

Peter Stanford
WHC Founder & Inspiration

by Terry Walton, Vice Chair, WHC

Peter Stanford spent his life founding things, it seems – South Street Seaport Museum, National Maritime Historical Society, and – highlight in our own lives – the Working Harbor Committee among them. He came by his maritime love well and truly: sailed as a child, sailed transatlantic and to Bermuda, sailed to East Coast harbors in his schooner *Athena*, worked with others to create New York's Op Sail '76. Beyond that he saved historic ships of many sizes, knew his naval battles and quoted Churchill effortlessly regarding WWII, and loved his Beefeater Martinis and the camaraderie they engendered at the New York Yacht Club

Peter was mentor to me for fifty years starting at South Street in 1966 and was the compass of my maritime life, and thus the encourager of my *Harbor Voices* book so filled with WHC help. But I was only one of many guided by him, as is seen in memorial services and remarks about his death March 24, 2016, at age 89.

Peter's wife Norma said of his trips down to NYC for WHC meetings, "He thoroughly enjoyed coming down for the Working Harbor meetings. And he came home enthused by the wide ideas proposed, the rowdy yet meticulous planning, the lively back and forth among people who so cared much and knew so much about our harbor." In later years as WHC Board Chair Emeritus he would read all reports, email copious comments, and keep his joy in the educational work we were all doing.

We each have our Peter Stanford memories! Among mine from our WHC meetings – his saying "Avanti!" when he wanted to move things along, writing things in his little black journal confirming details to augment his prodigious memory, and saying "Well, good, why don't we . . ." and you just knew that "we" was "you."

Working Harbor meetings were lively in Peter's presence. He loved talking of the first Hidden Harbor tour held in a downpour, with five of us drowned rats present, then in coming years swelling to thousands. He loved the enthusiastic offerings of WHC Steering Committee participants: dream up a tour wild idea or not and then plan it, show up to volunteer and bring a friend, salute and support the bold brave owners of the harbor's historic ships.

His heart was gladdened at the WHC's developing strengths in its educational programs, its tours for underserved youth who discover the harbor and learn about maritime careers in the industry. He was passionate about our

mission of teaching NY/NJ harbor history and life today and thus enhancing the harbor's future, and impressed by WHC's willingness to work hard to achieve that mission.

Peter's wife Norma and five children spoke fondly and proudly of him at his family service in their Mount Kisco church in early April; grandchildren abounded.

Of Peter's death, Jonathan Boulware, his much admired ultimate successor as head of the South Street Seaport Museum, wrote: "We mourn the loss, but at the same time we carry on the work." So be it.