

WILLIAM J. LARKIN, JR.
February 5, 1928 – August 31, 2019
Cornwall-On-Hudson, NY

The State of New York lost one of its treasures with the death of State Senator William J. Larkin, Jr., a longtime area resident, who died peacefully at home surrounded by family on August 31, 2019. He was 91 years of age and had served his country and community for 75 years.

Soldier, Statesman and Citizen, he was born in Troy, NY on February 5, 1928 and was raised by his Aunt and Uncle, Kathleen and Connie Koch. He volunteered for the draft and entered service in 1944 at the age of 16. Senator Larkin saw combat in New Guinea and the Philippines during WWII and then served in combat in the Korean War. Twenty-three years of exemplary service took him from Private to Lieutenant Colonel at retirement in 1967 with the Legion of Merit and seven Army Commendation medals.

During his combat service he received seven Battle Stars, one for WWII and six for Korea. He often spoke with pride of his service to President John F. Kennedy as Army Project Officer on the famous trip to Berlin in 1963. Another career highlight was providing security and protection for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on his historic march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. He always treated the men under his command by applying his own version of the motto Duty, Honor and Country by adding the word Respect. To this day he was in contact with men he served with throughout his military career. Many years after his retirement he was awarded the Army's highest civilian award, the Decoration for Distinguished Civilian Service in recognition of his tireless service on behalf of veterans and substantial contribution to the accomplishments of the Army's mission. In addition, the New York State Senate awarded Senator Larkin the first New York State Senate Veterans Leadership Award for his work on behalf of New York's veterans.

Following his retirement from active duty Senator Larkin served for over 40 years in the New York State Legislature, having served in the Assembly from 1979-1990. He was first elected to the New York State Senate in November 1990, prior to that he served as an Executive Assistant in the New York State Senate, and from 1976-1977 was Supervisor of the Town of New Windsor.

Widely recognized among his colleagues both in New York State and nationally for his vast knowledge and expertise about the insurance industry, Senator Larkin was elected in November 2001, as President of the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL). NCOIL is a bipartisan organization of State Legislators from the fifty states whose primary area of public policy is insurance. In 2002, Senator Larkin was named one of the "100 Most Powerful People in the Insurance Industry-North America".

The Purple Heart Medal, our nation's oldest military award was the focus of what the Senator considered two of his most important legacy accomplishments. He is a charter member of the prestigious four-man Genesis Group, which founded the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor located in New Windsor, NY. Senator Larkin also initiated the campaign to create the Purple Heart Forever Stamp. Both of these efforts took over a decade to complete and would not have been possible without Senator Larkin's unwavering tenacity and patriotism.

Senator Larkin was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh for his service to his community, state, and country. He is a member of the Catholic War Veterans, Knights of Columbus, Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, and the Disabled American Veterans, and an honorary member of the West Point Society of New York. He is a long-standing member of the Orange County Citizens Foundation and a recipient of the prestigious Ottaway Medal. Senator Larkin and his wife Patricia Kurucz McGuirk Larkin, a retired teacher from the Newburgh Enlarged City School District, share eight children and 17 grandchildren.

His survivors include his wife, Patricia Kurucz McGuirk Larkin, and children, Janet Stivers (Dan), William Larkin (Nancy) and Patricia Winters (Jim), J.P. McGuirk, Mary McGuirk, Jennifer McGuirk, Patricia Rivers and Anne (Gene) Duignan. Additionally, he is survived by 17 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren, who brought great happiness to his life.

Visitation will be held from 4 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, September 4th at the Newburgh Armory Unity Center in the William and Pat Larkin Education Center, 321 S. William Street, Newburgh, NY under the direction of Quigley-Sullivan Funeral Home of Cornwall-On-Hudson. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday, September 5th at St. Thomas of Canterbury, 340 Hudson Street, Cornwall-On-Hudson, NY.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Newburgh Armory Unity Center, Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties and Nora Cronin Presentation Academy.

Arrangements are entrusted to Quigley-Sullivan Funeral Home, Inc.; to send condolences please go to www.Quigleybros.com.