



John Irvin Crews

August 24, 1915 - December 17, 2012

John Irvin Crews died peacefully on December 17, 2012, at age 97. Born August 24, 1915, in the hamlet of Saxe, Virginia to Walter Henry Crews and Mabel Jeremy Crews, John I., as he was affectionately called, was married to the late Jane Wilkinson Crews of South Boston.

He is survived by his brother Ralph Crews (Betty) of Minnesota and sister-in-law Clarice Crews of South Boston. His brothers Lewis, David, and Arthur Gray Crews and his sister Elizabeth C. Lawson preceded him in death.

Also surviving are his children, Jerry C. Williams (Mike) of Henderson, N. C., Corbin C. Harwood (John) of Washington, D. C., and Jack Crews (Meg) of Richmond, Va.; seven grandchildren, Jennifer W. Rudolph (Rohan), Wake Forest, NC; Lawson Williams (Katie), Wake Forest, NC; Mary Kathryn Wood (Henry), Boulder, CO; Margaret C. Bond (Sam), Atlanta, Ga; John Crews, Washington, D. C.; Clare Harwood, New Orleans, LA; and Tim Harwood, Washington, D. C.; and eleven great grandchildren, Will, Olivia, Ella Rudolph; Patrick, David, Colin, Hayes Williams; Miller, Lucy Gray, Bridger Wood; and Ellie Bond.

Companions Kenneth and Carolyn Wilmoth and caregivers Edna Fields, Phillias Carrington, and Claudine Royster held a special place in his heart.

John I. graduated from the University of Richmond where he joined the Kappa Sigma fraternity. A member of The Greatest Generation, he enlisted in the Coast Guard during WWII. Lieutenant Crews served his country with distinction and was one of the last crew members to vacate his burning ship, the Wakefield, as it was evacuating civilians from Europe. He was stationed in Greenland for much of the war and, at age 88, enjoyed revisiting his former base.

John I. grew up during the Depression, which taught him the value of a dollar and the importance of a positive outlook on life. He developed a flair for business as a child while helping at his father's country store. After WWII, he owned and operated Wyatt & Crews wholesale grocery in South Boston. At age 65, he retired from that business and moved to his beloved farm on the Staunton River in Mt. Laurel. There he founded Camp Staunton Meadows, a summer youth camp with an international reputation. He remained active in every aspect of the camp until he was 88 years old.

As much as he loved his work, John I. loved even more to tell a good story, to learn a new word each day, and to take advantage of the good things in life. But he loved his children most. He always encouraged them to push a little harder.....and in return, they knew he would be there for them when needed. He was an exemplary father. His days in the Coast Guard showed him a world he had never before seen. He wanted to make sure his children saw it, as well.

A civic leader, John I. was the last surviving charter member of the Rotary Club of South Boston. He also served on the boards of the South Boston Bank & Trust Co., First Federal Savings & Loan, the Halifax Regional Hospital and the South Boston School Board. He particularly enjoyed lunches at Ernies and monthly dinners with the DunRoamin supper club among friends who, like him, were dun roamin'.

John I. was a lifelong member of the Southall Memorial United Methodist Church in Saxe, VA.

Interment will be private. Friends are invited to a reception on Saturday, January 5, at 5:00 P.M. at the Prizery where memories can be shared while celebrating the life of this extraordinary man. Nobody liked a party better than John I. He would approve.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to make memorial donations are asked to consider the South Boston-Halifax County Museum, 1540 Wilborn Avenue, South Boston, VA 24592; the Prizery, 700 Bruce Street, South Boston, VA 24592 or the Southall Memorial United Methodist Church, 6220 Saxkey Road, Saxe, Virginia 23967.

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Tribute Wall

CH

“ Thank you all for your very thoughtful comments. We miss Dad terribly, but were so lucky to have him so long.

Spence K. and Robert Baltus, could you please send me your contact information? Powell Funeral Home says it does not have it.

Corbin Harwood - January 03, 2013 at 12:00 AM

KP

“ Jack, We were so sorry to hear about your Dad. He was always a joy to see, always smiling when he came to the office.

Ken & Jan Perkins - December 26, 2012 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ For 6 years I had the pleasure to work with Mr Crews during the summers at CSM and it was a delight. Things that spring to mind are having a drink on the porch at his house during one of these humid Virginia evenings and listening to his stories and advice. But the picture I always have in my mind is him walking back from the dining hall to his house with his Beagles happily running around him. A beautiful picture of a true gentleman.

Glad to have known him and my deepest sympathies are with his family.

Robert Baltus - December 20, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SK

“ Thank you for creating such wonderful place for me to spend some of the best times of my childhood. CSM was truly a special, special place. I will never forget Mr. Crews smiling face pulling up in his Gator. I made lifelong memories and friends at CSM and could never thank Mr Crews enough for providing that special place.

Spence Kinnier - December 19, 2012 at 12:00 AM

PP

“ What a wonderful tribute to a real Southern gentleman. Kudos to whomever wrote it. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all as you celebrate his homegoing and mourn for the man you will miss. He was proud of each of you and loved you all dearly.

Phil and Bunny Propst - December 18, 2012 at 12:00 AM