



Owen Dawes Nee, Jr. November 22, 1943 - May 7, 2021

Owen Dawes Nee, Jr., Bronze Star recipient, distinguished attorney, law professor, loving husband, father, and grandfather passed away in Concord, MA on Friday, May 7 after a short battle with pulmonary fibrosis.

Born on November 22, 1943 in Bronxville, NY to Owen Dawes Nee and Elizabeth Osborne Nee, Owen attended The Loomis School in Windsor, CT and then Princeton University, from which he graduated with his B.A. as a proud member of the class of 1965. Through the Princeton in Asia program, Owen spent two years teaching English at the Chinese University of Hong Kong where he met the love of his life, Amber Wong, then a student there. Returning to the United States in 1967 to commence law school at Columbia University, Owen attended for a year before being commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army in 1968. He served in Military Intelligence in Vietnam from 1970-71, earning a Bronze Star for “sound judgment, versatility and stamina under conditions of stress and hardship,” and for contributing greatly “to the effectiveness of allied intelligence operations in the Republic of Vietnam.” He returned to Rye, NY in 1971 where he married Amber in December, and resumed law school, graduating in 1973 as an editor of the Columbia Law Review.

Joining the international law firm Coudert Brothers after graduation, Owen entered the firm’s new office in Hong Kong a year after Richard Nixon’s historic visit to China. From there, he launched a career that featured a series of “firsts”: participating in the March, 1979 conference where the Equity Joint Venture Law was written to allow commercial relations between China and the United States to resume formally for the first time since 1949; leading the opening of the first foreign law office in China; completing the first equity joint venture in China; advising on the automotive joint venture between General Motors Corporation and the Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation--now the largest automobile manufacturer in China; writing the contractual joint ventures that brought Coca Cola and McDonald’s to China; structuring the first limited recourse project financing in China; the first U.S.-PRC petroleum contract; the first mining concession; the first syndicated loan to China, and more. He generously shared the wisdom of his experiences too with generations of lawyers, mentoring so many younger colleagues at Coudert that many of the leading foreign and domestic law firms in China today initially built their practices with lawyers trained at Coudert China. Before he retired, he oversaw the merger of Coudert China with Orrick, Herrington, and Sutcliffe, and worked at the law firms of Jones Day, and Greenberg Traurig as well. In his retirement, he established

his own firm, InReNee, which specialized in pro bono legal work for fellow U.S. veterans. Additionally, Owen wrote four textbooks on shareholder agreements and joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, competition law, and tax laws in China, and taught courses on commercial and investment transactions with China at Columbia Law School and NYU Law School for years.

Owen relished his role as a mentor outside the field of law as well. As a Trustee to the Princeton-in-Asia program, a Deacon in the Union Church, Hong Kong, a Deacon and Trustee of the Rye Presbyterian Church, and a volunteer in the Coming Home Program run by the church in Rye to assist those formerly incarcerated in their transition back to their communities, Owen generously shared his time, energy, and guidance. Those in his family benefited from his insights and passions too, whether he was dispensing invaluable advice on life or careers, engaging in spirited debates about history (the American Revolution and the U.S. Civil War were topics of particular interest), or explaining Newton's Third Law or Einstein's Theory of Relativity to grandchildren being homeschooled via Zoom because of Covid-19 shutdowns.

An enthusiastic golfer, a connoisseur of Irish whiskeys and American country music, and a sartorially distinguished presence at every party, Owen is dearly missed by his wife of nearly fifty years, Amber; his brother, John Nee and his wife Jane of Greensboro, NC; his children Alexandra Nee of Alexandria, VA, and Claire Nee Nelson and her husband, Joshua Nelson, and grandchildren, Genevieve, Elisabeth, and Oliver Nelson of Concord, MA. He is predeceased by his son, David Nee with whom he is likely now sharing a drink and a laugh.

A memorial service will be held at the Rye Presbyterian Church, 882 Boston Post Road, Rye, New York on Saturday, May 22nd, at 10:30 a.m. It will also be live-streamed via Zoom; if you wish to attend remotely, please refer to the church website or call for a link.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be directed to three causes close to Owen's heart: the Coming Home Program at the Rye Presbyterian Church (attn: Dr. John Miller), the Mission Fund at the Rye Presbyterian Church (attn: Rev. Dan Love), and the not-for-profit organization that transformed his life, [Princeton in Asia](#).

Arrangements are under the care of Dee Funeral Home & Cremation Service of Concord, MA.

Memorial Service

Saturday, May 22, 2021

10:30AM

Rye Presbyterian Church

882 Boston Post Road

Rye, NY 10580

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