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Eugene Kelly, 90, From Struggling Youth to PepsiCo VP

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Date : November 30, 2016

Eugene F. "Gene" Kelly, 90, of Tampa, a retired financial executive and PepsiCo vice president, passed away on Sunday, Nov. 27. He raised his family partly in Darien and played the ukulele for entertainment.

Gene Kelly was born and raised in Jersey City, N.J., and was the son of Dr. James E. and Elizabeth E. Kelly.

He raised his family in Mountainside, N.J., and Darien before moving to Tampa 32 years ago with his wife.

Gene left school and went to work as a young teenager to support his mother, after the death of his father. He worked at Bond Bread packing bread crumbs and was known to say "It was a crummy job, but I made a lot of dough."

Through perseverance, he completed high school and went on to graduate from Seton Hall University, and

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obtain his C.P.A., all while working during the day and attending classes at night. He also taught accounting at Seton Hall for 10 years.

He had a successful career as a financial executive, starting with Boyce, Hughes and Farrell, then onto Price-Waterhouse, and ultimately moving onto Rheingold Corp., which was subsequently acquired by PepsiCo. He rose to the level of executive vice president of PepsiCo International, traveling worldwide.

— [an obituary](#) from *O'Brien Funeral Home*.

He was a U.S. Army veteran of the Korean War stationed in San Francisco,, and a member of the AICPA. While in Mountainside, he served as president of the school board at Our Lady of Lourdes School, which his children attended.

Gene was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, known for maintaining a positive outlook and zest for life, notwithstanding the hardships and losses he faced.

He enjoyed playing his organ and ukulele and entertaining family and friends as the "magic man." He enthusiastically embraced modern technology by connecting with friends and family via his iPad.

Gene was predeceased by his beloved wife, Joan (nee O'Brien) Kelly, in 1990. He was also predeceased by a son, Mark O'Brien Kelly, in 1994; a daughter, Adrienne, in infancy; a granddaughter, Ashley Kelly, in 2008, and by his siblings, James E. Kelly and Elizabeth Kelly Bishop.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Dr. Paul F. and Karen Kelly, of Newtown; his daughter, Alison J. Kelly, of Tampa, and his daughter and son-in-law, Kathleen and Jeffrey Willard, of Landenberg, Pa. Also surviving are his grandchildren, Adam, Ian, Connor, Matthew, Brendan, and Meagan Kelly, and Tracy and Jeffrey Willard, and his sister, Janet Hughes and husband, Jim, of Long Branch, N.J.

Visitation will take place from 3 to 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 2, 2016 at O'Brien Funeral Home, 2028 Hwy. 35, Wall, N.J. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 3, at St. Catharine Church, 215 Essex Ave., Spring Lake, N.J. 07762, followed by burial at St. Catharine Cemetery in Wall.

For further information, directions or to send online condolences, please visit obrienfuneralhome.com.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Mr. Kelly's memory may be made to Friends of the County Parks and Recreation, Inc. PO Box 271911, Tampa, FL 33688 (please specify Pam Callahan Nature Preserve in Gene Kelly's name).

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