



Arty Alafoginis (m) in 2015 with daughter Eleni and son Frank, in Capital Meat's dry age room (credit: Mark Gail)

## Capital Meat's Arthur "Arty" Alafoginis – a tribute

**B**y all accounts, Arthur "Arty" Alafoginis was a character, with friendships that transcended all barriers. Whether in the meat business, the wider food industry, on the golf course, in the Greek church he attended, or from his childhood growing up in D.C., he was that guy who made everyone feel like a friend.

Arty died this past June after a two-year battle with cancer. But his legacy lives on in his business — Capital Meat Company — in his family, and in colleagues who remember him well.

Bart Farrell, director of food and beverage at Clyde's Restaurant Group, says Arty's knowledge of meat was legend. The two met in 1984 when Arty was at Bay State Beef and Farrell was a purchasing agent at the Old Ebbitt Grill. On a visit to Bay State, Farrell says, "I saw this big guy in a white coat and

a warm hat, carrying sides of beef across his shoulder like they were five-pound weights." In those days, meat was hung on guide rails and moved on hooks around the cutting room. "We hit it off immediately," Farrell says. Arty was "one of the most knowledgeable butchers I've ever met. He taught several chefs and purchasing managers about meat and butchering. He was the last of the Mohicans when it came to butchering."

As the years passed, the Alafoginis and Farrell families came to know each other outside of the business. "Our friendship grew over the years," says Farrell. "Our families know each other...they are like my own family. Arty was one of my closest and dearest friends. When they made him, they broke the mold for sure!"

David Fanaroff, owner of Spectrum Foods, knew Arty for 34 years. When they first met, Fanaroff

was new in the meat business, working for a turkey processor. "When I met him, he was a big guy, very confident," says Fanaroff. "I was unconfident." But Arty made the young Fanaroff feel comfortable, and, over the years, they became friends. "He was a character in a positive way," says Fanaroff. "What I mean, he had a personality that he could carry himself extremely well...and in all my years working with him, I never saw him ever get upset, even when things messed up. He had an easy demeanor in talking to people...easy-going, happy, nice guy."

To make the point, Fanaroff cited a story from last November when he was airlifted to a local hospital with serious health issues. Arty was in the same hospital. "He found out I was in the hospital and came over to where my family was to share his concern, even with the cancer he was going through."

Arty Alafoginis was not born to work in the meat industry. In fact, he wanted to be a history teacher. His dad George was a Greek immigrant who started a wholesale meat business in the 1940s — the Fresh Grind Meat Company — out of his garage on Prospect Street in D.C., selling cuts of meat to local families and restaurants. When George had a heart attack, Arty joined his brother Peter at what, by then, had become the Bay State Beef Company on L Street in Northwest D.C., and Arty's history teacher idea was, well, history.

Arty did all the jobs he needed to do to learn the business — from loading and driving the meat truck to the clean-up crew in the meat cooler — before he ever learned to butcher. And then he REALLY learned how to butcher. Says son Frank, "He was really really good at what he did. He knew all parts of

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