

Robert Nangle, 87, Printing and Publishing Executive, Former Darien Resident

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Date : August 20, 2017

Robert Christie Nangle died peacefully May 9 in Meriden, Connecticut after a long illness. Karen, his wife of 57 years was by his side.

He was born March 16, 1930 in New Haven and lived there with his parents, Benjamin Christie Nangle, a professor of English at Yale, and his mother, Katharine Rawles Nangle, who taught at the Day School.

A graduate of the Foote School, Groton School, and Yale University, he took two years off to serve in the Army. At Groton, he learned how to set monotype, in the fashion of Gutenberg, beginning a life-long involvement in the rapidly changing industry of printing and publishing.

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When he became a partner in Clarke and Way, he had to join the International Typographers Union in order to run the very machines he owned. He was amused to find himself the only graduate of Groton who belonged to a Union.

— [This obituary](#) previously was published in the *New Haven Register*. You may leave [condolence messages for his family here](#).

Bob was instrumental in producing the first book printed by optical character recognition. Ultimately, he founded his own company designing and setting books by computer.

He loved tailoring the specific look of the printed word on a title page or chapter opener so the design echoed the essence of the book. His discerning eye caught mistakes no one else would notice.

Bob was a pile of paradoxes; to know him was to love him. After helping his father proofread portions of the Yale Shakespeare, he was startled to find himself thinking and speaking in iambic pentameter for several days.

Conversation was like a game for him, zooming madly from allusion to allusion, with points for unexpected juxtapositions of ideas or especially piquant or obscure references. Guests were either speechless or dissolved in gales of laughter.

He grew up sailing, and in later life would put on his ever-present cowboy hat, and single-hand our sailboat out onto the Sound, or take either his son, Fred or his daughter Jocie with him, heeling over, gunnels perilously close to the water as the sails filled, accompanied by peals of laughter as they disappeared around Noroton Point, not returning until hours later.

Bob's taste in music was wildly eclectic, and influenced everyone in the family, all of whom at one time or another sang in choirs, choruses, and musical sessions encompassing ancient Irish songs of revelry, rebellion and lost loves, spirituals, sea chanties, and cowboy songs not to mention Beethoven, Bach, and Brahms. He sang for 15 years in the choir of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Darien, where he also served as a chalice bearer and lay reader.

From the time he was an impish little boy, throughout his life, he was intrigued by railroads. There was always a railroad under construction in the basement of whatever house we lived in. He shared his love of trains with our children, however, our daughter is not working on the railroad. She is singing Irish songs both here and in Ireland. His son is working on the railroad.

Bob loved animals. Our house was home to rescue dogs and lost birds. He is survived by his wife Karen; son,

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Frederic; daughter, Jocelyn; daughter-in-law, Nina Crothers; twin granddaughters, Sofia and Freya Nangle, and his faithful rescue dog, Neave. Please consider making a donation in his name to the Meriden Humane Society, 311 Murdock Ave., Meriden, CT 06450.

Bob is giving his body to Yale Medical School for dissection by students in the beginning anatomy class. By doing so, he is becoming part of "the universal rite of passage in the education of a doctor" believing that such a donation is "a triumph over death ... and a way of realizing the immortality of the soul or the closest thing to it," as Richard Selzer, professor of surgery at Yale Medical School, described it.

Bob lives on in the hearts of the people who knew and loved him.