



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Donald R. Waful

DAVID J. VALESKY May 15, 2017

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Donald R. Waful is one of Syracuse University's oldest surviving World War II veterans, having recently turned 101 years old. A lifelong native of Syracuse, he earned masters and bachelor's degrees in Political Science from the Maxwell School and the College of Arts and Sciences, respectively. Mr. Waful was part of the third graduating class of Officer Candidate School at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and became one of the first soldiers of the Army's European Theater of Operations to set foot in North Africa. In 1942, he was captured in Tunisia and spent the next three years as a P.O.W. in Italy, Poland and Germany. He rose to the rank of

2nd Lt. of Headquarters Company, 1st Armored Division, 13th Armored Regiment before being honourably discharged.

While serving his country, Mr. Waful carried on a long-distance romance with a nurse from Boston named Cassie. The inspiring story of how they met at a wartime dance and were engaged on their third date, only to be apart until the end of the War, became the basis for a period musical titled I'll Be Seeing You. Mr. Waful and Cassie were in love and married for 53 years. After her death, he married his college sweetheart, Ginny, who died 10 years later.

A prominent civic leader and philanthropist, Mr. Waful spent 35 years as President of the Syracuse Chiefs Baseball Club, where he helped design and build the 11,000-seat NBT Bank Stadium. His love of music – he played trombone in the Rhythm Airs big band well into his 90s – is second only to his devotion to Syracuse football. Mr. Waful has missed only three home football games since 1946, and has never missed a football game in the history of the Carrier Dome.