

Memorial service set for Peter Finlay, retired Alfred University biology professor

5/03/18



Peter Finlay

ALFRED, NY – Memorial services for Peter Finlay, retired professor of biology at Alfred University, will be held Saturday, May 19, at 3 p.m. at the Union University Church in Alfred. Pete passed away Saturday, March 24, at Highland Park Nursing Center in Wellsville, NY, after a short illness. He was 93.

Pete was a professor of biology at Alfred University for 34 years, until his retirement in 1990. During this time at Alfred University, he taught a variety of courses including biology, general zoology, cytology and embryology, as well as introductory courses. He was also very active in the Environmental Studies program at the University.

He was born on October 12, 1924, in Montclair, NJ, to George and Edith (Christie) Finlay. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy while in high school, and upon graduation from the Berkshire School in 1943, joined the Navy Air Corps. As an Ensign, he served primarily as a navigator on patrol missions off the US coast, and was honorably discharged in 1946.

After his discharge from the Navy, Pete earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Williams College in 1949, and following graduation, accepted a teaching position at the Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, MA. He continued his education, earning a master's degree in zoology from the University of Vermont in 1953, and then a PhD in zoology

from Syracuse University in 1957.

In Syracuse, Pete met, and on August 18, 1956, married his wife of over 61 years, Therese “Terry” (Londrey) Finlay. That same summer, a representative from Alfred University came to Syracuse looking for a biologist and recruited Pete to fill a position at Alfred. Although initially a one-year contract, it was the beginning of a 34-year career at the University. He served as a pre-health professions advisor for most of his career at Alfred, and many future doctors, veterinarians, dentists and other health professionals found his support critical as they pursued their dream.

Pete was an active member of the Alfred University community, serving as Biology Division chair and chair of the Health Professors Advisory Committee, along with serving as member of several other faculty committees. He was also active in community service in the area and region. He joined the volunteer A.E. Crandall Hook and Ladder Company in 1956 and served often and regularly on the fire line. He and Terry, with several other couples, were instrumental in the development of the ambulance service, assisting in leading the fund drives that allowed the purchase of the company’s first ambulance. He became fire chief in 1963, and served for nine years in that position. He was also a member and chair of the Alfred Village Board of Appeals, a member of the Alfred/Alfred Station Community Chest (chairing the campaign for many years), a board member of the Irondequoit Club in Piseco, NY, and volunteered with Terry for the Allegany County Office for the Aging.

Pete is survived by his wife, Terry and their three children Judith, Tim, and Douglas. He was predeceased by his sister, Edith and his brother, Dick. At his request, a private burial will be at the Alfred Rural Cemetery at the convenience of the family.