



# David Spahr III

SEP 28, 1937 - DEC 1, 2019



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# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
<b>Tribute Wall</b> .....	Page 5



## David Spahr III

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**S** pahr  
David R.

Retired Baldwin-Whitehall teacher, David R Spahr, III, died after a brief illness on December 1, 2019.

Born in National Heights, PA. He graduated from Tarentum Heights School and earned a B.S. in chemical engineering from Penn State. Later he completed course work at Renesselaer Polytechnic Institute for a Master degree in Science.

After graduating from Penn State he was station in DC, as a Naval officer.

He returned to Pittsburgh after the Navy and worked for Gulf Research as a chemical engineer. But he quickly found teaching was his calling.

He took a job as a science teacher at Tarentum High School few years, and later joined Baldwin-Whitehall. For 55 years he taught physics, mathematics and even chemistry for a time at the Senior High. He loved every minute. Additionally, he taught Summer classes at Bethel Park and Community College in Pittsburgh. He occasionally tutored students over the years, as well.

He was also a life long learner, attending retreats and workshops. While receiving awards over the years and workshop certificates, he was able to help one student reach national recognition. In 1992, he was honored for his encouragement, support and vision of excellence to a high school senior, who was awarded the Presidential Scholar. That high school senior, Dr. Shawn Kelly, is now a professor in Biomedical Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University.

While the work and education might have been more cerebral, the relationship with his students was not always serious. Over the years they made lighthearted recognition of his work and gags. In 2012, his 8th Period AP Physics class had a star named after him, in the Constellation Ursa Major. He retired in 2017.



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Survivors include his wife, Dolores; son, David R. Spahr IV of Mill Valley, CA; brother, Jim (Jackie) Spahr of Lakeport, CA; sister, Margaret Melinda (Denny) Scheid of Fort Myers, FL; sister-in-laws, Dr. Jane Adams Spahr of San Francisco and Janet Spahr, Mt. Vernon, OH; brother and sister-in-law, Manuel and Carole Gonzalez of Pittsburgh, PA; Zachary Scheid, Jim (Ronda) Spahr II, Chesterfield (Teresa) Spahr, John (Kelly) Spahr Jr., Mathew Spahr, Margaret Jean (Michael Kilhoffer), Robert (Jessica) Gonzalez, Joseph (Lissa) Gonzalez.

He was predeceased by his parents, Dr. David R Spahr, Jr, Margaret Elizabeth Spahr and brother Reverend John Spahr Sr.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made through a donation to the Spahr Memorial Fund at Baldwin-Whitehall High School; 4653 Clairton Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15236. Donations go to an outstanding physics student at the high school.

There will be no visitation. A memorial will be held on Saturday January 25, 2020 at 10 AM Southminster Presbyterian Church; 799 Washington Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15228.



## Tribute Wall

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WD

**William Durkin** posted:

I'm from Baldwin Class of 1968 and I was in the first Physics class that Mr. Spahr taught at Baldwin High. I was impressed by his passion for teaching and his ability to clearly explain the underlying principles of physics. His class was about logical reasoning and understanding the nature of the universe rather than about learning \"the facts\" of physics. I had already decided that I wanted to get into a science or engineering career, but the way he approached science made me lean in that direction rather than engineering. While attending Carnegie Mellon University as a physics major and wanting to find a place in physics research I decided that there were too many fellow students who were more capable than I was and decided that maybe teaching physics would be a good alternative. So I got into the small group of students who were pursuing teacher education at CMU. I lobbied for doing my student teaching under Mr. Spahr, and enjoyed learning from him. Though I taught high school physics for only a few years before deciding to find a position in research and development, the success I had as a teacher I credit to him. And I used the teaching skills that he helped develop in me for 30 years at Eastman Kodak to teach many engineers and production workers the physics of electrostatics in photographic film manufacturing so that they were better able to understand how to keep product from being damaged. Mr. Spahr was the standard I used as my goal in my teaching. He was one of the best teachers I ever had. William Durkin

July 10 at 3:55 PM

CC

**Cldsmith@Msn.Com** posted:

I am sorry to be so late in sharing this memory, but I just learned of David's passing today. I took physics from \"Mr. Spahr\" as I will always refer to him in 1968. I moved to Alaska as soon as I graduated from Baldwin H.S., so lost touch with most folks in Pittsburgh, but the lessons I learned in that physics class have stuck with me through the intervening half century. Importantly, those lessons were not just about science, they were also about what it means to be an honorable person. Mr. Spahr was a true life mentor to me and - I'm sure - many generations of students. What an amazing life and contribution to our world. Thanks you for sharing him with all of us. Chris Smith Baldwin High grad '69

April 20 at 3:23 PM

CW

**Christine Walter** posted:

I am sorry to hear about your husband, David. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Christine

January 25 at 10:09 AM



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**Mary M Haus M.D.** posted:

I was so very sorry to hear of Mr Spahr passing. He was a gifted teacher of physics , making the complex clearly understandable. His love of basic science was infectious. I was very lucky to have the opportunity to study with him.

December 6 at 2:08 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring David by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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