

Half Staff – Richard E. Kuehne, 93

September 28, 2011

ROCKPORT — Richard E. Kuehne of Rockport, passed away on Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2011 at the age of 93 from natural causes. He is survived by his son, Hal and his daughters Lindsay and Meg; grandchildren, Ian Kuehne, Meghan Kuehne, Paul Turnquist Jr., and Max Turnquist, and great-granddaughter, Adalyn Kuehne. He was the son of a prominent landscape painter and decorative furniture maker, Max Kuehne.

Richard led a diverse and fascinating life. He was a graduate of Solebury, and then Amherst College. He served on a Navy sub-chaser in World War II.

After the war, he was a curator at the Cloisters in New York City, and served briefly as the director of a private museum in Saginaw, Michigan. After a move to Kingston, N.Y, he worked as a shipyard welder by day, and perfected his father's gilding techniques in his spare time. He was hired as the Curator of History at the West Point Military Museum. Richard spent the next 24 years at the West Point, soon moving to the position of museum director. He was the first civilian director in the museum's history. He was responsible for turning a very large collection of arms and armour into the largest military museum in the western hemisphere. Under his direction, the museum became a popular destination for visitors to the academy. He introduced huge dioramas showing battle scenes, and interactive displays, such as a World War I dugout made of sandbags that could be walked through. He gave lectures in military armament to the cadets while dressed in a suit of armor; and was known to call an unsuspecting cadet up to the lecture podium to balance an apple on his head while the proper technique for shooting a crossbow was purportedly to be demonstrated. The lecture would end before the bow was fired, but he had the full attention of the entire body of cadets for the whole lecture.

His interests were many and varied. He was a member of squash and tennis clubs at West Point, as well as being a member of the West Point Flying Club, and an enthusiastic skier. He had his grandfather's passion for racing Star boats. As a long-standing member of the Sandy Bay Yacht Club, he spent hours on the wharf tinkering with his boat. He was an excellent amateur photographer.

Upon his retirement, he moved to Rockport, where his own father had summered since Richard was a small boy. Following in his father's footsteps, he spent much of his time sculpting and gilding in his workshop.

ARRANGEMENTS: Services will be announced at a later date. He will be truly missed. Arrangements are by the Burgess & Mackey Funeral Home, 201 Main St., Rockport. Online condolences may be given at: www.greelyfuneralhome.com.