



Harold Rockwell Blalack

Harold R. Blalack age 90 of Gainesville, Florida passed into the arms of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at Haven Hospice with family by his side. He was born in a farmhouse in Miami County Ohio to George Rockwell and Mina Vore Blalack on September 29, 1925. He attended a three-room schoolhouse until high school where his favorite classes were agriculture related. After high school he proudly served in the Army in World War II, Company F, 423 Regiment, 106th Infantry Division. Harold's infantry unit was captured in the Battle of the Bulge in 1944 and was held as a POW in Stalag IX-B, Germany. He was awarded numerous medals including two Bronze stars, Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Infantryman, European Africa Middle Eastern Campaign, Prisoner of War and Expert Rifleman.

After the war he tried various jobs and then attended Embry Riddle in Opa-Locka, Florida where he earned his Civil Aeronautics Certificate while working at the Ft. Lauderdale Airport. During this time he met and married Barbara Anne (Bobbie) Sarles. They started their family with their first three children, Clark, Andrea and Loretta. Five years later they had another child named Rita. Harold then decided on a career in air conditioning and attended the Chrysler Airtemp Service Engineering course in Dayton, Ohio and worked for various mechanical contractors.

Harold and Barbara moved to Florida for a position with Hill York Air

Conditioning and then to Carrier Corporation in Miami. They moved again to Orlando where he was a Service Representative for Carrier, covering most of the State of Florida handling their maintenance contracts with large corporations. During this time he had the privilege of supervising the installation of the air conditioning and ventilation systems for the Apollo Rocket launch pad and Launch Umbilical Tower (LUT) bower for the moon launch, one of the most exciting times in his life, while also achieving his contractor's license. Harold began to tire of being continually on the road and away from his family. Ready to change careers again he took a position with the Florida Board of Regents as Acting Zone Director.

In July of 1969 he got a call from Allen Construction in California and got an interview without a prior application or resume and was hired on the spot. Allen construction had the contract to build The Magic Kingdom of Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Later Allen's contract was cancelled and Buena Vista Construction Company (owned by Disney World in Orlando) took over the project, hiring Harold away from Allen early in the construction phase. He stayed on the project for six years until construction slowed down after the park was opened. Being both the first Construction Manager as well as the Projects Manager, Harold handled preparing bids, awarding contracts and overseeing the construction of the many projects. At this time his first marriage came to an end, after which he moved onto several Architectural firms and received his real estate license. Harold then had a chance to utilize his full complement of talents and skills when he was hired by the University of Florida, eventually rising to the position of Assistant Director in 1981 until he retired at age 74.

In 1982 he married Edith Richardson, the love of his life, and merged their two families together, adding three more young people-- Peter, Laura and Rob Richardson. In 2004 they lost daughter Andrea.

After retirement, Harold was further able to develop other interests in photography, ham radio (N4MSY), rose gardening and visiting the hospital, hospice and rehab facilities taking each patient one of his signature roses.

In February of 2014 the Consulate of the French Embassy in Miami conferred on him the Knight of the French Legion of Honor, now earning the title of "Sir Harold Blalack."

Harold is survived by his loving family-- his wife Edith, sister Eileen McCowen of Dayton, Ohio, son Clark Blalack of Alachua, son Peter Richardson (Marta) of Houston, Texas, daughter Laura Richardson of Gainesville, daughter Loretta (Mark) Enfinger of Alachua, daughter Rita Settle of Sanford, son Rob (Natalie) Richardson of Houston, Texas, six grandchildren, and one great grandson.

The family wishes to thank Lisa Coney for her many months of loving care, his medical team and Hospice for all their special care, as well as all the loving friends who prayed for him through this difficult time in his life.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Trinity United Methodist Church or E. T. York Hospice of Gainesville in preference to flowers.

A memorial service will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 2nd in the Chapel of Trinity United Methodist Church in Gainesville, preceded by a visitation from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Harold's ashes will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. at a later date. Arrangements are in the care of Forest Meadows Funeral Home (352)378-2528.