



Dr. Francis F. Tarsney

June 8, 2024

Born on the feast of Our Lady of Fatima in 1933, Francis Finn Tarney was a man of few words but compelling, quiet action. The oldest of four sons born to Edith and Francis in Green Point, Brooklyn, New York, Frank would discover he had a gift for running as he raced his brothers around the block. Later in life, when the family moved to Forest Hills, his father saw more than running talent, and had Frank skip a grade to attend Regis High School in the fall of 1940. He would go on to the Fordham University honors program while running track, helping the Rams two-mile relay team set a world record at the Los Angeles Coliseum on May 22, 1954. Frank always reflected on this success with his characteristic humility, saying he was fortunate to be on a team with an eventual Olympic champion, and that he ran his fastest time ever in a race where one other guy passed him. Nonetheless, the skinny, undersized kid, who never got picked to play in stickball games back in Brooklyn, achieved more as an athlete than the bigger kids on the playground.

Frank's athletic success paled in comparison to what he achieved off the track as a husband, a father, a surgeon, a friend, and a member of the community. In 1960, he met a redheaded nurse named Sarah Campbell and, as he once put it, he "would never feel lonely again" in the 60 years they shared raising five kids. He excelled as an orthopedic surgeon because, as he described it, he found great satisfaction in seeing a person come in hurt and helping him walk away healthy.

But a successful career would never take priority over his family. He made good on a promise he made to himself — that he would be around to play with his kids, something he lacked in his childhood. And he was there — for board games, sailing, cheerleading, art displays, and science fairs. Frank's wife told one of the kids how their father prayed every night to be a good father. Perhaps that's why his gentle, loving presence seemed so effortless to all his kids. He never took for granted the privilege or responsibility of being a dad. He taught his kids through actions, more than words. When he did use words, they were short, gentle in tone, but always full of wisdom. It is difficult to summarize the wisdom of the man, but his children will always remember, and pass on, lessons like:

- Never let the teacher get in the way of your education.
- You are never totally free until you work for yourself.
- You'll need to forgive your parents for not getting everything right.
- And, “God is greater than any problem I have” — a saying he always displayed on his desk in his den.

Frank was anything but one-dimensional. He raced sailboats, played tennis, took up golf in his retirement, and refereed basketball games. He was always proud he worked his way up to division 1 varsity boys as an older referee before his knees finally gave out. In all these activities, he was competitive, but mainly with himself and his constant effort to improve.

Service was always part of Frank's life. He ran the carnival for Mount Carmel, hosted men's prayer groups, coached Little League, and served at the Office of Concern at Saint Cecilia's in retirement, eventually acting as its Director. He loved the simple things in this service, looking forward to working with all the guys to empty the trucks delivering food to distribute to families in the area.

When the family celebrated his 80th birthday, Frank offered a few thoughts. He reflected simply on the little way of Thérèse of Lisieux, and how his

retirement had given him more time to reflect and think about her words and her lesson. He realized that her encouragement to do "small acts with great love" was something he realized he should have done more as a younger man. His life reflected St. Therese's advice more than he realized. St. Cecilia's Office of Concern honored his "quiet leadership" when he stepped down as its director.

The Covid lockdown and the subsequent passing of his wife, Sarah, two years ago inflicted a progressing dementia that took much of his memory — but not one ounce of his courage. He carried this cross with persistent grace, suffering every time we had to remind him of his wife's passing. On one occasion, speaking with one of his sons about Sarah, he was asked what he would say to comfort us when we would miss him when he was in heaven with Sarah. After a pause, he responded simply: "I'll see you soon enough!" For those he has left behind, it simply cannot be soon enough to share the company and grace of this quiet leader. He died on the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

This former runner, doctor, father, and husband embodied in his final years the words of Saint Paul to Timothy:

"As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is laid up for the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that Day, but not only to me, but also to all his appearing."

2 Timothy 4:5-8.

In lieu of flowers, you may make a donation in Frank Tarsney's memory to the Office of Concern Food Pantry at St. Cecilia in Englewood, NJ.

Cemetery Details

Mt. Carmel Cemetery

10 Serpentine Rd
Tenafly, NJ 07670

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

JUN **15**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church
10 County Rd
Tenafly, NJ 07670-2105
(201) 568-0545

Tribute Wall

JH

“ Sincere condolences to the widespread Tarsney family on the passing of your gentle Dad. Ever considerate and kind, it was a pleasure to have known Frank. We remember Frank and Sarah staying with us in Mountcharles, many years ago. On his return home, he penned and forwarded a short poem of appreciation.... a measure of his thoughtfulness and generosity of spirit.

May he rest in peace, JJ & Mary Harvey

J J & Mary Harvey - June 17, 2024 at 04:05 AM

PH

“ My sincere condolences to all the family on your sad loss. Frank was an absolute gentleman in thought, words and deeds. It was indeed an honour to have spent time with Frank & Sarah on numerous occasions from the late 70s onwards. May he rest in peace. Paul Harvey, Dublin.

Paul Harvey - June 14, 2024 at 11:13 AM

SF

“ Shanti & Manish Sharma Families purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Dr. Francis F. Tarsney.



Shanti & Manish Sharma Families - June 14, 2024 at 10:26 AM

MQ

“ *Maureen Quinn lit a candle in memory of Francis Tarsney*



Maureen Quinn - June 12, 2024 at 08:55 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Francis F. Tarsney.*



June 10, 2024 at 08:12 AM

BF

“ *Brian/Janet Schoenborn & Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Francis F. Tarsney.*

Brian/Janet Schoenborn & Family - June 10, 2024 at 08:12 AM