



Joseph Thomas Nolan

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Joseph T. Nolan died peacefully on Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2011 at the age of 91. He had made his home in St. Augustine, Fla., since 1985. He was born in Waterbury, Conn., "The Brass Capital," on April 11, 1920, the eldest child of Thomas F. and Mary Gaffney Nolan. His father was assistant superintendent of schools and his grandfather one of the early builders of the city. One summer during college years, he contracted polio, spent time in an iron lung, and had to relearn the ability to speak. In later years, people would sometimes ask how they could get his distinctive newscaster-type voice and he would say "I don't recommend it." He recovered and graduated from Holy Cross College in 1942. The next year he married his high school sweetheart, artist Virginia Tappin, after her graduation from Mary Washington College. They were together for more than half a century before her death in 1996. Launching a career in journalism, he worked for the United Press in Boston during World War II, then moved to Washington as a night editor for U.P. during the Truman administration. This was followed by six years at the New York Times, where he worked on the "News of the Week in Review" section when it won a 1953 Pulitzer Prize. In the early years of television, he wrote for programs hosted by John Daly and Walter Cronkite. In 1956 he switched from journalism to public relations, spending the next six years working for RCA and its memorable chairman, television pioneer David Sarnoff. In 1962 he took a job with the

Chase Manhattan Bank where he became senior vice president in charge of public relations and advertising. The bank's president (and later chairman), David Rockefeller, was a prominent voice for corporate social responsibility. Nolan contributed his talents to those efforts. He later wrote "In 1962, Chase like most other banks and industrial corporations had an all-male, all-white board of directors. I began building a dossier of potential candidates. When the time seemed right, I produced the dossier and before long we had a black businessman and a woman lawyer on our board. Today this is a sine qua non among Fortune 500 companies." He declined an appointment as assistant secretary of state in the Nixon Administration (and later voted for George McGovern for president). A great believer in education, he earned a master's degree in English from Boston University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics from New York University. He often said that if he had been born rich, he would have taught all his life. James Hilton's 1935 novel *Good Bye Mr. Chips*, about a beloved teacher, was always on his bookshelves. When he received his doctorate in 1973, he decided to give it a try, becoming a professor at the University of South Carolina. He was a dynamic lecturer who took his students on distant tours, meeting with people like Luigi Barzini in Italy, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber in France and Walter Cronkite in New York. (The university's Public Relations Student Society was named "The Joseph T. Nolan Chapter" in his honor.) Much as he enjoyed the academic life, he was lured back into business, serving nearly a decade as vice president for national affairs at Monsanto in St. Louis. *Business Week* magazine cited him in 1979 as one of the ten top figures in corporate public relations. When he retired from the business world in 1985, he resumed teaching, serving as Gannett Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Florida. He spent the next decade teaching, often simultaneously, at Flagler College, Webster University, and the University of North Florida. In the summers he would teach abroad, in London, Geneva, Vienna or Leiden. After giving up full-time teaching, he continued with the lighter schedule of Elderhostel courses until he was 80. In 2001 he was honored as a "Living Legend" by the Public

Relations Society of America. He contributed to the textbook On Moral Business and was quoted in other textbooks in the field. His writing appeared over the years in the New York Times Magazine, Catholic Digest, Harvard Business Review, and Vital Speeches of the Day. He is survived by his daughter, Dr. Carol Rigolot, executive director of the Humanities Council at Princeton University, and his son, David Nolan, St. Augustine author and historian. He had four grandchildren, Dr. Sophie Adamson of Greensboro, N.C., Stephanie Rigolot Severson of Los Angeles, Sudie Nolan-Cassimatis of Atlanta, and Hamilton Nolan of New York. There are five great-grandchildren. Also surviving are his brother, John Nolan, sisters, Ann O'Neill and Mary Bailey, and sister-in-law, Janice Whittemore, along with many nieces and nephews. A memorial service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, friends may make contributions to ACCORD, P.O. Box 697, St. Augustine, FL 32085 or to a favorite charity. The family is grateful to the kind staff at Emeritus, Flagler Hospital, and the Bailey Family Center for Caring, who eased his final days.

Tribute Wall

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“ *My deepest sympathies over the loss of Mr. Nolan. While a few words offer peace during a difficult time, perhaps the words expressed at Revelation 21:3,4 provide you with both comfort and hope along with the realization that soon tragedies such as this will one day be a thing of the past.*

A. Jackson - October 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM