

The North Shore Over 71 Years! Leader

The Leading News Source for Long Island's Gold Coast Communities.

Vol. 70 No. 33 April 4, 2018

Locust Valley, New York 11560

www.theleaderonline.com

\$1.00



Photo: Loriani Cody

The longest serving mayor in state history, Clarence Michalis, the former Mayor of Lattingtown, passed away on Friday, March 30th. See page 3 for more.



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Clarence Michalis Passes Away



Photo: Loriann Cody

Clarence Michalis in June of 2017. (l-r) Tom Zoller-Mayor of Cove Neck, Peter Quick-Mayor of Mill Neck, Bob Fagiola-Mayor of Lattingtown, Carl Marcellino-NYS Senator, the Honorable Clarence Michalis, Larry Schmidlapp-Mayor of Centre Island, Elliot Conway-Mayor of Upper Brookville.

• **LORIANN CODY**

Clarence F. Michalis, the former Mayor of Lattingtown, died on March 30th. Clarence Michalis was 96 years-old. He was the longest-serving mayor in New York State history and emerged victorious in the last Village election in June 2013. At that time Clarence was 91, and had held the office for 44 years. He defeated Nicholas DellaFera, the 23-year-old challenger on June 18th, 2013, winning handily (376-87), and inspiring the largest voter turnout in 4 decades. Of the election Michalis noted, "It was a simple case of age and experience trumping youthful zeal."

He graduated from Harvard and entered the U.S. Navy where he spent the next three years as a lieutenant and navigator on the U.S.S. Hall. As a dedicated civic leader, he served 48 years as mayor of the Village of Lattingtown. He was a former commissioner of the Locust Valley Fire District, President and Trustee of the Nassau County Museum of Art, and Trustee of the North Shore Land Alliance.

In his last years as Mayor, when most 90+ would be slowing down, Clarence still had his fingers on the pulse of the area. It was Clarence who first cautioned me about the possible closing of Rottkamp Farm in Glen Head (the problem has fortunately been resolved and Rottkamp remains open.)

When his failing health forced him to step down as Mayor in early 2017, he maintained his sense of humor saying, "I used to see many politicians, now I see many doctors."

Michalis was much loved and admired. At the time of the election, Diane Fagiola, wife of current Lattingtown Mayor Robert Fagiola, said of him, "Clarence knows how things work - how roads are built and how to fix them, about storms and the damage they cause. He knows about wetlands, mosquitos trees and wildlife. He can fix a diesel engine - still. He knows how to cut costs but not quality, and he's balanced thousands of budgets. He also knows a lot about people—what bothers us, what moves us, what motivates.

"He's a brilliant leader. If I were caught in a storm at sea, I'd like to be in Clarence's boat." Mayor Peter Quick of the Village of Mill Neck said, "I have never met a man more dedicated to his community than Clarence. He is a sage in terms of advice and the ultimate gentleman of Lattingtown. His experience is unparalleled. If he were running against me, I would vote for him"

I last saw Clarence on Sunday evening, June 25th, 2017, when he was honored for his 48 years of mayoral service at the Lattingtown home of Diane and Robert Fagiola. One US Congressman, one State Senator, one Assemblyperson, one Nobel laureate, six mayors, local village trustees, family members and friends were among the more than 80 who toasted Michalis.

Clarence is survived by his wife of 64 years, Cora Bush and his children Cynthia B Michalis, Mary C Michalis, Cora M Thomas, Helen M Bonebrake (Michael). His grandchildren are Jennifer B Harris (Tyler), Mia C Harlock (Robert Schultzberg), Cora C Thomas (Henry Guest), Henry M Thomas, Tristan M Hanraets and Clarence F Bonebrake. His great-grandchildren are Carter Harris and Peyton Harris.

Clarence was an active member and former President of the Piping Rock Club, former Commodore of the Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club, and a member of the Union Club, New York Yacht Club and Holland Lodge.

A memorial service will be held on Friday, April 13th at 1:00 PM at St. John's Church in Lattingtown.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Merchant's House Museum and the North Shore Land Alliance.