

## Obituary of William John (Bill) Coffey

**William John (Bill) Coffey** died peacefully at home in Newport RI November 10th, 2012 at age 71.

Son of Alice V. O'Connor and William J. Coffey, he was raised in Woonsocket, RI. A graduate of Mount St. Charles Academy, College of the Holy Cross and Georgetown University Law Center, he served in the [US Navy](#) during the [Vietnam War](#) era, attaining the rank of Lieutenant.

At the time of his death, he was an Adjunct Professor at Roger Williams University's School of Law and a faculty member of the University of Rhode Island's Department of Marine Affairs.

Previously, he was President of R.K. Johns & Associates, Inc. a New York City based consulting firm. He also served as Secretary and Counsel to Sea-Land Service, Inc., an international container shipping line.

Beginning his career as a transportation advisor in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Bill spent many years advising on maritime, legal, regulatory, public and legislative affairs. For the past 12 years, he was President of Beaufort Maritime Group, a strategic marketing and management-consulting firm in Newport where his clients included the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island.

He was also a frequent contributor of Op-Ed articles to the Providence Journal.

A devoted, proud and fun-loving father, grandfather, and godfather, he is survived by his two loving sons,

- **Connor Edward Mulcahy Coffey**, his wife Allison Page Coffey and their two children Carter James (CJ) Page Coffey and Catherine Margaret Coffey;
- **Christopher Mulcahy Coffey** and his partner Adam Joseph Riff; his former wife and good friend Diane Mulcahy Coffey.

Bill also leaves scores of relatives and friends who benefitted from his playful wit, good humor, and many kindnesses.

He was a mentor to many, performing countless acts of generosity, touching the hearts of so many. In recent years, he was a constant presence on Bannister's Wharf, where he could frequently be found at his beloved Coffee Grinder with his dear friends Alyssa, Jeff, Rio and Evers.

He loved to laugh and prompt others to join. Particularly in the last five years, he grew to become a fierce and committed advocate of marriage equality, in spirit, active engagement and financial support.

We will all miss him dearly.

## Obituary of William John (Bill) Coffey

In accordance with his wishes, there will be no funeral service. Bill would not have wanted flowers but for those who would like to contribute, there are three causes he believed in strongly, and donations in his name to any of these organizations would be welcomed: Hurricane Sandy Relief ([www.nyc.gov/fund](http://www.nyc.gov/fund)) Marriage Equality R.I. ([www.marriageequalityri.org](http://www.marriageequalityri.org)) Mount St. Charles Academy ([www.mountsaintcharles.org](http://www.mountsaintcharles.org))

Published in The New York Times on Nov. 14, 2012

- See more at:  
<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/nytimes/obituary.aspx?pid=161053766#sthash.dFitaU8i.dpuf>

### Tribute from the MNIH Fall 2012 Newsletter

*"We were saddened to learn of the sudden passing of former Museum 2nd vice president and board member, William J. Coffey, on November 10, 2012.*

*Bill was a long-time member and we appreciate his years of support of the organization and its Mission and will miss his presence at our lectures and other events.*

*] Bill was a strong voice for causes important to our state and region, and we share with you the **below editorial from the November 15 edition of the Providence Journal:***

*We mourn the loss of our friend William J. Coffey, of Newport, who died Nov. 10 at 71. Bill Coffey was an indefatigable promoter of Rhode Island's ports in particular and improved public infrastructure in general.*

*More broadly, he was a voice for forward-looking public policy in many matters. A maritime lawyer, businessman and professor with decades of experience in transportation, regulatory and other subjects, he was perhaps best known for his push to make Quonset Point/Davisville an important international port that would hugely benefit the economy of southeastern New England.*

*With his immense knowledge of international trade, there was no one better in Rhode Island to make the case. And he did it with this trademark wit, good humor, patience and tolerance."*