

CONNECTICUT MUTUAL LIFE CEO

Civic Leader Denis Mullane, 86, Dies In Florida

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Denis F. Mullane, a consummate civic leader who guided Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co. through turmoil as the company's last chief executive to rise through the ranks, has died. He was 86.

Mullane died at his home in the village of Golf, Fla., on Dec. 27.

Mullane, born in Queens, N.Y., joined Connecticut Mutual in 1956 as an agent on Long Island. He moved to the home office in Hartford in 1968. By the mid-1970s, he was the No. 2 executive and held



Mullane

a seat on the board of directors.

Mullane became CEO in 1983 and oversaw a four-fold growth in the company's financial size, expanding into new products and markets in-

cluding overseas, before stepping down in 1993. The company made it through the retrenchment of the 1990-93 recession without the sort of mass layoffs that were becoming common in that era.

Outside of corporate life, Mul-

lane embodied commitment to God, country and family. A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, he served as an Army officer and remained close to West Point.

He would typically start his day in prayer at the Church of St. Peter Claver, where he was a parish council chairman. He was named a Knight of St. Gregory, the highest honor bestowed on a Catholic lay person by the Pope.

A longtime West Hartford resident, he was married with three children, juggling about a dozen civic and corporate board commit-

ments at a time including Connecticut Natural Gas Corp., Connecticut Bank and Trust, the region's chamber of commerce, St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Drugs Don't Work! and insurance industry groups.

"The greatest responsibility I feel is to the people in the organization," he said in a 1988 Courant interview. "You don't want to make a mistake that would cause other people pain."

A later Courant story described a style that would soon nearly vanish from corporate life: "Mullane would roam the halls of Connecti-

cut Mutual every Christmastime to wish his employees, one by one, a happy holiday. The white-haired Mullane flashed his grandfatherly smile as he shook each employee's hand. He knew most by name."

Mullane brought in a successor, David E. Sams Jr., and in 1996, Sams and the board merged Connecticut Mutual into Massachusetts Mutual and the Hartford operations wound down.

A memorial mass will be celebrated on Saturday, Jan. 14, at 11 a.m. in the Church of St. Peter Claver in West Hartford. Burial will be private.