



Alfred Goguen

September 16, 1926 - April 7, 2022

Alfred passed away at his home in St. George on April 7, 2022, of complications of Alzheimer's Disease.

He was a resident of St. George since 1989, when he moved here to retire, along with his late, beloved wife Evelyn, who passed away here in 2005. Fred was known to many locally as a kind, genial, friendly man with a warm, charming smile and a mean golf swing. Fred was also a longtime member of a local bowling team in St. George and was a solid teammate and friend to his fellow bowlers for many years.

Fred was a living example to his children, and to many others, of grace, class, responsibility, hospitality, competence, courage, common sense, devotion, kindness, camaraderie, taste, charm, gallantry, good humor, realism, and mostly, of how to love. Alfred survived a great depression, a world war, and many other waves of economic and social upheaval, rising from very humble beginnings to achieve a decent share of the American dream for himself and his family, a good life, if not a fortune. If success can be measured in love however, Fred Goguen can be called a great success.

Alfred Goguen was born and raised in Gardner, Massachusetts, a small industrial manufacturing town about sixty miles west of Boston. Aside from a few years living with his family in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada during the

Great Depression, and two years spent in Naval bases in other states and overseas with the U.S. Navy at the end of WW2, Alfred spent the first thirty years of his life in Gardner, living in a bilingual French-Canadian enclave.

His neighbors and schoolmates were mostly French-Canadian immigrants like his grandparents and mother, or the children of immigrants, like his father and himself. Fred attended Holy Rosary Catholic grammar school where instruction was bilingual, half the day in English and half in French. At home, Fred's mom Alma spoke a mix of French and broken English, and his grandmother (mémé) spoke no English at all. Fred remembered his mémé listened to cylindrical records on an old horn speaker gramophone, playing old New Brunswick French folk songs and what he called "paradiddle" music; fast paced fiddle and guitar Acadian French dance music featuring the sound of clicking clog shoes as percussion.

Alfred loved the outdoors, and loved to spend hours playing stickball in summer, ice skating on the frozen lake in winter, and other physical activities with his friends all year long. He also loved to draw, filling sketchbooks with charcoal sketches of his favorite movie stars and singers. At Gardner High School, Fred excelled at sports, playing football and baseball. Fred loved music, collecting dozens of 78rpm records featuring his favorite Big Band and Jazz musicians, and singers. Fred himself was a fine singer, who emulated his favorite jazz and popular singers, such as Billy Eckstine, Joe Williams, and Tony Bennett. When he could afford it, Fred went to see his favorite Big Bands playing live.

Fred joined the Navy before his 18th birthday in 1944, as war raged in the Pacific, sacrificing his graduation and high school diploma from Gardner High School to join the fight against fascism overseas.

Alfred was a part of the first wave of the American post-war occupation of

Japan. His ship, the USS Belle Isle, entered Okinawa harbor a few weeks after Japan's surrender, arriving just in time to be caught in the 1945 Pacific Typhoon while anchored there. Alfred recalled hanging on all night long below decks as the ship was thrown and buffeted around by the powerful storm and coming up in the aftermath to the sight of multiple overturned and sunken ships all around him.

After Fred's service ended, back in Gardner, he was married to his first wife, Aline Arsenault, and son Richard was born to the young couple in 1945. Alfred worked as an upholsterer, pattern maker, and fabric cutter for Heywood-Wakefield in Gardner, where three generations of his family had made their living. Alfred came from a long line of French-Canadian furniture makers, craftspeople, and farmers and had inherited their pride in good and hard work, as well as love of family, good times, music, and laughter shared with loved ones.

When Alfred's first marriage ended in 1953, Alfred made the decision to relocate to California, a place he had fallen in love with when stationed in San Diego with the Navy. He felt that he could restart and make a better life for his son and himself in this sunny, exciting place where palms lined the streets, and jobs were said to be plentiful. While Mémé Alma took care of young Richard, Alfred left for Los Angeles with a couple of friends looking for a new life, driving the famous route 66 to its end at Santa Monica. Fred found his first apartment right there in Santa Monica, and his first California manufacturing job within a week of his arrival, at a higher pay than he'd ever seen. He brought out son Richard and began the next thirty years of his new life in the "Sunshine State".

In California, while working for Cole of California, a bathing suit maker, Alfred met Evelyn (Webb) Bentley, a seamstress at Cole, and a fellow divorcée, who

was raising two young children of her own, Dennis and Debra Bentley. Fred and Evelyn fell in love, and married in 1959, merging their families to create a unified, loving home in Buena Park, California. They worked hard to create a normal, happy home life for their children, becoming “mom and dad” to all, raising each other’s children as if their own, with love, encouragement, discipline, and support that lasted to the end.

Fred and Evelyn Goguen remained happily married, soulmates until Evelyn’s death in 2005. In 1961 the couple welcomed their only child together, son Michael.

During Alfred’s years in California, Alfred worked full-time as a valued foreman in furniture factories around the Los Angeles area, as well as freelancing nights and weekends as a highly sought-after Master Upholster, recovering chairs, couches, and other furniture for clients all over Southern California, including recurring work for famed television composer Frank Comstock.

Alfred and Evelyn loved to travel together, enjoying many road trips around the United States, Canada, and Mexico during their more than 50 years together. Evelyn had been a church singer in her younger years and would accompany Fred as he sang while driving. Their beautiful harmonies were just one example of how perfectly matched Fred and Evelyn seemed to be.

In later years their adventures grew to include multiple trips to Hawaii, as well as a trip of a lifetime to British Columbia, Canada, where they were helicoptered to hike on snowy mountain peaks. Their love of natural beauty and travel led to their decision to settle permanently in St. George, Utah in 1989, where they spent their retirement years exploring the canyons, mountains, and towns surrounding their adopted home. They loved nothing more than finding a new dirt road leading them to spectacular hidden natural places and ghost towns, hiking, and collecting rocks and artifacts they found

along the way.

Alfred and Evelyn became involved citizens of their new home, gaining many friends over the years. Fred served as President of his townhome's HOA for several years and was a regular on the golf courses in St. George, playing several days a week with many partners, until only a few years prior to his death. Fred and Evelyn also enjoyed bowling, and Fred bowled with his team in St. George until just a few years before his passing.

Sadly, Alfred's beloved Evelyn died in 2005 after a long struggle with ovarian cancer. It was very hard, of course, but Fred continued alone, finding joy in the lives and accomplishments of his children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren, helping and supporting them all as best he could, until he just couldn't any longer. In 2018, at the age of 92, Alfred was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.

When Fred lost his driving privilege, he thought for sure that his life was over. His independence was everything to him. His purpose in life was to take care of other people, but his biggest horror was to be dependent on others, to be a burden on his family. He had fiercely defended his independence as family members noticed that he was becoming confused and forgetful, but when he lost his license to drive, he could no longer deny that someone needed to help him on a full-time basis.

Fred insisted that he wanted to stay in the home he and Evelyn had shared until his death. This would have been impossible, except for the fact that one of Fred's granddaughters, Lisa Marie Rhodes, had decided that she would devote the next years of her life to helping her beloved grandpa achieve his wish to die at home, and to make sure that he would understand just how much his love and sacrifices had meant to his family. Lisa is the daughter of Fred's stepdaughter, Debra, who had always seen her stepdad as her hero,

and as her true father. Fred had swooped in and saved Debra's mom Evelyn, after she had fainted at work from near starvation, making sure her children ate before she did. Fred took care of Evelyn and her children, becoming a loving, strong "Daddy" to a young girl who needed one. Debra always felt that he was sent by God.

Lisa felt it was time to return the favor and make sure that Fred would have the love and support he had earned a hundred times over throughout his life.

While taking care of Alfred with much love and respect, Lisa decided that she wanted to make sure that Alfred received his due for his military service at the end of WW2. She began working to help Fred receive benefits that were due him, and for a way to help him feel honored by his fellow citizens for the sacrifices he had made for his country.

Thanks to Lisa's efforts, in 2019, at the age of 93, Alfred was honored as a veteran of the Second World War as a guest of the Utah Honor Flight to Washington D.C., where he was also presented with an honorary Gardner High School diploma, along with an official proclamation in his honor by the current mayor of Gardner, Massachusetts, and the Gardner Superintendent of schools. This honor was entered into the United States Congressional record by Massachusetts Rep. Lori Trahan on April 26, 2019, recognizing Alfred's educational sacrifice when he entered the U.S. military during wartime.

Later that same year, Alfred had the opportunity to travel with son Michael and grandson Kevin Goguen, and aided by granddaughter Lisa, to his ancestral eastern coastal region of New Brunswick, Canada. There he attended a Goguen family reunion in Cocagne, NB, the town founded by his direct ancestors. Alfred's grandparents had grown up in the area and were married in the Cocagne, New Brunswick church in 1887, shortly before emigrating to

the United States.

Fred also visited his mother Alma Leblanc's home village and church in Haute Aboujagane, New Brunswick. Using his cane, Fred quietly walked alone up the long aisle to the altar, where he lit a candle in his mother's memory while his son Michael and grandson Kevin looked on.

Fred's last two years were hard, as his physical abilities failed along with his memory. Lisa's husband, Daniel Rhodes, moved in to help his wife, leaving their home in Colorado to work from Fred's home in St. George, becoming a friend as well as caretaker to Fred. Dan took Fred on four-wheel drive adventures around St. George, right up until his last months. Dan, Fred, and Lisa enjoyed games of Gin Rummy, and making jigsaw puzzles together, until Fred just couldn't do it anymore. Fred was tired, physically, and mentally weakening day by day, but he made sure to let his family know that he loved them, and remembered them, and treasured their accomplishments, until his last waking moment.

Fred Goguen's life was long, and full of love and family. He was a talented, charming, magnetic, strong, smart man who devoted his life to his family. He was a talented artist, with a beautiful singing voice, and could have succeeded in many walks of life. He chose love, family, and hard work, staying close to home and close to his wife and his children. His pleasure was in seeing his wife happy, and his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren fulfilled and joyful. Alfred loved nothing more than experiencing others' joy in the things he could share with them. It was his greatest value, and he was incredibly treasured, admired, and loved by all who knew him.

Alfred will be interred in the Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, California, on April 19, 2022. In lieu of flowers, the family would prefer that donations be sent to the Alzheimer's Association: <https://act.alz.org/site/Donat>

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Alfred is survived by his children, Richard Goguen (Lynda), Dennis Bentley (Mary), Debra Scafani (Louis), and Michael Goguen (Christine); grandchildren Darren Riddle (Julie), James Goguen, Damon Riddle (Diana), Michelle Goguen, Heather Navarro (Kelly), Jeff Bentley, Joe Bentley (Leeann), Hilary Leiper (Ed), Lisa Rhodes (Daniel), Christi Quintero (Guillermo), Rita Sealy (Matthew), Wendy Pezelet (John), and Kevin Goguen; great grandchildren Tyler Riddle, Dialynna Riddle, Jade Goguen, Brian Navarro, Jason Navarro, Will Bentley, Benjamin Bentley, Dillon Leiper (Meghan), Harley Leiper, Jordan Rhodes, Bryson Rhodes, Christopher Scafani, Felina Newsom, Matthew Newsom, Remi and Ryann Jeffries; nieces Chris Gill, Miriam Estrine; and nephews Doug Weiler (Jean), James Weiler (Susan), and Bruce Etro. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife Evelyn, his parents, Edmond Goguen and Alma Warchol, grandson Dennis Riddle, sister Doris Etro, and nephew Robert Etro.

Previous Events

Graveside Service

APR 19. 2:00 PM (PT)

Riverside National Cemetery
Riverside, CA

Tribute Wall

ME

“ *Uncle Fred made my twin sister and I feel very special for our 16th birthday by presenting us with Chanel No5. This was his way making others feel special with his kindness. ❤️*

Miriam Estrine - April 19, 2022 at 01:44 AM