

Andre B. Soucy, PGC

June 19, 1926 - May 28, 2014

Andy Soucy was born in Lowell on June 19, 1926, he was a son of the late Joseph F. and Eva (Beausoleil) Soucy.

He shared 58 wonderful years of marriage with the late Rita M. (Furtado) Soucy who passed away in 2005.

Andy was the proud father of seven wonderful children and is survived by his children, Joan and Michael Armstrong of Lowell; Patricia and Thomas Hebert of Lowell; Judith Hartman of Westerville, OH; Brian and Carol Soucy of Pelham, NH; Cheryl and Leo Sheridan of Lowell; Joseph and Maureen Soucy of Lowell. He was predeceased by his daughter and son in law, Carol A. and Robert P. Nangle, his grandson, Brian E. Soucy, Jr. and his brothers, Rene H. Gerald A., Maurice L., and Donald P. Soucy. He was the grandfather of 15 and the great grandfather of 12.

Please allow me to tell you how I remember my friend Andy.

On a cold and stormy winter morning in December of 1945, I reported to the Naval Station in the Fargo building in Boston, MA. Upon arrival I reported to the personnel office and presented my records to a young Yeoman named Soucy. He told me to take a seat while he looked over my records. He commented that he came from Lowell and asked where I lived in Lowell and how I had gotten down to Boston. I told him that I had taken a train and a cab.

He read my records and went to show them to the Commander (Personnel Officer). A few minutes later he came out and told me that the CO wanted to speak to me. When I went in and saluted, he told me to take a seat and proceeded to congratulate me and tell me that my base assignment for the remainder of my tour was to be the NCO in charge of Small Stores. The present NCO was due for discharge and this would give us a chance to become acquainted and to perform a joint inventory.

He rang Yeoman Soucy and instructed him to escort me to my base quarters and take me to meet the NCO presently in charge in the Small Stores. This was my introduction to a young man who was to become one of my best friends and companions for the next 70 or so years!

Later in the day, Andy came into Small Stores with two other sailors and introduced me to Bob Montgomery and Leo Mercier both of whom also lived in Lowell. Leo owned a pre-war car that was in good condition and the three of them were presently traveling back and forth to Lowell. Unless you had a night watch (once every two weeks) you were allowed to go off base every

night and all weekend. Andy asked if I was planning on going back to Lowell and when I said “yes”, he asked if I would like to travel with them at a small cost of \$1.50 per week. I agreed and that was the start of a long and pleasant friendship.

We dropped Andy off at a house on Grace Street where his girlfriend, Rita Fortado, lived and proceeded to Bob’s and my house (both in the same area of Lowell). Later on, when I was telling my girlfriend Kay about my day, she commented that Andy sounded like a real nice fellow and I was lucky to have made a friend that quick. The following day, Andy remarked that his girlfriend was interested in meeting us. That weekend we made arrangements to meet and the girls hit it off real fine.

After discharge, (we were both discharged within a few days of each other) Andy went to work for D.L. Page, a local restaurant on a work trainee program to learn the restaurant business. I was lucky to go to work shortly thereafter for Armour and Company at the local branch in the finance office. The four of us still saw each other at least a couple of times a week and Andy mentioned that he wasn’t too keen on what he was doing for work. A few days later, the plant manager at Armour happened to mention that he had an opening for a truck driver. I called Andy that evening and both he and Rita were pleased about the job prospect so the next morning I told the manager that I knew a young fellow who was looking for a job and after a short interview, Andy was hired.

In March of 1948, I was signed into Lowell Council 365 by future brother-in-law, PC Allen McQuarrie. In November of the same year, I sponsored Andy and he became a member as well. Andy was immediately elected Sentinel of Lowell Council. The following year I followed him in line. Andy became a Past Counselor in 1957 and I received my honors in 1958. We were doing a lot of things together as good friends often do.

We both became interested in going to meetings and other functions in other councils in New England. We both served as a part of the Installing Team at the installation of Tri-City Council 823. It was during this time that Andy became very interested in the Grand Council of New England and served several Grand Counselors as a committeeman.

The Merrimack Valley Past Counselor’s Association, along with Lowell Council 365, sponsored Andy to run for the Grand Line and Andy was elected as Grand Sentinel in 1976, continued through the line and received his honors in April 1983. I was privileged to fill in as Andy’s chaplain when his appointed chaplain took sick and had to resign after only a few months. We traveled throughout the United States and Canada during his year as Grand Counselor.

A short while after starting to work for Armour, an opening as a route salesman opened up and Andy was promoted to the position of Route Salesman for the greater Lawrence and Haverhill area. He soon increased the presence of Armour in this area bringing in new customers and

increasing sales volume. Andy's efforts were recognized by the Regional Office and he received several merit raises.

When Armour decided to close its branch offices, Andy was moved to the Regional Office in Boston and given a large territory as a specialty food salesman. The job was a well paying job but included long days of traveling and being away from home.

Andy tired of the travel and opted to go to work for one of the premier food stores in Lowell as the head of the meat department. The market was known for its quality and service. Shortly after beginning work there Andy was promoted to assistant manager. When Mr. Conant, the owner, was forced to retire due to illness, he offered to sell the store to Andy.

Andy purchased the store and soon changed the product line to include fresh fish. He also renamed the store to Belvidere Meat and Fish Inc. It remained as a highly regarded place to get great meat and friendly service. Two of his daughters worked for him in the store.

Unfortunately for Andy, the years of working in and out of cold freezers had an adverse effect on his wrists and hands. He found it harder to rotate his wrists or to open and close his fists and this necessitated his hiring additional help to cut and prepare the meat and fish.

He was eventually forced into semi-retirement when the arthritis spread to his legs and back. He was able to remain at home for some time as his wife Rita was there to assist him. When Rita passed away in the spring of 2005, his daughter Joan and her family moved in with Andy to help him.

Unfortunately, all of them had day jobs but were able to get Andy up in the morning and fed but he was on his own until they came home in the evening. Having many friends, Andy usually had people in and out most of the day checking on him. His special friend was Brother Morris, who was a relative and came in a couple of times a week to bring him the Sacraments.

He remained active in both the local and Grand Council in spite of his disability. He was able to get to out of town functions using a walker and being driven by other members. Also, his house was the meeting place for Lowell Council until Lowell Council 365 surrendered its charter and the members joined Tri-City Council 823.

After falling several times while he was alone, thankfully he had a home alarm system, it was decided that he was no longer capable of being alone. He was enrolled in the D'Youville Senior Citizen Service Care as a permanent resident.

Shortly after he arrived, the family got him a motorized wheel chair and in a short time he was actively involved in the activities at the center. He was a founding member of the Men's Club which meets almost daily in the function room to discuss world affairs and especially sports.

I tried to get there every Saturday for our weekly discussion of things, especially the wonderful years we had together as members of the world's finest organization, United Commercial Travelers of America!

Little things that happened over the years brought us laughs. One in particular happened when I was serving as Andy's Grand Chaplain and we went to a Visitation to council in southern Connecticut. It was during the playoffs between the New York Knicks and the Boston Celtics. We had discussed it on the way and I mentioned that as a part of my opening prayers as chaplain I might ask to the Lord to favor the Celtics. He told me that I wouldn't dare and when I did, he stood up and "seconded the motion"! We almost got lynched as this was Knicks' territory!

Andy loved UCT whole heartedly and his biggest disappointment was that because of the change in population and the lack of interest by the younger generation, Lowell Council 365 was forced to surrender its charter.

God Bless you Andy and be sure to say hello to all of our members in the Eternal City Council!

I have been laying in bed reliving the years that we spent together and the things that happened that are not in the Eulogy. I feel that I could write a book about all of them. Like that afternoon at a Lowell Council outing when I accidently knocked Andy out when I opened a keg of beer and the stopper hit him between the eyes. He went down and out and had a lump on his fore head as big as a golf ball.

Or the Armour Christmas party when we went to a place that had no liquor license and we all brought our own. The place would sell the ginger ale etc but we had to drink out in the parking lot. Both of us got smashed and the wives had to drive us home and put us to bed. We both dragged ourselves into to work the next morning but were put on 'light duty'.

Another thing was at a Supreme Convention in San Diego when Andy and Chris Antonelli went head to head because Chris was giving some of our liquor to the California rumpus room.

Andy loved to 'politic' as you know at the Visitations but when the band started to play "One More Time". he had to find Rita to dance. It took a long time to convince him that it was not a happy love song but one where the marriage was headed for the divorce court.

Or the time, five of us [Betty MacKenzie was along] drove to Atlanta in my son in law's station wagon and in Georgia, the brace holding the tail pipe broke and we had to tie it up until we could find a place open-it was the 3rd of July and all of the stations were closed. We found a place where the fellow sold used parts and he was nice enough to sell us two new braces [and install them]. He was all dressed in a white suit [he was the Grand Marshall for the town parade] but he put on a set of coveralls. he burned his hand on the hot pipe but in the end told us that he was being nice to his Yankee Cousins on the Holiday.

So many other things, getting lost on the way to Chicago Supreme when we left the highway to eat and took a wrong turn which took us miles out of our way. But we made it.

Or the night we got a call from the Kentucky State police to come bail out Gus Watson, Morrie Pearl, and a PGC from Connecticut who had all been mugged in some joint when we were in Cincinnati for a Supreme Convention. The Host Council had warned us not to cross the River but the three jerks didn't listen. It was fortunate that we were able to get into their rooms to bring some clothes as in addition to being all mugged they were also stripped of their pants. Fortunately, they didn't have all of their money, having left some in the safes in their rooms.

One last thing was that two nights before the Lowell Council Visitation [I was Senior Counselor and Andy was Past Senior], the Grand Executive Committee 'fired' the Grand Counselor [secret meeting, no records kept so we never got a straight answer as to why]. I received a registered letter at my home the Thursday before the visitation telling me of the action and that Gus Watson was appointed the Acting Grand Counselor and as such would represent the Grand at the Visitation. We had an emergency meeting of our own and decided that we would honor BOTH Harold Arthur and Gus Watson. We set them both at the Head table [had to convince both of them to sit that or out in the hall with the rest of the members]. We introduced them both as Grand Counselor and Acting Grand Counselor and allowed both to give a speech, cutting them both off when they got 'out of order'. A fine night was had by all.

The following Wednesday, I received a second Registered Letter telling me that the Grand Executive Committee had reversed their action.

A lot of memories of the two of us to look back on. Remembering playing cribbage with Andy and him having trouble holding his cards and cursing up a blue streak until Rita and Kay would come out and break up the game.

Loved that Man Hank