



Hugh F. Keefe

January 10, 1943 - July 11, 2025

Hugh F. Keefe, famed criminal trial lawyer and beloved husband of the Hon. Tara L. Knight, did not go gently into that good night. He died on July 11, 2025, as he lived, battling to the end.

Born in Somerville, Massachusetts, to Irish immigrant parents, Jack and Catherine, he personified all that was Irish: pugnacity, rebelliousness, poeticism wistfulness and affability. His father, a former IRA member and eventual Boston-area meatpacker, imbued in him an intrepid spirit and an affinity for the immigrant, the disenfranchised, and the voiceless. Hugh abhorred the abuse of authority and identified with the working man- he himself coming from the most modest of roots. He was a paperboy, a shelf stocker, and an army national guard veteran. He worked for one and only one law firm, Lynch, Traub Keefe & Errante, from 1967 until his death. From his mother he inherited a determined dignity and civility. No temper. No conceits. No desire for things or status. He was not easily impressed, he was slow to anger, and he looked at life through a prism of optimism and humor. Nothing made him happier than cross-examining a witness, spending time with his three sons and grandchildren, watching the Red Sox, having a cold beer with his partners at happy hour or having a cup of coffee alongside his wife on the front porch of their beloved New Haven home. Nothing, absolutely nothing else mattered.

He, as many children of immigrants, was the first in his family to graduate college. He went on to law school ultimately becoming one of Connecticut's

most recognized, revered, and fiercest trial attorneys. His clients ranged from Black Panther revolutionaries to corporate CEOs, to celebrities and to various members of American political dynasties. And this is the only thing you need to know about his many honors, accolades, distinctions, and awards. He was Hugh Keefe.

Hugh was truly the man in the arena, and he lived his life with quiet confidence - not arrogance, with audacity, bravery, and self-possession. He dared greatly and was unafraid to lose, to fight hard or to take a chance, so- to paraphrase Teddy Roosevelt- that his place in this world would never be with those cold and timid souls who neither knew victory nor defeat.

In addition to his adoring wife, Tara, he is survived by his loving sons, Hugh Patrick Keefe and his wife, Megan; Brendan John Keefe; and Dr. William Sean Keefe. He was "Grandie" to his five adored grandchildren, Clara, Teagan, John, Alice, and Patrick. He also leaves behind his devoted sister, Marjorie B. Keefe, and her husband Capt. Paul Prescott as well as his loyal and dedicated brother and law partner, John J. Keefe, and his companion Lynn Brennan. He is also survived by his mother-in-law, Mary Lou Knight, brother-in-law William Meehan, sister-in-law, Kristen Keslow and her husband, Marc, and brother -in-law Edward Knight Jr. and his wife Carolynn as well as many beloved nieces and nephews and extended family.

In addition to his parents, and his beloved sisters, Mary Meehan Keefe and Carol Keefe, and father-in-law, Edward Knight, he was predeceased by his former spouse and mother to his three sons, Dorothy M. Keefe, and he leaves behind many members of the warm, kind and generous Montano clan.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be Celebrated Friday at 10 a.m. in Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, 2819 Whitney Ave. Hamden. Friends are asked to go directly to church. Burial in All Saints Cemetery. Calling hours are Thursday from 3 - 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the Greater New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade care of Bernadette Smyth LaFrance P.O. Box 9078 New Haven, CT 06532. To leave an online condolence please visit www.siskbrothers.com

Cemetery Details

All Saints Cemetery

700 Middletown Ave.
North Haven, CT

Previous Events

Calling hours

JUL 17. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Our Lady of Mt Carmel
2819 Whitney Ave
Hamden, CT 06518-2544
(203) 248-0141

Mass of Christian Burial

JUL 18. 10:00 AM (ET)

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church
2819 Whitney Ave.
Hamden, CT

Tribute Wall

MI

“ My deepest sympathies to the Keefe Family. I remember during the holidays, Attorney Keefe would send Christmas gifts to each of the courtroom clerks. He even remembered my name. I was felt so special. He has always been approachable and kind. I will never forget him.



Marilyn inge - March 12 at 02:06 PM

HF

“ I recently saw news of Hugh's passing and I'm devastated. He was a part of my family's life since grammar school. Always a card to my mother on the hoidays and always a warm smile & hug when I ran into him. So sorry for your loss. Helene Fitch

Helene Fitch - November 15, 2025 at 11:14 AM

SS

“ RIP Hugh Keefe - great lawyer, great wit. Smart guy. Always a pleasure to talk to.

Stan Simpson - August 20, 2025 at 10:36 AM

ES

“ Sincere condolences to the Keefe family on Hugh's passing. Hugh was truly an extraordinary person and incredibly talented and accomplished lawyer. He was a giant of our profession. Hugh was not only an icon but a role model for all of us. In addition to his incredible legal accomplishments, he was simply a great person. He will truly be missed but never forgotten.

Sincerely,
Attorney Eugene A. Skowronski

Eugene Skowronski - August 04, 2025 at 11:26 AM

PC

“ My sincerest condolences to Judge Knight and the entire Keefe Family. The loss of a loved one is always difficult. May his memory be a blessing.

Phyllis Cummings-Teixeira

Phyllis Cummings-Teixeira - July 30, 2025 at 02:53 PM

ES

“ Sincere condolences to the Keefe family on Hugh’s passing. Hugh was truly an extraordinary person and incredibly talented and accomplished lawyer. He was a giant of our profession. He was not only an icon but a role model for all of us. In addition to his incredible legal accomplishments, he was simply a great person. He will truly be missed but never forgotten.

Sincerely,

*Attorney Eugene A. Skowronski
Derby, CT*

Eugene A Skowronski - July 24, 2025 at 10:59 AM

BG

“ On behalf of the Quinnipiac University School of Law community, we extend our deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Hugh F. Keefe, a distinguished alumnus and legendary trial attorney. His fierce advocacy, unwavering integrity, and lifelong commitment to justice left an indelible mark on the legal profession and on all who had the privilege of knowing him. We honor his legacy and mourn his passing.

--Brian Gallini, Dean, Quinnipiac University School of Law

Brian Gallini - July 23, 2025 at 03:26 PM

JG

“ To the family of Hugh Keefe
Reading this obituary, though a little late to be able to pay my respects in person, deeply saddens me. I met Atty Keefe when I came to work in the real estate dept for the law firm in 1978 out of college for a year. In that year I learned so much about law, met many of his infamous colleges and developed tremendous respect and admiration for him. Coincidentally, I lived around the corner from the family of his late wife which created a special bond. I'm not sure if he would remember me but aside from the other members of the firm, he is one I will never forget! His smile, his good mornings and his kindness when asked to do some work for him on the Saturday mornings the staff had to alternate working, is always something I remember. Over the years, as I've been summoned for jury duty, even now as I resident in the Hartford area, when I mention I worked for the law firm, and in particularly Hugh Keefe, I am asked a few questions and out the door they send me! His reputation is everywhere. RIP Mr. Keefe and my deepest sympathy to all.
Joan Esposito Guerrera

Joan Esposito Guerrera - July 19, 2025 at 11:43 AM



“ A grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

July 18, 2025 at 10:58 AM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



July 18, 2025 at 10:51 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

July 18, 2025 at 10:51 AM



“ Tara
I am deeply sorry for your loss. May the beautiful memories you hold in your heart carry you through this difficult time. May Hugh rest in eternal peace.
In sympathy,
Janis

Janis Ardito - July 18, 2025 at 06:25 AM



“ John Anderson and Chrissy Peck purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



John Anderson and Chrissy Peck - July 17, 2025 at 03:37 PM



“ Anthony D. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

Anthony D. - July 17, 2025 at 09:48 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



July 17, 2025 at 09:39 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

July 17, 2025 at 09:39 AM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



July 16, 2025 at 08:15 PM



“ New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade - July 16, 2025 at 05:01 PM

NP

“ *New Haven St. Patrick’s Day Parade planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.*

New Haven St. Patrick’s Day Parade - July 16, 2025 at 05:01 PM

GE

“ *Twenty years ago, Hugh and I had neighboring lockers at Payne Whitney (Yale) gym. He successfully defended an area public official on criminal charges that made him and counsel very unpopular— typical of Hugh. He defended an unpopular police sgt in a shooting controversy (justified force it turned out). In short, he was the go-to trial atty for unpopular Greater New Haven cases. Yet, Hugh had time to share his humor with me twould never be a client.*

g fain esq - July 16, 2025 at 11:22 AM



“ *Forever Our Angel Bouquet was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.*



July 16, 2025 at 09:11 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.*

July 16, 2025 at 09:11 AM

SC

“ Sean, Holly, Maddie, & Evan Conley purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



Sean, Holly, Maddie, & Evan Conley - July 16, 2025 at 08:40 AM



“ God Bless Hugh Keefe. And his family. One of the truly fine men of New Haven's current and past. Personally, a Great man.

Joe Redente - July 15, 2025 at 08:36 PM



“ Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



July 15, 2025 at 06:31 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

July 15, 2025 at 06:31 PM

WA

“ Warm Regards, Your friends at ACT purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



Warm Regards, Your friends at ACT - July 15, 2025 at 03:50 PM

WA

“ Warm Regards, Your friends at ACT planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

Warm Regards, Your friends at ACT - July 15, 2025 at 03:50 PM

JS

“ My thoughts and prayers are with you all and for Hugh. He represented my husband when he was an up and coming young lawyer. He was kind and thoughtful young man.

Jean Schwartz - July 15, 2025 at 03:42 PM

GN

“ I AM SO SORRY TO LEARN OF THE PASSING OF ATTORNEY HUGE KEEFE. I WANT TO ENTEND MY SINCERE CONDOLENCES TO HIS WIFE, TARA, HIS THREE SONS, AND HIS ENTIRE FAMILY. I KNEW HUGH KEEFE FOR MANY YEARS WHEN I WORKED FOR THE WORKERS COMPENSATION COMMISSIONER, AND WHEN HE FIRST STARTED HIS CAREER AS AN ATTORNEY. HE SHARED MANY STORIES ONE OF WHICH WAS ABOUT THE FIRST CRIMINAL CASE HE WON THAT HIS MOTHER HAD ATTENDED. HE WAS TRUELY A GENIUS AT HIS CRAFT. HUGE KEEFE WAS A VERY WARM, AND KIND MAN WHO WILL BE TRUELY MISSED BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM. WITH DEEPEST SYMPATHY, GLORIA NICHOLS

GLORIA NICHOLS - July 15, 2025 at 03:37 PM

DS

Truly a Great Person Rest in Peace. We pray for you and your Family plus friends. Truly you will be missed.

David Siligato - July 18, 2025 at 06:46 AM



“ *Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.*



July 15, 2025 at 03:13 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

July 15, 2025 at 03:13 PM



“ *God Bless Hugh Keefe. And his family.*

Joe Redente - July 15, 2025 at 02:59 PM



“ *I knew Hugh for many years when I was a VP with Milford Bank. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family*

Eileen Cavanaugh - July 15, 2025 at 01:50 PM



“ *Family of John, Diane, Craig and Karen purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.*



Family of John, Diane, Craig and Karen - July 15, 2025 at 01:21 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.*



July 15, 2025 at 01:01 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.*

July 15, 2025 at 01:01 PM

IM

“ Ivy and Seth Keslow and Eli and Mason purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



Ivy and Seth Keslow and Eli and Mason - July 15, 2025 at 12:54 PM

IM

“ Ivy and Seth Keslow and Eli and Mason planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

Ivy and Seth Keslow and Eli and Mason - July 15, 2025 at 12:54 PM

HC

“ Hara, Terry and Miles Copen purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



Hara, Terry and Miles Copen - July 15, 2025 at 12:13 PM

HC

“ Hara, Terry and Miles Copen planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

Hara, Terry and Miles Copen - July 15, 2025 at 12:13 PM

DN

“ Debra and I send our condolences to Tara and the entire Keefe family. Hugh's contributions of time, treasure and talent to Quinnipiac University were significant in every way! As former Board members we shared much time together and I valued each and every opportunity to meet with Hugh. God Speed Hugh!

David Nelson - July 15, 2025 at 11:22 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



July 15, 2025 at 09:46 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

July 15, 2025 at 09:46 AM

DM

“ Dashayla M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

Dashayla M. - July 15, 2025 at 09:16 AM

BS

“ I'm so sorry for your loss! I met Mr. Keefe briefly in the mid '80's after my apartment had been broken into & robbed. He was representing my insurance company. When he realized that there was a problem with the forms from the insurance company, the arbitrator brought the matter to a close. When I went to pick up the settlement check from my attorney, Mr. Keefe was there. He told me that he had told the insurance company to pay my claim in full & they refused & he was sorry he couldn't make that happen. That has stayed with me my entire life; that someone from the opposing side of a matter would actually go to bat for me. He was a kind, generous man of whom the world will sorely miss!

*My Condolences,
Barbara (Langevin) Schieding*

Barbara Schieding - July 15, 2025 at 09:08 AM

JF

“ It was a privilege and honor to work with Hugh. He was " on call 247". Hugh was a strong leader, resilient and humble. Condolences to Hugh's family from Justin and Michele Frechette.

Justin Frechette - July 15, 2025 at 08:38 AM

JS

“ TO THE KEEFE FAMILY, VERY SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS. GOD BLESS HUGH KEEFE. RIP .

jd smith - July 15, 2025 at 08:13 AM

GR

“ *What an extraordinary gentleman. We are so indebted to Hugh for his unwavering friendship and loyalty, and we will miss his humor and wisdom always. Tara, he adored you so and had such love for you and his family. We are sad for all of you but know he is with our Lord and just waiting to see all of you again. Sending love, prayers and comfort to you all. John and Patty Rowland*

Governor John and Patty Rowland - July 14, 2025 at 08:59 PM

TN

“ *TOD,NANCY,TOD JR.AND KYLE NIXON purchased the Pink Potpourri Bouquet for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.*



TOD,NANCY,TOD JR.AND KYLE NIXON - July 14, 2025 at 07:49 PM

TN

“ *TOD,NANCY,TOD JR.AND KYLE NIXON planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.*

TOD,NANCY,TOD JR.AND KYLE NIXON - July 14, 2025 at 07:49 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.*



July 14, 2025 at 06:24 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



July 14, 2025 at 06:22 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

July 14, 2025 at 06:22 PM



“ Divine Light was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



July 14, 2025 at 06:06 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

July 14, 2025 at 06:06 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



July 14, 2025 at 02:56 PM



“ *My sincere condolences to Tara and all of Hugh's family.*

Beth Carpenter

Linda Gaskill - July 14, 2025 at 01:05 PM

MF

Tara and Family of Hugh Keefe

I am very sorry to learn that a giant in our profession has passed away. He will always be remembered for who and what he was: a lawyer who fought for the rights of the wronged; the downtrodden and the little guy. There will be no one else of his ilk to fill those shoes. We have lost a friend and the world has lost a great man, RIP Hugh Michael A. Fasano

Michael A. Fasano - July 14, 2025 at 02:55 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.*



July 14, 2025 at 12:58 PM

EJ

“ *Everyone at Jacobs & Jacobs purchased the Lavender Reflections Spray for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.*



Everyone at Jacobs & Jacobs - July 14, 2025 at 11:58 AM

EJ

“ Everyone at Jacobs & Jacobs planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.

Everyone at Jacobs & Jacobs - July 14, 2025 at 11:58 AM

DM

“ Don M. purchased the Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



Don M. - July 14, 2025 at 11:36 AM

RJ

“ Robyn Jenkins lit a candle in memory of Hugh Keefe



Robyn Jenkins - July 14, 2025 at 11:18 AM

TF

“ The Galante Family purchased the Lily and Rose Tribute Spray for the family of Hugh F. Keefe.



The Galante Family - July 14, 2025 at 11:09 AM

TF

“ *The Galante Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Hugh F. Keefe.*

The Galante Family - July 14, 2025 at 11:09 AM

 Leslie Webb

“ *Our condolences to his Wife Tara and his boys Patrick, Brendan, Billy. He was a wonderful person and friend. Our Sympathy, Gladys, Henry and Leslie Webb*

Leslie Webb - July 14, 2025 at 10:47 AM

GD

My condolences to the entire Keefe family from an old friend from Quinnipiac college in the 1960's. We were both in Paul Falsey's Law class. Hugh was a great guy. May he rest in peace. Guy DeMelis RI

Guy DeMelis - July 15, 2025 at 09:18 AM

MI

I remember when he was called Franny Keefe from Allingtown. May he rest in peace.

Mike - July 16, 2025 at 11:05 AM

LB

Whenever I saw him I always called him Franny

Lou Bernacchia - July 26, 2025 at 10:10 AM