



James Constantine Kontes
CU Member
and
A Member of
The Greatest Generation



Dear Friend,

I read with great surprise and sadness of the passing of James Kontes in the newspaper this morning. Jim was an amazing fellow. He and his brother Nontas were the dynamic duo. Both cared deeply about the health of our Delaware Bay. They were close pals and called me with concerns about jeopardized fish stocks and possible solutions. Jim was a man of few words; he measured what he said and made every word count. He was a grand supporter of his community as well as a steadfast advocate for CU Maurice River. I remember that I got a call from him one day saying that he and his brother needed to see me, and I thought possibly they had an important concern to share. In fact they bestowed upon me a wonderful strawberry, a team-made glass paperweight. Today I will gaze upon it and remember the great men who made it, as a thank you for the river work we do. It has always been a treasured item in our home, and now the meaning of this kindness gives me pause to think about Jim Kontes and you, the members, who carry out the work of caring for our natural and cultural resources.

Jim, you are fondly remembered. Members, if you did not know Jim or even if you did I hope you will take time to read about his extraordinary life. Our condolences to his family

and friends, many of whom, like you, are members and care greatly about our rivers.

Sincerely,

Jane Morton Galetto
Board President

James (Jim) Constantine Kontes, WWII decorated combat veteran, master glassblower and nationally known paperweight artist, passed away at age 95 on September 4, 2014 with family by his bedside at Inspira Healthcare.

Mr. Kontes was born in 1919, the son of the late Constantine (Gus) William Kontes and Hariklia (Koula) Olympiou who immigrated to America from the Island of Crete and Athens, Greece.

He graduated from Vineland High School in 1939 and began a career as a glassblower at Bell Glass (Belco Glass). In 1942, he and his brothers, William and Nontas, founded Kontes Glass Company, manufacturers of scientific and laboratory glass.

During WWII from 1942 to 1945, he proudly served his country as a U.S. Marine in the Regimental Weapons Co., 25th Marines, 4th Marine Division. He saw action in the Asiatic-Pacific theater areas of the Marshall Islands, Saipan, Kwajalein, Tinian and Iwo Jima. Among the medals he received were the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. He was recommended for the Navy Cross Medal for "his brave and courageous conduct under heavy artillery fire during the Battle of Saipan" in 1944. Returning to civilian life in 1945, he resumed his partnership at Kontes Glass. The company grew to employ over 300 people. In 1982, it was sold to Owens Illinois. H.S. Martin Inc., a laboratory glass division of Kontes, was retained by Jim and Nontas. It continues today as a family business.

In 1978, Jim and Nontas began to pursue an interest in making glass paperweights. He is known for his weights containing strawberry motifs, crimp roses and whimsical interpretations of komodo dragon lizards. His personal style shows expert use of torsades, piedouches and baskets. In 2014, he received the Millville Rose Society Award "given to individuals who have made significant contributions in support of the mission of Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center."

Mr. Kontes was loyal to his Greek heritage, a philanthropic contributor and

credit to his community, respected by his employees, peers and friends who knew his word was his bond. He will be forever missed by his loving family.

He is survived by his wife and high school sweetheart, Valerie Lois Stevens; children, Valerie Kontes Baron (Robert), and James Ellsworth Kontes (Vivian), both of Port Elizabeth; grandchildren, John Christopher Kontes of Phila., PA, Christa Lynn Ritzler (Michael); great-grandson, Victor Kontes (CMCH, NJ); brother, Nontas C. Kontes (Vineland, NJ). He was predeceased by his brother, William C. Kontes (Jupiter, Fla.); sister, Helen Irene Treires (Vineland, NJ).

Visitation (4:30pm) and Memorial Service (5:30pm) will be Wednesday, September 10, 2014. Funeral arrangements will be held at Rone Funeral Service, 1110 East Chestnut Ave., Vineland, NJ (856) 691-4222.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Inspira Healthcare Network Foundation, Cumberland (856) 641-8290; Saint Anthony's Greek Orthodox Church, 430 W. Wheat Rd., Vineland, NJ (856) 696-0917; The Vineland YMCA, 1159 E. Landis Ave., Vineland, NJ 08380 (856) 691-0030.

CU on the River!

<http://www.cumauriceriver.org>

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