

# Longtime Delaware disabilities advocate dies

January 28, 2013



William J. Adami, president and chief executive officer of Easter Seals of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore, died Monday morning after a battle with cancer.

One of Delaware's top advocates for those with disabilities this week lost his eight-month fight with cancer.

William J. Adami, president and chief executive officer of Easter Seals Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore, died Monday morning at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, his wife Anne told The News Journal.

"He had a very courageous battle," she said Tuesday night.

He was 56. The regional Easter Seals based near New Castle, which provides services for disabled residents and their families, announced his death today. Known for his dedication as well as humor and enthusiasm, Adami worked for Easter Seals for 22 years, serving since 2008 in its top post.

Adami also was known as a devoted family man who adored his wife of 28 years and their three children—son, Andrew; and daughters, Lindsay and Katherine—with whom he lived near New Castle. He also is survived by his mother, Frances T. Adami; his sister, Ellen A. Fortin, and her husband, Stephen; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, in-laws and friends, his family said. He was the son of the late George C. Adami. His family recalled Adami as "a great cook," a man who enjoyed the quiet time of reading as well as "cheering on all New England sports teams."

That's understandable, considering he and his wife both grew up and went to college in Massachusetts, moving to Delaware when he joined the Easter Seals here.

His career of more than three decades in disability services grew

from childhood volunteering and his energy for helping others never stopped, colleagues said.

"It's really impossible to express how much Bill was loved by everyone," said Easter Seals Board Chair Cynthia Morgan, adding he inspired and motivated all levels of employees. "He will be missed terribly by his staff and the people served by Easter Seals."

"Anyone who met Bill soon became aware of his light-hearted humor, his compassion and integrity, and his absolute dedication to creating a better life for others, especially people with disabilities," Morgan said in a statement. "In addition to being a devoted father and husband, Bill was a passionate advocate for people with disabilities, beginning at the age of 14 when he volunteered at a state institution for individuals with significant intellectual disabilities."

That initial contact was an experience that "shaped his career path and ultimately led him to Easter Seals," Morgan said, noting the board's and employees' "deep sadness at the loss of our friend and colleague." The board's executive committee decided to have the senior management team that Adami had led continue leading the organization "during this time of transition."

A Rotarian and past president of the Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Adami also was active at the national level of Easter Seals, serving on key committees, and in Delaware on the Governor's Commission on Community-Based Alternatives Health Care Subcommittee and the Advisory Board for Choices for Community Living.

A visitation for family and friends will be held 5-8 p.m. on Friday, February 1, 2013 at Strano & Feeley Family Funeral Home, 635 Churchmans Road in Newark. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, February 2nd at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 345 Bear Christiana Road, Bear. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to Easter Seals, 61 Corporate Circle, New Castle, DE 19720.

*Written by Robin Brown The News Journal -- January 29, 2013*