

LOVELY, Francis Beirne Jr. Family Man, War Hero, Leader

Francis Beirne Lovely, Jr.--proud Marine, Vietnam war hero, stalwart attorney, community leader, advocate for the underprivileged, avid golfer, motivating coach, faithful Catholic, loyal friend, cherished Papa, beloved father, treasured father-in-law, adoring and adored husband--died at his home, surrounded by his family, on June 7, 2020.



Even in the face of his sudden cancer diagnosis, Beirne displayed his trademark qualities of grit, fortitude, faith, humility, dignity, and, most of all, enduring love. Beirne leaves behind a widespread network of heartbroken friends, colleagues, fellow veterans, admirers, and family who, if they were lucky, were on the receiving end of his signature selflessness, unending gratitude, and, most certainly, his contagious belly laugh. Like so many who have passed during the pandemic, Beirne will not get the sendoff that he so deserves, and his friends and family will not be able to gather to toast (and roast) him. These are unconventional times, Beirne was an unconventional man, and this is an unconventional tribute. So, buckle up, his life was quite a ride!

When 10 of Beirne's 12 grandchildren (those old enough to talk) recently answered the question, 'What do you love most about Papa?', their responses were personal, yet strikingly similar: 'I love that he's brave', 'I love that he fought for our country', 'He is always in a good mood', 'He is caring no matter who the person is', 'He taught me how to play golf', 'He's supportive and loving and kind', 'He takes care of us', 'He loves my drawings', 'He's a great coach', 'He has an ability to make everyone laugh and smile'. These sentiments paint a poetic picture of a man who lived in service to his country, God, his community and, above all, his family. In these reflections, one common theme emerged, summed up whimsically by his 4 year old granddaughter, Taylor: 'I love that Papa is the best.' All who knew him will certainly agree that Beirne Lovely was, indeed, the best.

Beirne was born on January 5, 1946. Contrary to what his red hair, fair skin, and loathing of the beach might've indicated, Beirne was raised in the seaside town of Nahant. After graduating from Lynn Classical High School in 1963, Beirne matriculated to Dartmouth College where, despite a questionable performance in his freshman chemistry class (a story he loved to regale), he made his mark, forming a close bond with his brothers of Chi Phi fraternity and scrumming on the rugby field.

As the conflict in Vietnam brewed, Beirne heeded his instinctual desire to serve his country. While he began his military career in the Army ROTC at Dartmouth, he chose to accept his commission as an Officer in the Marine Corps on June 10, 1967, alongside so many of his fraternity brothers. After earning the designation of Infantry Officer at Quantico, Beirne deployed to Vietnam in January of 1968, courageously leading his men in the 1st Battalion 9th Marines (notoriously coined 'The Walking Dead') into battle in Khe Sanh during the Tet

Offensive. For his heroism, Beirne was awarded two Bronze Stars as well as a Purple Heart and, later, a Navy Commendation Medal and a Navy Achievement Medal.

In an effort to preserve the histories of combat veterans, Beirne gave his voice to a number of publications. His oral accounts for the web series, Witness to War, reveal stories of bravery, humor, and heartbreak that will endure the test of time. (Watch it here: https://www.witnesstowar.org/combat_stories/Vietnam/5150) Beirne was profoundly committed to veterans, principally through the New England Center and Home for Veterans, where he tirelessly volunteered his time and expertise, most recently as Chair of the Board. Following Vietnam, Beirne became Executive Officer of the Marine Corps Barracks in Newport, RI, and immersed himself in the community by volunteering and coaching.

It was also in Newport where, one beautiful night, he first met his perfect match, his soulmate and future wife, Joan. Ever the charmer, Beirne coaxed Joan into a date and, after a whirlwind courtship, they married on February 19, 1972, after just 8 months together, in order to ensure a military wedding. Even a blizzard on the day of their ceremony at St. Gregory's Church in Dorchester did not prevent Beirne and Joan from having an arch of swords (albeit, indoors). Thus began a partnership brimming with mutual admiration, respect, support, and unadulterated love that lasted nearly 50 years.

Upon completing his service and being honorably discharged from the Marine Corps, Beirne enrolled in law school at Boston University, where he expertly balanced work with his budding family, submitting his paper for the Law Review (of which he later became Managing Editor) on the night that his first child, Kristen, was born. He graduated cum laude in 1975 and began a successful career in corporate law at Herrick Smith, before being recruited to Goodwin Procter, where he was selected for early partnership. As a Senior Partner, he acted as sage mentor to new lawyers and founded the Children's Fund at Goodwin, collecting toys, clothing, and money for children and the homeless.

In 2007, after over 30 years, Beirne 'retired' and began his next career as the first in-house General Counsel for the Archdiocese of Boston. As a lifelong Catholic with a deep-seated faith, working for Cardinal O'Malley was the privilege of a lifetime. Beirne's steady presence, sharp wit, and intellectual prowess were mainstays at the Pastoral Center for over 12 years.

For all of Beirne's impressive professional accomplishments, he also made a conscious decision that his career was his livelihood, but not his life. Beirne always made time for his community and was actively involved in the Town of Milton for over 25 years. He served in many capacities, including as a member of the Warrant Committee, a Corporator at Milton Hospital, a Town Meeting member, President of the Milton High School Boosters, and Chair of the School Committee. During his years as Chair, Beirne was instrumental in initiatives to build new schools, and was a Founding Member of the Milton Foundation for Education. So indelible was his impact on Milton schools that Beirne was presented with a pair of 'reserved seats' painted on the wall of the Milton High School fieldhouse in 2010.

Even in the midst of his many hours of volunteering, working, and being a family man, anyone who knew Beirne knew that there was always time for golf. He loved spending time on the

course--any course--with colleagues, friends, and most especially, his sons. However, even golf was never purely recreational for Beirne. He steadfastly organized memorial and charity golf tournaments, and was actively involved in the leadership at Wollaston Golf Club, where he held multiple positions, including Director, Governor, advisor, and sounding board. In acknowledgement of his dedication, Wollaston recently recognized Beirne with the Distinguished Service Award, an honor that meant the world to him.

Beirne was many things to many people, but nothing was more meaningful to him than family. When given an option between family and anything else (yes, including golf), Beirne never wavered. He lived by the mantra, 'Family First'. Whether globe-trotting with Joan from Hawaii and Alaska to Ecuador and Italy, or just staying put, nothing brought him more joy than being surrounded by family. In particular, he and Joan treasured family gatherings; whether it was a holiday, their annual family trip, or a spontaneous weeknight barbecue, there was sure to be copious amounts of food and drinks and, inevitably, a mishap amidst the laughter.

Eternally selfless, a conversation with Beirne was never complete without his trademark, 'What can I do for you?' He was the physical manifestation of what it means to show up. From day one, he enthusiastically coached his kids and grandkids (and countless Milton youth) in every sport; cheered--not so quietly--at hockey, soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey games from Hingham to Arizona; picked up and dropped off his grandkids at school (with an occasional secret detour to Wendy's or Dairy Freeze); stood in line without complaint at TJ Maxx for holiday returns.

Most of all, Beirne was never shy in his unwavering support of his kids. He faithfully drove with Joan to Bowdoin to catch David in every basketball game and to watch Greg play shortstop; ventured to UVM to give homesick Michelle a warm hug; and, when he felt the conditions were unsatisfactory for play, single handedly mowed and weed whacked the Milton field hockey field before one of Kristen's games. Beirne had a rare ability to be there at just the right time: to listen or offer advice, make up songs to the delight of his grandchildren (and the playful eye rolling of Joan), celebrate occasions with gusto, teach his grandkids how to give a 'real' handshake, and offer comfort in times of grief and put things into perspective with a classic, 'this too shall pass'. Mostly, he showed us how to speak and act with dignity, kindness, and humility. In essence, he taught us to lead by example. This is the beautiful legacy that Beirne has bestowed upon generations to come.

Beirne is survived by his rock, his biggest supporter, his beloved wife, Joan, and their 4 children and their families: Kristen, Dennis, Camden, and Maggie Carr, of Milton, MA; Michelle, Shannon, Zoe, Hailey, and Orin Staiger, of Fairbanks, AK; David, Kerri, Dylan, Jackson, and Taylor Lovely, of Hingham, MA; and Gregory, Sarah, Scott, Wesley, Eliza, and Mae Lovely, with whom he shared his home in Milton. He is also survived by his brother, Ed, and his wife, Barbara, of Topsham, ME; countless in-laws, nieces and nephews; and, of course, a wide array of loyal friends. Beirne was predeceased by his parents, Francis Beirne and Dorothy Lovely.

In the final weeks of his life, Beirne was cared for by a loving team of doctors and nurses at Beth Israel in Boston, who offered comfort when pandemic regulations prevented his family from being there. Once Beirne came home, South Shore VNA offered compassionate care, answering our questions and late-night calls. The family wishes to extend heartfelt gratitude to Cindy

Getman, Beirne's hospice nurse, who went above and beyond to help us navigate our heartbreak. Beirne's Services will be private for now, and a Memorial Mass and Celebration of Life will occur when it is safe. If you'd like to help carry on Beirne's legacy, please consider a donation to the following causes: The New England Center and Home for Veterans <https://www.nechv.org/donations/tribute-giving/> Campaign for Catholic Schools <https://www.campaignforcatholicschools.org/support-ccs> or a scholarship established in his name (checks payable to the Beirne Lovely Memorial Scholarship Fund can be mailed to James McAuliffe, Town Treasurer, 525 Canton Ave., Milton, MA 02186).

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