodlawn. However, the Lord opened new doors when the four of us began to lead days of reflection at churches throughout the Baltimore-Washington area.*

*Throughout our ministry together, we share many times of laughter, many times of tears, but always special times in the presence of our holy Lord. We would have monthly community weeks where we would just gather for times together as our relationships grew spiritually deeper. As we can no longer hear the voices of our brother and sister, the memories of our times together are a special gift to both of us.*

*When we moved to Florida in 2000, we were no longer physically near each other, but our friendship was deep as we understood being brothers and sisters in Christ goes beyond our physical presence. Whenever we needed to talk, to share what was happening in our lives, or needed prayers, we knew we had Terri and Hal to spend time in conversation with. Those conversations always ended in prayer. We were a spiritual family.*

*As we had to say goodbye to our sister Terri, we now have to say goodbye to our brother Hal. Thank you for your presence in our lives, the ministries we shared together, and the unconditional love we shared. But most important, how we became so deeply part of each other's lives.*

*Till we all meet again, dear brother and sister, in the presence of our Lord.*

*Bob & Anne Kershner*

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**Robert Kershner** - February 19, 2023 at 03:15 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Howell Aloysius McConnell.*



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February 16, 2023 at 06:09 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Howell Aloysius McConnell.*



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February 16, 2023 at 11:15 AM

LM

“ Over 40 years of memories from weddings to birth of babies to birth of great grandchildren. He was always kind and quick to offer nuggets about life. His passion to the country and our national security and safety was always top of mind right along with religion and the church. Everyone who knew him has some very special stories. I know he is happy to join all the special people in his life that have passed first. And we will have a guardian Angel looking out for all he knew!

lynn martin - February 15, 2023 at 09:09 PM



“ Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of Howell Aloysius McConnell.



February 15, 2023 at 09:05 PM

PF

“ I worked with Hal in religious education for many years. His family and my family enjoyed many good times and memories. To his girls, I say I will never forget all the Irish stories. God bless you all. Prayers to all of you during your grief.

pat fitzmaurice - February 14, 2023 at 09:17 PM

KK

“ I will always remember Howell. I, too, went to St, Bernards in Riverdale. He and his wife, Theresa, were very active in the church and school. Howell always had a smile and a "hello". Howell was an inspiration and I know he will be missed by his family. Kathaleen Klotz.

Kathaleen Klotz - February 14, 2023 at 05:48 PM

RW

“ *First time meeting Mr. McConnell he wanted to know my life story. He was sweet. God Bless you. R.I.P.* ”



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**Rose Woolley** - February 14, 2023 at 05:02 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Howell Aloysius McConnell.* ”



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February 14, 2023 at 04:23 PM