

Christopher Seán Day

June 5, 1949 - July 27, 2023



Christopher Seán Day, beloved father, husband, friend, and adventurer, died peacefully at home with his family in Greenwich, CT, on July 27, 2023. He was 74.

Seán, as he was known to all, was born on June 5, 1949, in Cape Town, South Africa to Joan and Eric Day. From his parents, he inherited his moral compass, stoicism, and independent spirit. Seán grew up first in Cape Town and later in Knysna, South Africa, during the apartheid regime. His family strongly opposed the movement, and his parents had relocated to South Africa from Ireland in 1948 as part of General Jan Smuts' efforts to defeat the Nationalist Party.

At just six years old, Seán began attending boarding school at the South African College School in Cape Town, from which he graduated. Seán loved ships and the sea from his earliest memories, and at 17, he followed this passion and enrolled in the South Africa Merchant Marine Academy. He then spent several years at sea as a cadet in the merchant marine. In 1968, he resumed his studies at the University of Cape Town, earning a degree in business. While a student at UCT, he competed in the first Cape to Rio Yacht Race—the longest continent-to-continent sailing yacht race in the southern hemisphere—as a crew member aboard the Merchant Marine Academy boat. Seán was awarded a Rhodes scholarship, and after completing his national military service as a navigating officer on a destroyer in the South African Navy, he studied law at Oxford University in England beginning in 1972.

After graduating from Oxford, Seán joined the Scottish trading house Jardine Matheson in Hong Kong, where he served as commercial manager of their ship-owning group, the Indo-China Steam Navigation Company. Following two years in Hong Kong and one year in Taipei with Jardines, he joined the Canadian ship-owning group Fed Nav as an operations manager based in Montreal, Canada. During this time, Seán met his future wife, Virginia (Ginny) Farrell, then a student at Harvard Business School. They were introduced by their close friends, Dick and Lisa Cashin.

Seán and Ginny married in 1981 and settled in New York. In 1982 he joined Navios Corporation. After restructuring and restoring Navios, Seán briefly left the shipping industry to work at Citicorp Venture Capital for several years.

In 1989, Seán rejoined Navios and eventually became CEO. In 1999, he joined the Teekay Corporation as its chairman until 2017. At the time of his death, he was Chairman Emeritus of Teekay Corporation and Compass Diversified. During his life, he served on many boards, including Navios Corporation, Teekay Tankers, Teekay Offshore Partners, Teekay LNG Partners, Compass Diversified Holdings, Teekay Corporation and Kirby Corporation.

Throughout his life, Seán worked to create better educational opportunities in South Africa. In 1997, alongside his former teacher and mentor, John Ince, Seán started the Friends of South African Schools (FOSAS) to ensure equitable education post-apartheid. He was also a strong supporter of the Lawhill Maritime Centre in Simonstown, led by his lifelong friend, Brian Ingpen. Lawhill focuses on job creation in South Africa through maritime education at the high school level.

A lifelong explorer, Seán completed several long yacht races and passages around the world, from Hong Kong and Manila to Bermuda and Rio. He traveled to at least 123 countries over the course of his life, including an expedition to the North Pole for his 60th birthday. His instinct was always to get to the top of the mountain or the edge of the cliff.

Seán was a proud member of YPO in the Fairchester and the Intercontinental Chapters, and those friendships enriched his life with wisdom and adventures in the far reaches of the world. Closer to home, his Friday night tennis games were legendary for their competitiveness and laughter.

Above all, Seán was a family man. He was a devoted husband for nearly 43 years, a loving father to four daughters and three sons-in-law, and a treasured grandfather to nine grandchildren. Of his many accomplishments, they are his most meaningful.

In the words of Seán's close friend, Joe Massoud, "he was the true definition of a 'gentleman.' He embodied everything I always understood to be the definition of a great man – he was family focused, humble, kind, philanthropic, intelligent, authentic and generous with his talents and relationships."

Seán made his way in the world, but never moved on from those he valued. Throughout his life, despite living far away, he stayed close to his childhood friends and the band of brothers with whom he shared Oxford. From every facet of his life, he maintained an enormous circle of international friends with whom he was in frequent contact. He is famous among his friends and loved ones for never forgetting a birthday.

Seán is survived by his wife, Virginia (Ginny) Farrell Day; his four daughters, Anne (Annie) Day Thorp and Ryan Thorp, Alexandra (Alex) Day Golden and Jonathan Golden, Whitney Day Steele and Mac Steele, and Robyn Day; his nine grandchildren Eliza, Georgie and Teddy Thorp, George, Madeleine and Maxwell Golden, and Jay, Ginny and Henry Steele; his sister Jill Day Doorman; his mother- and father-in-law, Anne and Robert (Bob) Farrell; and his nephew and niece Eric and Lillian Day. He is also survived by 15 godchildren, whom he cherished.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Joan Stephenson Day and Eric Rouviere Day, and his brothers, Patrick (Toby) Day and Richard (Ric) Day.

In loving memory of Seán, and lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Seán Day Fund at the Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF). Your contributions will help continue his legacy at Lawhill Maritime Centre, and support the dreams of young students in South Africa pursuing careers in the maritime industry.

Please make checks payable to OCCF and write "Seán Day Fund" in the memo line. Checks can be mailed to Orange County Community Foundation, 19200 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 700, Irvine, CA 92612. Donations may also be made online by credit card. Visit www.oc-cf.org and click on the "Donate" button then select "Seán Day Fund" on the drop down menu found on the secure donations page.

A Celebration of Life will be held on September 20th, 1:30pm, at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Greenwich.

For further information or to share condolences, please contact seandayfamily@gmail.com.