



## Edward Paul O'Brien

July 28, 1923 - May 17, 2013

Edward Paul O'Brien, 89, of Alexandria, Virginia, died peacefully in his sleep in the early hours of Friday, May 17, 2013. Known to his family as Ed, Dad, "Chief," Grandpa, Uncle Ed and Eddie, he had just entered physical rehab after a brief but difficult illness and hospitalization.

Ed is survived by his son, Paul John O'Brien, his wife Elaine and their children Caitlin and Kevin, of Oakton, Virginia, and his daughter Kara Anne LaGrassa, her husband Bart and their children Vincent (Vince) and Anthony (Tony), of Arlington, Virginia. He also leaves behind his nieces Judy Guarino (and her husband, Tom), Georgia Carney of Great Falls, Virginia, Cecelia Jones and Lisa Mowry of Texas, and nieces and nephews living in New York and California. He is predeceased by his wife, Paul and Kara's mom, Katherine Corea O'Brien, who passed away in November, 2006, his parents and all of his other siblings; eldest brother John and his sisters Marguerite (Marg), Katherine, Ora Lee, Evelyn and Helen.

He was born in his home in Beaufort, South Carolina on July 28, 1923, the seventh and youngest child, and second son, of John O'Brien, known locally as "Captain John," a skilled and trusted harbor pilot, and Katherine, "Katie" (Baer) O'Brien (who, it was said, "could ride a horse and shoot as well as any man!"). After the sudden and untimely death of his father when Ed was only six, his mother and five sisters moved to a small South Carolina town,

Walterboro, where he grew up. He loved sports and the outdoors (and a little bit of mischief), but quickly assumed the role and responsibility of the "man of the house." His much older brother, John, had long left home as a member of the Merchant Marine. After graduating from Walterboro High School with honors (where school once let out for a quarter inch of snow so the kids could play in it, he recalled), and having served twice as a class officer (President in his freshman year, Vice President as a senior) as well as the managing editor of the yearbook and president of the American Observer Club, he set out in the world and became a certified airframe and powerplant mechanic. When World War II broke out, having already been a member of the United States Army Air Corps Reserve, he volunteered for active service and after working on many smaller aircraft in active service with the now USAAF, he trained specially for and then worked on the mightiest aircraft of the Second World War, the Boeing B-29 Superfortress.

After the war ended, he was demobilized in 1946 and entered civilian life once again. He then pursued his new interest, international relations. Under the GI Bill, he entered into the Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. where, continuing his history of academic achievement, he was awarded the prestigious W. Coleman Nevils Gold Medal for earning the highest grade average in his studies of the foreign relations of the United States. To save money, he lived with his mother and two older sisters in Arlington, as he worked hard on his studies and finished in three years, graduating with highest honors. He subsequently entered civil service with the United States Department of State, with an eye to becoming a career diplomat. While there, however, that "eye" was caught by a lovely young woman from New York, Kay Corea, whom he met when she was looking for a lost earring! They were married on October 22, 1955 in East Rochester, NY and were married for 51 years at the time of his beloved wife's untimely death. He and Kay lived first in a small apartment in Shirlington, then in 1959 they moved to Fairfax County, where they spent the rest of their lives

together raising their kids. Paul was born in 1960 and Kara in 1969.

After finding that he wouldn't be travelling as a diplomat after all (Kay was more of a "home body"), Ed started his career with the Department of Defense, working with "NAVORD," (Naval Ordnance Systems Command), at the old "Main Navy" complex in Washington, until it was demolished and NAVORD became NAVSEA (Naval Sea Systems Command), moving to Crystal City. He retired ("for good this time"), after having already done so and going back to work for several more years in the late 1980's.

Ed was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and uncle who gave his life to his family. He was a very shy and personal man, who (despite his original leanings to travel the world) was the "perfect wallflower" at a gathering. However he was universally liked and loved by all who met and knew him for his honesty, gentleness, good humor, gentility and intelligence. He was quiet, and said little, but what he did say he meant and believed in. He believed intensely in honor and often said, and truly believed, that "a man's word is his bond." He also believed in people, and treating everyone as an individual, put here by God. "Never make generalizations," he'd say. He supported his children in whatever they wanted to do. He loved tending a garden and working around the yard. In his later years, he was so proud of a fig tree in the back yard that had been planted by his son-in-law Bart. That tree grew to a huge size, and yielded hundreds of figs every season, which he enjoyed eating (at least the ones the squirrels didn't get!). Through thick and thin, he stood by the Redskins, always watching the games to the very end.

Ed was also a very spiritual and religious person, starting at an early age as an altar boy, serving countless Masses in Latin. His faith sustained him throughout his life, particularly in its final days. He was a special man, loved deeply by his family, and his departure leaves a great hole in our lives. We are

all sustained, however, by knowing that he left us peacefully and that he's in God's arms with all those who've gone before him, and that he'll be waiting to welcome us.

Please join us as we celebrate his life. Services will be held at Jefferson Funeral Chapel, Alexandria, Virginia. Friends and family will be received on Wednesday, May 22, 2013 from 2 - 4 p.m. and 6 - 8 p. m. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Thursday, May 23, 2013 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Louis Catholic Church, 2907 Popkins Lane, Alexandria, Virginia, and internment will follow immediately after at Mt. Comfort Cemetery, 6600 South Kings Highway. We'll gather together after the internment at the home of our dear friends, John and Jean Moretti, at 3110 Circle Hill Drive, Alexandria, Virginia, to share our love of Ed through our fellowship.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Edward Paul O'Brien*

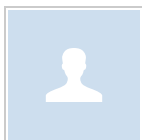
October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Obituary Wall*



**Jefferson Funeral Chapel** - January 28, 2019 at 09:50 AM



“ *Paul and Kara, We're so sorry to hear of your Dad's passing. What fond memories we have of a young, gentle, smiling couple visiting our home...before your births, and beyond! It was always a highlight for Tessie and Augie when Kay, Ed and kids arrived to sit and chat...and how dear to recall your Grandmother Corea as well. Your parents were beautiful...calm, loving, and kind. We are honored to have known them for a lifetime. Your Dad called two years ago when our Mother, Tessie, died at 94. His familiar voice and sweet concern bent my heart...and memories flooded once more. Please know you and your families are in our thoughts and prayers as you continue to be filled, each moment of each day, with your parents' love and beauty.*

*Our Love,*

*Joanna Policelli, Catherine O'Connor, Theresa Donahue, MaryAnn Young, and Philip and Paul Peluso*

May 23, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Wishing you peace to bring comfort, courage to face the days ahead and loving memories to hold in your hearts. Kara -- Your father was a great man! Our thoughts are with you and your family.  
Love, Al, Marty and Alexa Lerner

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May 23, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ We are so sorry for your loss. Your Dad's life reads like a storybook. It is beautiful! Find peace in knowing he had a full life and now is rejoined with the love of his life. Our prayers are with your family.  
With love, Sean, Joanne, Paddy, Catie, Colin and Finn.

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May 22, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with your family. Your dad was a wonderful man.  
Love,  
Tracey, Allan, Lyndsay and Allyson Anderson

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May 21, 2013 at 12:00 AM



“ Wow - he sounds like an absolutely amazing man! We feel like we knew him. Our thoughts and prayers are with you Kara, Bart, Tony and Vince. Love, The Murrays

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May 21, 2013 at 12:00 AM