

# Longtime Freeman co-owner, business manager dies at 95

*Hamm remembered for high standards, as family man*

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**W**AUKESHA — Hans Hamm was a devoted man: to his eight children and “lovely bride” Joan; his career as business manager and display advertising manager for The Freeman; to proper use of English; and to his community.

Hamm died Thursday at age 95 after a short illness, surrounded by family and friends, including his 99-year-old sister-in-law Miriam Youmans Wellford whose family owned the newspaper for decades and to which Hamm married into when he married Miriam’s sister Joan, who predeceased Hans.

Hamm was born in Milwaukee in 1924 and early on discovered a love of swimming and boating, as well as for the games of cribbage, sheephead and bridge. He was still playing sheephead and cribbage weekly at the Avalon only days before his death.

As a boy, Hamm suffered from polio, which affected his leg, Wellford said, but he and his mother, Pearl Morgan Hamm, worked hard for him to overcome the disability and he was able to walk by the age of 17. Wellford said this showed his fighting spirit.

After high school, Hamm attended the University of Wisconsin, where he majored in engineering and met Joan Youmans. After brief employment at an engineering firm, he joined the Youmans family at The Waukesha Freeman. Hans and Joan had eight children whom they raised in Waukesha.



Hans Hamm loved to cook for his family and created a Christmas cookie competition.

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■ Read Hans Hamm’s full obituary. 7A



Submitted photos

Hans Hamm served as business manager and display advertising manager during a career that lasted several decades with The Freeman.



The Hamm family at a recent family gathering, from left, Paul, Morgan, Sandy, Susan, Daniel, Margaret, David and Mark, and Hans, sitting.

His son Sandy Hamm remembers visiting his father at The Freeman.

Hamm’s daughter Susan said while in college, she’d spend summers working in different Freeman departments.

His children remembered Hamm as a man who had strong principles. Sandy Hamm said his father was exacting and held high standards for his children regarding their education and manners. In his obituary, Hans is remembered as a man who put an emphasis on proper grammar:

“He could be a stickler when it came to the proper use of the English language. In a humorous vein though, he reminded his family for years of how he was on a mission to keep alive the use of the semicolon,” it reads.

Sandy Hamm said his father had an expression that “now is a very short period of time,” which meant two things: as an instruction not to procrastinate and as a philosophical statement, meaning live life in the moment. However, another expression that Hans Hamm used also stuck with the kids.

“Once in high school on the debate team Hans had made an argument that ‘one should never do anything unless it was fun.’ I know this because at some point in the 1960s we found a 78rpm recording of that speech,” Sandy Hamm recalled. “I am not sure he was happy with



Hans Hamm was devoted to his wife, Joan, whom he referred to as his “lovely bride.”

# Hamm

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that discovery because we threw it back at him whenever we wanted to do something we deemed fun that he wasn't so hot on."

Daughter Susan Waite said her father had a strong value system.

"He really tried hard to excel at what he did," she said. "He had that real strong Midwestern work ethic that he tried to instill in us."

Throughout his life, Hans served on several boards to promote the betterment of the community, Wellford said, including the YMCA and Waukesha Memorial Hospital.

Many people often thought of Hans Hamm as a serious man, Waite said, but he had a fun side too, including his love of the holidays, especially Christmas and Easter.

Every year the family would take a vacation, often to a place with a body of water to enjoy. Sandy Hamm recalled these trips as a caravan of vehicles carrying his parents and seven siblings, and sometimes other family members and perhaps "tag-along friends or any age."

The Youmans, Wellford and Hamm families sold The Freeman in 1979. In retirement, Hamm spent lots of time with his family for which he enjoyed cooking and baking and would send handwritten cards to three generations.

"... He gave us the great gift of his committed devotion to his wife of 69 years. In a letter he wrote to Joan on their 20th anniversary, he said, 'When they look back on old Hans and Joan many years from now, I'm sure that only one accomplishment will be recalled. Certainly, that will be our large and wonderful family.'"

He is survived by children, Susan (Robert) Waite, Sandy (Colleen) Hamm, Morgan (Pamela) Hamm, David (Laura) Hamm, Paul, Mark, Margaret (Karen McCaffery) Hamm and Daniel Hamm. Also, his 17 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, his sister-in-law Miriam Youmans Wellford and other friends and relatives.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. See Hans Hamm's full obituary on Page 7A.