

Oyster Bay Oyster Festival founder Thomas Reardon dies

October 21, 2009 by BILL BLEYER / bill.bleyer@newsday.com

Thomas Reardon taught his children that they had to give something back to the community, and he set an impressive example.

Reardon, 62, of Oyster Bay, who died early Wednesday morning at [North Shore University Hospital](#) at Manhasset of complications from open-heart surgery, was a founder of the Oyster Bay Oyster Festival 26 years ago and served as chairman of the event for many years. He also held numerous other leadership positions in nonprofit organizations.

"He was a dedicated community servant," said his son Andrew, of Bayville. "I can't tell you where it came from but he tried to instill it in the rest of us."

Said Town Supervisor [John Venditto](#): "His life was interwoven in the fabric of Oyster Bay hamlet."

Reardon was helping out at this year's Oyster Festival on Sunday when he felt ill and was taken to Glen Cove Hospital, where it was learned that he had an acute aortic dissection and needed immediate surgery, Andrew Reardon said. He was transferred to [North Shore University Hospital](#), where he had the surgery, but his condition worsened and he died early yesterday.

Reardon lived in Oyster Bay his entire life except for when he attended Mount Saint Charles Academy in Woonsocket, R.I., and University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.

He worked at the Thomas J. Reardon Agency, the agency started by his father in the early 1950s. He eventually headed the company, which became Reardon Raplee Lindner & Mehlman Inc. with Reardon as a partner.

A longtime volunteer firefighter, Reardon was twice elected chief of the Oyster Bay Fire Company 1 and headed it during the response to the 1990 Avianca jet crash in Cove Neck.

He was board president of the Youth and Family Counseling Agency of Oyster Bay and past board president of the Doubleday Babcock Senior Citizens Center. He was past president of

the Oyster Bay Chamber of Commerce, Boys and Girls Club of Oyster Bay, Oyster Bay-East Norwich Soccer Club and Oyster Bay Rotary Club. He was past Grand Knight of the [Knights of Columbus](#).

He was best known for the Oyster Festival. "In 26 years, he never missed one festival," Andrew said. When the Chamber of Commerce decided to end the festival in 1991 because of rowdiness, Reardon got the Rotary Club to take over.

In addition to Andrew, Reardon is survived by his wife of 37 years, Mary Ann - their anniversary was yesterday; his son Thomas, of [Seoul, South Korea](#); a daughter, Emily Ann, of Oyster Bay; four sisters, Catherine V. Reardon, of Oyster Bay; Joan Kirkpatrick, of Lincoln, [Maine](#); Mary Meyers, of Locust Valley; and Alice Casey, of Lawrence, Mass.; and two grandchildren.

A wake is 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the Oyster Bay Fire Company No. 1. A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 9:30 a.m. Monday at St. Dominic's Church in Oyster Bay, followed by burial at the Locust Valley Cemetery.

[< back to article](#)