



Nicholas T. Zeoli

1923 - 2022

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Husband, father, coach, educator and World War II veteran Nicholas T. Zeoli, 98, of Hubbardton, Vermont, died on April 20, 2022, at the Norwalk Hospital in Norwalk, Connecticut.

Nick was born July 1, 1923, in the Saugatuck section of Westport, Connecticut, to parents Dominick Zeoli and Lillian Valiante Zeoli. He was the eldest of five children, with brothers John and Eugene, and sisters Helen and Jeanette.

Some of Nick's fondest memories were of growing up in the Saugatuck neighborhood, playing football and baseball on the local sandlots and for Staples High School. (See Nick's reminiscences of Saugatuck in the Life Section). Nick gave up a college scholarship to enlist in the Navy at the start of World War II, serving four years in the Pacific aboard the heavy cruiser **U.S.S. Boston**. After the war, Nick resumed his education, getting his degree in physical education from Arnold College (which would be merged into the University of Bridgeport). He met Ruth Joanne Scott (known to all as Jody) while serving as lifeguard at Compo Beach in Westport. The two were married in 1952. During this period he was beginning a long and distinguished career as a physical educator, coach and athletic director in Wilton, Connecticut. He pursued and received his Master's Degree from Columbia University where he took an anthropology class taught by Margaret Mead, a bit of name-dropping he was always tickled to report.

Nick was very proud of his Italian heritage. If you mentioned Italy to him any time after he retired in 1994, you would need to prepare for a long session in which he regaled you with stories of the several trips he and Jody made to Italy.

Nick retired with Jody to a log home in the town of Hubbardton, Vermont, where he spent the last quarter century of his life. During his long career Nick received many honors, including national recognition as Athletic Director of the Year, and upon his retirement, Wilton High School rechristened the athletic facility the Nicholas T. Zeoli Fieldhouse. But Nick was most proud of the students' lives he had impacted over his 41 professional years. Even up to the months before his passing former students would visit him in Hubbardton.

Nick is survived by Jody and his three children, sons Stephen and Christopher, and daughter Nikki, and his three grandchildren, in whom he took great joy, as well as by his lone living sibling, Jeanette. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to [The Special Olympics](#), a cause to which Nick devoted much of his time and energy. Services for Mr. Zeoli will be announced at a later date. Condolences for the Zeoli family may be left on line at www.hardingfuneral.com