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## TO MAKE A SUGGESTION

» To suggest a recently deceased resident for this feature, reach Christina Mitchell at [chmittell@gannett.com](mailto:chmittell@gannett.com). Subjects are selected from death notices printed within the last month. Find more tributes online at [www.courierpostonline.com/LivesWellLived](http://www.courierpostonline.com/LivesWellLived).



COLETTE BLEISTINE



MARTIN GREEN



WILLIAM FINNEY

ley Forge Military Academy graduate who fathered three sons and a daughter and put them all to work in his various restaurants. They included four other Perkins' eateries and the Chicago Restaurant at Pennsauken Country Club. In partnership with developer John Canuso, he designed and opened both The Mansion and Pub at Main Street in Voorhees.

He nurtured future culinary stars Jack McDavid of the Down Home Diner in Philadelphia and master chef Jack Shoop. But he "always gravitated to the back of the house," his son adds, getting to know dishwashers and busboys, too.

"My dad had a debilitating disease the past eight to 10 years and people would always ask me about him," says Michael. "A lot of them were people who worked for him.

"The impression I got was that he was a hip boss."

Marty Green's illness was Lewy body syndrome, a form of dementia that also diminishes motor skills. But before it took him down and after he retired from the restaurant business, Green earned a black belt in karate.

He was 70.

"He was taking the test

with all these little kids," Michael remembers. "And there were certain (belt test) requirements he couldn't do. So the karate owner allowed him to do 100 straight push-ups.

"That was cool. We can't help thinking about that."

Or Michael adds, the irony of a father fully engaged in life diminished by illness.

"Here's a guy who can't keep still, and he catches a disease that demands he be still," the Haddon Township resident says.

"But he didn't let it defeat him."

Not Marty Green, who was all of 23 when he walked the walk at Arlington.

## Colette Bleistine

After Colette Bleistine died May 21 — spent from a lifelong battle with cystic fibrosis — several people told me I simply had to write about her.

In her 22 years, Colette was undiminished by a devastating disease. Her enthusiasm and refusal to give in to illness were not to be believed, they said. So it's fitting to focus not on what took the college senior but what made her such a bright light. And I can't say it any better than those who knew her.

Larry Litwin, Colette's

former professor and academic adviser at Rowan University, recalled when he first met the Washington Township native and transfer student:

*With a firm handshake, the new student told me she was Colette Bleistine. ... My immediate thought: I was looking at a Tasty-Kake. ... All the good things wrapped up in one.*

Harriet Reaves of Newark was among those who wrote seven pages of tributes attached to Colette's online obituary:

*I thank God that I had the fortune to meet and spend time with Colette. She left a legacy of giving, caring and selflessness and is an example we can all follow.*

David Hackney, also a Rowan professor:

*She made such a difference in the world in her short life. She would have made an even greater difference had she been granted the gift of time.*

Colette's mother, Nancee, put it simply when she alluded to her only child's community spirit:

*She used all her challenges to make the world better.*

Colette once said her greatest reward was giving back to the community. "Paying it forward," she said in a Web interview, "is the greatest feeling in the

world."

As Lincoln might have said, it is often "the better angels of our nature" that impacts others.

To that army of spirits, add Colette Bleistine.

## William Finney

William Finney's original plan was to be a phys-ed teacher and coach.

When his career instead took him to the state's prison system, the Mount Holly resident coaxed some of his charges into the ring by starting a boxing program at Yardville Youth Correctional Facility, now known as Garden State.

"He felt locking people up was not really rehabilitation," says his wife of 48 years, Gladys, who met Bill Finney when both were students at South Carolina State College.

"He used his love of the sport to teach. He wanted to be something other than a key holder."

Finney — who ended his career as assistant superintendent of the former Riverfront State Prison in Camden — died May 18 after a battle with cancer. He was 70.

"Big, burly Bill Finney" — as he was known in his native Bristol, Pa. — was raised by working parents who believed in a firm, guiding hand. The young-

est of five, he excelled at baseball, football and anything at the former High School.

"He always told me I watched my brother's mistakes, so I wouldn't make the same mistakes he did," recalls Gladys.

A stocky 5 feet 10 inches tall, Finney had his own "common sense" way of parenting that left little questions. He was in charge of five children. His wife calls the day their oldest son asked if he "hang out."

"Where?" Bill asked.

"Just around," he replied.

"But where?" asked again. "You don't go hang out somewhere."

And that was the end of the conversation. Finney had a soft side.

"He had an aura about him that was non-negotiable," Gladys, a teacher. "But on the other side, he was gentle and kind."

Bill called her "Queen" and they played together in a weekly league. He sang lead in two church choirs. He was known to break out in song at any time, whether it was a hymn or gospel.

"Oh, did he sing?" Gladys enthuses of the man called "Finney."

Eventually, Bill's role took him into prison administration. But that he left on young inmates, Yardville remained.

"I remember we went to Home Depot one day," Gladys said. "And they walk up and says, 'Hi, Finney. I really appreciate the guidance you gave me while I was locked up.'"

"And I told them, 'Hmm,'" Gladys said. "After all these years"