

## Robert Allen Wahl Jr.

November 7, 1927 - December 17, 2023

Robert Allen Wahl Jr (Al) passed away peacefully at 96 years of age. Born November 7, 1927, Al enjoyed a full life of accomplishments. Growing up in Oak Park IL, Al began his football career at Oak Park High School later to become a two time All American at the University of Michigan in 1949 and 1950. Al joined the Wolverines football team as a freshman in 1945, then spent the following two years in service with the US Army in Germany. Upon returning to the football field in 1948 to a National Championship, Al picked up the nickname "Brick" Wahl. He was named team captain in 1950 and led Michigan to a Big 10 Championship and a Rose Bowl win. In 2004, he was inducted in the University of Michigan Hall of Honor.

During his service with the US Army, Al also became the US Army heavyweight champion in the European theatre, winning four fights to gain the title.

He returned to Oak Park to enter the workforce and met his wife Karen Muller of Evanston IL,

to whom he remained married to for 70 happy years. After many professional endeavors, he moved with his wife and family to Omaha NE and worked for Valmont Industries. He joined the company in 1965 as Vice President of Marketing and was named President and Chief Operating Officer in 1977. Al served until 1985 helping expand the company into the international marketplace affording both he and his wife many exciting adventures overseas and driving Valmont to become a Fortune 500 company. Upon leaving Valmont, he moved his family to Dallas, TX acquiring a \$60 million dollar sales distribution company, Why Not Better Paper Products. After successfully restructuring the company and making strategic acquisitions, he negotiated the sale of the company to a British conglomerate.

Upon his retirement, he and Karen enjoyed all that Dallas had to offer and made many lasting friends. They spent their summers in Steamboat Springs Colorado playing golf, tennis and hiking. Right to the end, Al remained active in serving as an independent consultant and in his enjoyment of vigorous political debates to keep his mind sharp. Al was liked by all that knew him and was always the life of the party.

Al and Karen had three children: Mark C Wahl, Mari Wahl Henry and Robert Allen Wahl III. His youngest son, Rob preceded him in death in April 2021. He is survived by his

wife Karen of 70

years, son Mark Wahl, daughter Mari Henry, son in law David Henry, and daughter in law

Cherie Wahl (Rob's Wife), as well as grandchildren, Max Barretto, Cooper Wahl, Spencer Wahl

and Christopher Wahl, and great grandchild Ruston Wahl (Cooper and Jenny Wahl).

He will be loved always, sorely missed, and not forgotten.

In lieu of flowers the family ask that you leave a memory or a photo of Robert Wahl.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JAN 12. 11:00 AM (CT)

DFW National Cemetery  
2000 Mountain Creek Pkwy,  
Dallas, TX 75211

# Tribute Wall

AL

“ Dear Aunt Karen, Mari, Mark and family, I was saddened to hear that Uncle Al passed away in December. I am also shocked and saddened to learn that cousin Rob passed away suddenly in 2022. I have fond memories of visiting Al and Rob in Omaha and in Steamboat Springs when I was growing up. My mother Marilyn was always thrilled to spend time with her younger brother, who she grew up with her in Oak Park, Illinois. Uncle Al lived a momentous life with many exciting experiences. I'm sharing a phot of Al with his mother Luella at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. Also a photo of my mother Marilyn with Al and Karen during a visit at our house in Western Springs, Illinois. Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. With deepest sympathies, Alan Launspach



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**Alan Launspach** - February 11, 2024 at 12:50 PM

JP

“ Dear Aunt Karen and family,  
Tony and I wish to express our deepest sympathy in the loss of your husband, Al Wahl, who was also my uncle and godfather! We so appreciated your annual Christmas cards, Aunt Karen, that kept us in touch with your family. When we didn't receive one from you this Christmas season, I searched online for an obituary and was sorry to learn that Uncle Al had died on December 17, 2023 after an amazing life! I was also heartbroken to learn that your son, my cousin Rob, had died of a severe allergic reaction on April 24, 2022. I am, again, so sorry for your losing both your youngest son and your husband who were both fantastic people!  
On January 23, 2024, I made an online donation to the University of Michigan Athletics Scholarship Fund in Uncle Al's name. He was such an outstanding football player for University of Michigan and a lifelong fan! I always marveled at Uncle Al's achievements, but he also had such a down to earth and friendly personality. He will be greatly missed!  
Love, Jean Launspach Plucinski and my husband, Tony Plucinski

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Jean Launspach Plucinski - February 09, 2024 at 02:59 PM

GS

“ Karen, Mari and family. Susan and I share your grief with the loss of Al. You are in our thoughts and prayers and know that we're only a phone call away. Not only was Al a dear friend but also one of my cherished mentors. He would let me stub my toe to teach me a lesson instead of giving me the easy way out. I will miss our weekly calls to check on the progress of our projects and to solve the world's problems. He always talked glowingly about Karen and the family, especially how smart and successful they were. Al was a larger than life figure and has a legacy of accomplishments that include a military boxing championship, an All American tackle at the University of Michigan and CEO of a fortune 500 company. He was a man's man and could be comfortable in any setting whether in a cow field or a board room. We don't say goodbye to someone that you are still going to have conversations with. He may not speak back but I know he'll be listening to me. Rest in peace my friend and we'll talk soon.

George and Susan

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George Smith - January 11, 2024 at 04:10 PM

CW

“ Popi,

*I miss our phone calls to see if you were watching the Michigan football games and to see how you and Nana were doing. I bet you were cheering them on in the National Championship game!  
Thank you for being a great Popi! I love you and miss you! RIP Popi*



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Christopher Wahl - January 10, 2024 at 11:01 PM

CW

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



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**Christopher Wahl** - January 10, 2024 at 10:44 PM

CW

“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



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**Christopher Wahl** - January 10, 2024 at 10:35 PM

CL

“ *"Another good man has finished the race."*

*Rest in peace, Al.*

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**Carolyn Lane** - January 09, 2024 at 10:22 PM

JL

“ When I met Al Wahl, I was an 18-year-old, just starting my sophomore year in college, and had also just started dating his daughter Mari. He was a senior executive at one of the largest companies in Nebraska. On paper, I would’ve been relieved if he had been willing to give me the time of day.

*Instead, he treated me, from the start, as a fellow human being. He had an easy smile and a manner that said, without words, that since we are sharing this moment in time, let it be lighthearted and fun.*

*As I recall, the first or second time I ever saw him was at a party he and Karen had for their friends. I was stunned when he invited Mari and me to join him the next morning on the company jet, where he was going to a same-day conference at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs. Which we did. Even now, it is hard for me to appreciate what a generous compliment he had given me.*

*It was certainly not the last one. I always felt welcome in his home and at his table. We discussed great matters of the day, as equals. He found me a good summer job at his company in Valley, Nebraska. Little did my co-workers know that I also spent time that summer playing tennis with Al – a man at the opposite end of our place in the corporate hierarchy.*

*By then, I had discovered (though not because he ever mentioned it) that he was an All-American captain of the Michigan team that won the Rose Bowl in 1951. (Their defensive tackle’s nickname was “Brick” Wahl.) And that he’d been the heavyweight boxing champion of the Army. When I asked him about those accomplishments, he didn’t dwell on the many stories of personal glory he might have told. They seemed to bemuse him, as if they had happened to somebody else. It is fitting that his Wolverines just won the national championship – as his undefeated 1948 team had also done.*

*I am fortunate to have known Big Al Wahl. I am fortunate that he treated me, always, as a friend. My good memories, and my respect*

*and affection for him, are among the treasures he's left me.*

*Thank you, Al.*

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**John B Lane** - January 09, 2024 at 03:09 PM

MH

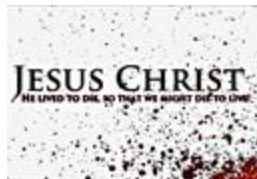
“ *Dad, you were one of a kind! In so many ways. You had a full life that was made of so many wonderful memories and contributions. Somehow you seemed immortal, but I know you are with the Lord and with your beloved son, Rob. I know Rob is showing you the way up in Heaven and you two are back together once again. Our love for you stays steadfast. Rest in Peace until we meet again.*

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**Mari Henry** - December 31, 2023 at 03:35 PM

DH

“ *38 files added to the tribute wall*



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**David Henry** - December 27, 2023 at 02:13 PM

DH

“ *Mr. Al Wahl,*

*Father, grandfather, GREAT grandfather, my father-in-law and friend.*

*My "hey, buddy".*

*You and I have laughed together.*

*And you and I have cried together.*

*Cannot reason which I cherish more.*

*Your smile will forever be imbedded in my heart.*

*I love you, Al.*

*And we will see one another again in The Presence of Our Lord.*

*THAT indeed gives ME a smile that will never diminish.*

*Thank you for all of you.*

*Your son-in-law and friend,*

*dlh*

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David Henry - December 27, 2023 at 01:41 PM

DH

“ *20 files added to the tribute wall*



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David Lee Henry - December 27, 2023 at 01:15 PM