



## Jerome S. Thaler

January 10, 1930 - October 19, 2019

Jerome S. Thaler, formerly of Yorktown Heights, passed away in Yonkers, NY on Saturday, October 19, 2019 after a brief illness.

Jerome is survived by his son Daniel (Susan), daughter Naomi (Barry) Volain and son Jonathan (Helen); stepdaughter Rebecca Schram Zafrany and stepson Mordechai Schram; grandchildren Rebecca Thaler Heineman, Diane Ruby Thaler, Noah Volain, Mark Volain, Maximus Thaler, Anna Volain Jones and great-grandson Jude Heineman; and by Eleanor Arnold, his loving partner of 22 years. He was preceded in death by his parents, Herman and Clara (nee Hirsch), his first wife Diane (nee Perin) and his brother, Allan (Susan). Jerome was born on January 10, 1930 in New York City. He earned a B.S. and an M.S. at Columbia University and a Doctor of Optometry degree at the Massachusetts College of Optometry. He was a U.S. Army veteran, who served in Alaska during the Korean conflict from 1954 to 1956. He opened his own optometry practice in Peekskill in 1959 and had a practice in Mahopac for nearly 40 years. He served as Chief of Optometry at the V.A. Hospital in Montrose from 1981 to 1992. He continued to practice into his 80s. Dr. Thaler was a prominent climate historian of the Hudson Valley, maintaining a National Weather Service station at his home in Yorktown for 50 years. He authored a number of books on the subject, including *The Westchester Weather Book*, *Weather History and Climate Guide to the Lower Hudson Valley* and *Hudson Valley Warming*. His writings appeared in *Hudson Valley Magazine*, *The New York Times* and many local newspapers. He received several awards for his service and contributions to the climatology of the Hudson Valley. He was an ardent amateur geologist, naturalist and astronomer, who traveled widely and loved music and the theater, especially the works of Gilbert & Sullivan. He was also an avid swimmer and outdoorsman.

A memorial service will be held on Friday, October 25 at 11:00 am at Yorktown Funeral Home, 945 East Main Street in Shrub Oak, NY. Memorial contributions may be made to the Union of Concerned Scientists, 2 Brattle Square, Cambridge MA 02138-3780 or [uscusa.org](http://uscusa.org).



# Comments

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“ Good morning. I'm Naomi Volain, Jerome's daughter. Thank you for coming today - I know you're here because of your care for and connections to our father Jerome. I call him Jerome, because his warm, wonderful and funny brother, our Uncle Allan, always called him Jerome.

Our father never expected to live this long. He was amazed to make it into his late 80s. He constantly told us his story of having lost both his father and mother within 3 years when he was a young man. The loss of his loving wife, our mother Diane, when my brothers and I were 9, 12 and 14 years old was another painful mark in his life. His losses were achingly, constantly present for him, despite all the joy he got from his interests, work and accomplishments.

I think our grandparents Herman and Clara Thaler would have been so proud to see all of Dad's successes, and the impact he had on Dan, Jon, and myself. Like his father Herman who was a skilled watchmaker in Midtown Manhattan, Dad was talented with his hands. In his optometry practice, he would grind and shape the prescription lenses for his patients with precision and strength. He built stone walls, planted trees, and in winter melted the snow to that fell into the rain gauge in his work as a National Weather Observer. Jerome's influence on us was clear in this way - Dan, Jon and I all work with our hands. Dan's kayak artistry and auto mechanics, Jon's ceramics, acupuncture and massage work, and my hands-on science teaching. Dad's tangible and concrete approach and work ethic continue with us in the next generation.

Some of the best moments in our relationship were in the past few years of his life. He was relaxed and happy. He was more accepting of our complex and colorful family, and facing our challenges. Recently, he finally accepted the fact of my lifelong reality of living with epilepsy; he was only recently able to ask me about it, and tell me how much he was concerned, and how much he cared. And when we talked, he told me he loved me, which he had never done before.

I'm so sad to lose my Dad. I'm so sad to lose him as the person he was; I'm so sad to lose him as a father; and I'm so sad to lose him as the person I wanted him to be.

Dad was a practical man and a realist. The advice he gave us was to always have a goal. His end-of-life goal looked into the future, and he was determined to live to the year 2020. Perfect vision is 20/20 of course, and is what all optometrists want for their patients and all people.

Though he didn't reach 2020, I believe we can clearly see Jerome as the man he was - curious, complicated, sentimental, creative, interesting and loving. When the New Year rings at midnight into 2020, please toast Jerome as we all move into a clear new year.

Naomi Volain - October 29, 2019 at 12:40 AM



“ So sorry to of heard of your dads passing .I knew him through my garage door business when I would service the doors .I always enjoyed talking with him .He had given me a book on the adirondacks weather inwhich I had an interest in being I have a camp up there .I just took the book off the shelf as I'm writing this and remembering him.

**Brian Whittaker** - November 07, 2019 at 07:18 PM



“ The Christmas/Holiday card I sent to Jerry (and his family) was recently returned to me as "undeliverable". When I called to wish him a Happy Birthday, the phone numbers were wrong. I feared the worst, and now, I sadly learn, it's true. Jerry;s gone. He and my late husband, NormanSpiro, were friends since their college days, in the 40's. We were all close friends since then. I would love to talk/write to Ellie or any children. Please call me @ 619-291-1935 or janetspiro@gmail.com Much Love.

**janet spiro** - January 14, 2020 at 06:05 PM