

Harris Sperling



Captain Harris Sperling USN (Ret.) died peacefully in his home on September 26, 2026. He was 88 years old. Born in Newport, R.I. on August 25, 1938, he attended Rogers High School, where he was elected class president and co-captain of the football team. He attended the Naval Academy, also played football, and graduated with the class of 1960. During his naval career, Harris served in the Maritime Administration, the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), commanded four combatant ships – a guided missile destroyer, a frigate, and two destroyers; and was Director of the Surface Warfare Prospective Commanding/Executive Officer School, where all

officers going to sea as Executive or Commanding Officers, attended. He was selected to be a member of the CNO's Mod Squad, a group of destroyers commanded by officers, one rank below the norm. He excelled as a Commanding Officer and his last ship won top ship out of five, two years in a row. He attended the College of Naval Warfare, Naval War College, Newport, R.I. and graduated with the highest distinction, winning the Stephen B. Luce Award for top academic performance and community service. While on active duty, he also received a master's degree in international affairs from George Washington University.

After leaving the Navy, Harris Joined the Northrop Grumman Corporation and for over 20 years worked directly as Executive Assistant to four CEOs. He managed over \$40 million in budgets, directed a \$750,000 food service operation, chaired company programs and provided executive support. He developed strategic agendas for operational growth, handled newly acquired acquisitions and managed multifaceted organizational issues. During his employment, the company grew from \$5 billion in sales to over \$30 billion when he retired in 2010.

Harris Served as Chairman of the Board for the Century City Chamber of Commerce and was a director on the Century City Arts and Culture Foundation. He was President of the USA Dance Los Angeles County Chapter and competed as a dancer in gold level competitions. He served for many years as President of the Bel Air Crest Canyon Homeowners Association, a membership of 135 homes.

Once retired, Harris joined the Executive Service Corps of Southern California as a pro bono consultant and assisted many nonprofit organizations in their growth, management, and leadership. He especially enjoyed coaching Executive Directors and was thanked for bringing "immense service to nonprofit leaders." In 2016, Harris won ESC's Jack Horton Award for outstanding service.

Harris had many passions including cooking and baking and had opportunity to attend several "Boot Camp" classes at the Culinary Institute of America. He greatly enjoyed painting in watercolor and his works were selected in juried shows. He was a member of the Delaware Watercolor Society and the Rehoboth Art League. He loved ballroom dancing and worked hard

to make his dancing look effortless. He enjoyed hiking and was proud of his summiting Mt. Whitney, California's highest peak. Attending opera and classical music performances were a favorite pastime, and he loved walking his beloved dog, Birdie, around the neighborhood. Harris loved his life and grasped every moment with vigor. He is survived by his much beloved wife, Linda; his daughter, Annie Sperling; his son, Jonathan Sperling; and his grandson, Nicholas Sperling.

Watson Funeral Home