

Robert Wehling

Edwardsville | Tuesday, March 22 2016

Robert J. Wehling, age 87, of Edwardsville died at 7:30 p. m. on Tuesday, March 22, 2016, at Eden Village in Glen Carbon, comforted in his final hours by his daughters Cindy Fuehne and Kathy Cimarolli, and sons Jeff and Steve Wehling.

A lifelong resident of Edwardsville, “Pretzel,” a nickname acquired in his youth, was born on August 3, 1928, in St. Louis, the son of the late Fredrick and Teresa (Long) Wehling. Following the passing of his father in 1933, he spent considerable time on family farms under the tutelage of his uncles and aunts Joseph and Alice Wehling, and Joseph and Minnie Long.



He married Mary Jane Thomas, his wife of 67 years, on February 19, 1949, at St. Boniface Church in Edwardsville; she survives. In addition to Cindy, Jeff, Steve and Kathy, all of the Edwardsville area, he is survived by son-in-laws Jerry Fuehne and Steve Cimarolli, and daughter-in-laws Peggy and Kathy Wehling, grandchildren Kristin (Stephen) DeVasto, Kyle Fuehne, Michael Fuehne, Allison (Josh) Ferry, Emily Wehling, Cole Cimarolli and Abby Cimarolli, and two-great grandsons, Dylan DeVasto and Lucas Ferry.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Eugene Wehling, and sisters- and brothers-in-law Carol Wehling, Peggy and Bud Mann, Shirley and Kelly Dutko, Beverly and Larry Wheeler, and John Thomas, Jr.

Mr. Wehling graduated from Edwardsville High School in 1946. Like many of his classmates, after graduation he enlisted in the U.S. Navy in the final year of World War II. After being honorably discharged from the Navy, he attended and received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Washington University.

Mr. Wehling was a journalist for more than 40 years, including 30 years at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and stints at the Alton Telegraph and now defunct East St. Louis Journal. Of the thousands of interviews he conducted, Mr. Wehling cited his interviews of the legendary Teamsters boss Jimmy Hoffa and Southern Illinois' legendary crime figure Frank "Buster" Wortman as the most memorable.

A member of the American Federation of Musicians since 1944, Mr. Wehling served as a regional vice president of the organization for 11 years. He also served as secretary and business agent of musician's Local 98. For years he played in the Edwardsville Municipal Band and, while stationed at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Fla., performed with the Jacksonville Symphony.

Mr. Wehling was an active member of the community, including serving as a board member of Edwardsville Community School District #7; as chairman of the Edwardsville Plan Commission; the first chairman of the Intergovernmental Liaison Committee, created to promote and implement the orderly planning and development of the Southern Illinois University's Edwardsville campus; a member of the board of directors for the Madison County Association for Retarded Children; and as a commissioner of the Madison County Housing Authority.

A Fourth Degree member of the Knights of Columbus, Mr. Wehling served as Grand Knight of Edwardsville Council #1143 and as a District Deputy, overseeing numerous councils in Madison County. He was also a member of American Legion Post 199 in Edwardsville.

For decades, Mr. Wehling was an unpaid, unofficial member of the board for Mine Run University (MRU), an unaccredited educational institution and think tank located at the historic Vanzo's Taproom, operated by his longtime friends, brothers Frank and Jim Vanzo, in Edwardsville.

Mr. Wehling's family would like to thank the staff at Eden Village for the quality, compassionate care they provided their father during his stay at the long-term care facility.

Visitation will be from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 28, 2016, at Weber & Rodney Funeral Home in Edwardsville. Services will be held at 10:00 a.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church on Tuesday, March 29, 2016, with burial at Calvary Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to the Alzheimer's Association.

Condolences may be expressed online at weberfuneralhome.com.