



## Warren Ballinger French Jr.

April 14, 1923 - November 4, 2021

The staff at Heishman Funeral Home sends condolences to the family of Warren Ballinger French Jr,

Warren Ballinger French, Jr., 98, of Edinburg, Virginia died Thursday, November 4, 2021 at his home.

He was born April 14, 1923 in Woodstock, the first of ten children of the late Lena Belle Sheetz and Warren Ballinger French.

He was predeceased by his wife, the former Patricia Hamill Teale, whom he married on September 17, 1949 in Silver Spring, Maryland. Pat and Warren, who were the parents of four children, were predeceased by their son Warren Ballinger French, III, who died on April 19, 1981. Warren is survived by his three remaining children and their spouses: Anne French Dalke and Jeffrey Alan Dalke of Philadelphia and Edinburg, Cynthia French Mullen and Wesley Grigg Mullen, Jr. of Lexington, and Christopher Edward French and Rhonda Harris French of Woodstock. Warren is also survived by his grandchildren and their spouses: Lena French Dalke and Sameer Gupta of Brooklyn, Lillian Stover Dalke and Angelina Lim of Brooklyn, Samuel Shaffer Dalke and Katherine Baratz Dalke of Harrisburg, Marian Ballinger Dalke and Elizabeth Nadia Pisarczyk of Philadelphia, Wesley Grigg Mullen, III and Accacia Max Mullen of Lexington, Andrew French Mullen and Melissa Falkenstern of

Albuquerque, Rebecca Blythe French of Harrisonburg, Warren Ballinger French, II of Woodstock, and Stuart Teale French and Tiffany Marie French of Harrisonburg. Eight great-grandchildren also survive him: Naima Belle Dalke Gupta, Mahalia Vati Dalke Gupta, Andy Bo Tian Dalke-Lim, Julia Baratz Dalke, Audrey French Dalke, Lucia Hazel Dalke Pisarczyk, Cora Lynn Falkenstern-Mullen, and Taylor Marie French. He is also survived by his sister Emma French Randel of Woodstock; by his in-laws Marian Bashaw French and Joyce Ryman French, both of Woodstock; John Bertram Weber of Winnetka, Illinois; Robert Edward Teale and Carol Rogers Teale, both of Lincoln, Nebraska; and by many, many cousins, nieces, and nephews. In addition to his parents, his wife, and his son, Warren was preceded in death by his five brothers Ned, Ted, Millson, Douglas, and Orrin; and by his three sisters Ellen, Lena, and Sally.

Warren was the patriarch of the large French family clan. He was active with his brothers in real estate and family businesses and thoroughly enjoyed his life as a farmer. He took a great deal of pleasure from frequent family gatherings, always warmly welcoming new members. A highlight of each year was the fall family hike and picnic. Warren savored good food: raw oysters, fresh morels, and homemade pies topped his list of favorites. It was a particular joy to him when others joined him for Sunday morning waffles in the dining room at Frenchfield and for homemade ice cream during summer evenings on his back porch.

Warren was a problem solver: the more difficult the problem, the more he persisted in solving it. He also liked to delegate tasks to others. His children remember being greeted at the breakfast table each Saturday morning with a list of their assigned chores. He organized the larger family for activities such as digging potatoes and picking strawberries. Some who worked on the farm or at the telephone company said that they learned a lot from his assignments; others said that they learned to stay out of his way. He was always the boss. He did not hesitate to tell others what he thought they should

do, and expected them to work as hard as he did. His standards were high, which meant that he could inspire fear in others. He believed in doing what was right, no matter the cost. (Of course, he was the one who determined what was right and he didn't believe in explaining himself.) He had many firmly held opinions. He could disagree strongly with others, but he treated everyone with respect.

Warren also enjoyed exploring the Internet; watching harness races at the Shenandoah County Fair; playing dominoes with his grandchildren, and bridge and poker with friends; seeking out fine walnut furniture; antiquing in Pennsylvania with family members; and traveling to Canada with his brothers, grandsons, nephews, and friends on annual fishing trips. He was a faithful attendee of UVA football and basketball games, sharing his tickets with others who joined him on frequent trips to Charlottesville.

He felt a responsibility to help others. He could be gruff, but he could also be very generous. He supported, advised, and encouraged upcoming generations in their various interests and enterprises. He also stayed in touch with family members who moved out of the county, visiting with them on trips during his earlier years, and then, after he was no longer able to get about easily himself, faithfully phoning those who were aging or ill. Remarkably, he kept his good humor through the diminishment of age and all the restrictions of the COVID era. It was good to hear him chuckle and see the twinkle in his eye.

Warren was a graduate of Woodstock High School, Massanutten Military Academy, and the University of Virginia. In September 1941, he entered the V-12 Navy College Training Program. When war was declared, he entered an accelerated training program, received a Navy commission as an ensign, and left college to join the war effort. He was assigned to the Pacific theater and

participated in the Philippine campaign, serving as the executive officer of Landing Craft, Infantry-684 and LCI-976, and as captain of LCI-976. After his discharge in the spring of 1946, he returned to UVA and received his Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering in 1947.

After graduation, Warren joined AT&T Long Lines, serving as an engineer and working on its wire, cable, and microwave radio relay network, which provided long-distance services to AT&T and its customers. While stationed in the Washington, DC division office, he met his future wife Pat. He was transferred by AT&T to New York City, but soon found that urban life did not agree with him.

Against his father's advice, Warren left AT&T in 1954 to become the General Manager of the Farmers Mutual Telephone System of Shenandoah County. He subsequently held the positions of Vice President and General Manager, President and General Manager, and President of Farmers Mutual and its successor organizations Shenandoah Telephone Company and Shenandoah Telecommunications Company. He also served on the organizations' Board of Directors and as Chairman of the Board. As an executive he oversaw the transformation of a rural party-line local telephone company into a modern and diversified regional telecommunications provider. During his professional career, he also served on the board of SouthernNet, Telecom\*USA, Orion Network Systems, AvData Systems, Metrotel Services, First National Bank of Strasburg, and First National Corporation. He retired as President of Shenandoah Telecommunications Company in 1988 and as Chairman of its Board of Directors in 1995.

Warren was also active in state and national industry associations and organizations representing the interests of small independent (non-Bell System) telephone companies. He served as President and a member of the Board of Directors of the Virginia Telephone Association, and served on the

Board of Directors of the Organization for the Protection and Advancement of Small Telephone Companies (OPASTCO) and the United States Independent Telephone Association (USITA), serving the latter as Chairman in 1985. He was a Director and Vice Chairman of the National Exchange Carrier Association, created by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to administer the fees that long distance companies pay to access local telephone networks in the United States, serving from its founding in 1984 until his retirement in 1996. He was a member of the FCC's Network Reliability Council. He was appointed by President Reagan as a member of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee. In 1988, he participated in the World Telecommunications Conference in Melbourne, Australia. In recognition of his career of service to the independent telephone industry, in 1988 he was awarded OPASTCO's President's Award and USITA's Distinguished Service Medallion. He was inducted into the Independent Telephone Pioneers Hall of Fame in 1993.

He and Pat traveled extensively for state, national, and international industry events and developed close personal relationships with many of their peers and leaders in the telecommunications industry. A highlight of their travels was participating in a 1980 delegation of telecommunications professionals organized by Telephone Engineer & Management magazine to give lectures and workshops in the People's Republic of China.

Warren served as a Director of the University of Virginia Engineering Foundation and was appointed by Governors Holton and Godwin to serve as a Member of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia from 1972 to 1980. He was appointed by President Nixon as a delegate to the World Food Conference in Rome in 1972. Warren also served on the board of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Virginia.

Warren considered politics his primary hobby and was an active supporter of

many local, state, and national campaigns. He served as President of the Electoral College of Virginia in 1952. He was Seventh District Republican Party Chairman, a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1969, and Chairman of the Republican Party of Virginia from 1970 to 1972.

Warren was also an active supporter and advocate of his local community. He became a member of the Woodstock Rotary Club in 1954; he rarely missed a meeting, was a Paul Harris Fellow, and served as President. He was an active supporter of the Boy Scouts of America and served as President of the Shenandoah Area Council. He served as President of the Shenandoah Industrial Development Corporation and as Director of the Shenandoah Economic Development Council. He was a Director, Vice Treasurer, and Treasurer of Shenandoah Memorial Hospital and served as President of the Shenandoah County Library Foundation. He conceived of and founded the Shenandoah Community Foundation. He was a member of the Woodstock United Methodist Church, where he served as Trustee and Chairman of the Administrative Board.

There will be a private graveside service, with interment at Massanutten Cemetery, Woodstock. Pallbearers will be Warren's grandchildren and their spouses. The family of Warren French, Jr. is hosting a public memorial service in celebration of his life at 10 am on Saturday, May 21st at the music pavilion at Shrine Mont, Orkney Springs, VA; the service will conclude w/ an ice cream social. All are very welcome to join us. The service will not be live-streamed, but it will be recorded, and available for viewing that same evening @ <https://www.nolanzunk.com/french>

The family would like to thank the loving caregivers who attended to Warren during the last years of his life: Kim Dutrow, Susan Goody, Gloria Green, Lisa McDonald, and Connie Morrell.

The family requests no online condolences. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Warren and Patricia French Family Fund, Shenandoah Community Foundation, PO Box 350, Strasburg, VA 22657; to the Shenandoah County Library Foundation (for children's books), 514 Stoney Creek Blvd, Edinburg, VA 22824; to the Warren B French III Memorial Fund, Shenandoah Area Council-BSA, 107 Youth Development Court, Winchester, VA 22602; or to the Woodstock United Methodist Church, 154 South Muhlenberg Street, Woodstock, VA 22664.

Arrangements are in the care of Heishman Funeral Home, Inc., Valley Funeral Service Branch, in Bowmans Crossing.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAY 21. 10:00 AM.

Shrine Mont Music Pavilion  
Orkney Springs, VA

# Tribute Wall



“ *Warren Ballinger French Jr.*

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January 30, 2023 at 03:03 AM



“ *Warren Ballinger French Jr.*

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January 30, 2023 at 12:44 AM



“ *Sending our sincere condolences to the French family.*

*With sympathy,  
Jim Lambert and daughters Susan and Gretchen*

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**Gretchen Johnson** - November 11, 2021 at 11:05 PM