



Milton W. Lee

November 18, 1936 - October 23, 2019

Milton Wayne Lee, age 82, of Alexandria, VA (though he still claimed Mayodan, NC), went home to the Lord on Wednesday, 23 October. Our loss is his gain; he is at peace.

Known as “Wayne” to those in North Carolina, and “Milt” to those in Maryland and Virginia, he was the husband of his childhood sweetheart, DiAnne Barrow Lee, and celebrated 63 years of marriage last August. He reared 4 well-loved sons: Roger, Richard, Ryan, and Steven; and leaves 4 daughters-in-law he adopted as his own: Aimee, Joyce, Kelly, and Lindsay; and 7 grandchildren whom he loved deeply and delighted in spoiling: Nathaniel, Joshua, Julianna, Jonathan, Cameron, Sydney, and Jason.

Milt was the son of Carey Fitzhugh Lee and Bernice Anne Joyce Lee. He was born 18 November 1936, in his maternal grandparents’ home in Mayodan, NC. As a child, his mother was diagnosed with tuberculosis and spent most of Milt’s childhood in a Black Mountain, NC sanatorium; he saw very little of her before her death when he was 9. He and his father lived with relatives of the Lee, Joyce, and Craig families over the years in Mayodan, Stoneville, Elon, and Greensboro. Blinded in his left eye in an accident at age 9, most never knew of his disability – he never complained; he just overcame. He drove a school bus, worked at a gas station in town, cleaned house for his Aunt Columbia, put together wagons, bicycles, and lawnmowers at Western Auto,

worked for his Uncle Reid, slaughtered hogs, topped and primed tobacco, collected bottles, sold papers, and did most anything to earn a dollar. At age 16, he got his first kiss from a young, 14-year-old DiAnne Barrow. It didn't take long for them to plan a life together, marrying 24 August 1956.

Milt graduated as valedictorian of the class of 1955 of Stoneville High School in Stoneville, NC, but attended Mayodan School for one year with his bride-to-be. He made the decision to attend NC State University, with the assistance of his school principal who encouraged him and made an appointment for him to meet with faculty there, where he earned a scholarship in Electrical Engineering, graduating in 1961. While in college he earned money working odd jobs – even playing checkers for \$1.00 an hour with a state champion checker champion who sought competition. He worked for Vick Chemical Company and for the City of Greensboro programming their early traffic signals and before accepting a position as a Patent Examiner with the U.S. Patent Office in Washington D.C. in 1962. Milt, DiAnne, and their first 2 children, Roger and Richard, moved to Seven Corners, VA, to begin his career, then to Bowie, MD in 1963 where Ryan and Steven were born. While working full time, Milt attended law school at night at the University of Baltimore School of Law, earning his J.D. in 1966. He switched from the U.S. Patent Office to support the Department of Defense with positions at the Naval Ordnance Lab and the U.S. Army Materiel Command. When he accepted a position with the Night Vision Laboratory at Fort Belvoir, VA, the family left Bowie, MD, and moved to Alexandria, VA, in December 1970, welcomed by rain, snow, and mud into their new home. Milt would serve as the Department of Army Director of Intellectual Property and Director of the Night Vision Laboratory until his retirement in 2003. He then devoted himself -- unfettered by work -- to his wife, sons, and grandchildren. He was a life-long tinkerer. He refused to pay someone to do a job he could do himself. No one else but Milt ever worked on his cars, did his plumbing, electrical, any work on his home (although he did let someone else dig his in-ground pool), maintained his

yard, handled his investments, or did his taxes. He was a Renaissance Man and could do it all. He did his best to involve his sons, teach them, and give them every opportunity. Somehow, he was able to work full-time, work part-time jobs, go to law school at night, and still attend every baseball or basketball game and track meet of his boys, every school play they performed, and even coached their teams. He always made time for his family and put them first. He was there for his family, but was always available to his neighbors, his co-workers, his church friends, and the friends and families of his sons. He was loving, caring, and giving throughout his life. His hardscrabble upbringing enabled him to appreciate what he had. Milt was quiet for the most part, but people listened when he spoke. He was a man of few words and lived by his actions.

Milt survived his son, Ryan, whom we lost in 2017, and never quite recovered from that loss. Milt was a man among men. He was hard and soft. He loved and was loved. He'll be missed and remembered – for his actions toward each of us . . . for what he meant to each of us . . . for what he inspired in each of us . . . and for who he was to each of us. We shared him for 82 years. We'll never forget him. We are who we are because of Milt – our husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather (Papa), nephew, cousin, friend, neighbor, mentor, and colleague. Milt, may you rest in the peace of the Lord.

The family will receive visitors Sunday, 3 November, 12:00-4:00 p.m., at Jefferson Funeral Chapel, 5755 Castlewellan Drive. Alexandria, VA 22315. (703) 971-7400).

Interment will be in the family plot in the Old Mayodan Cemetery in Mayodan, NC, Saturday, 30 November, at 11:00 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Milt's memory to

the American Lung Association, online www.lung.org or by mail (9702 Gayton Road, #110, Richmond, VA 23238).

Previous Events

Gathering

NOV 3. 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Jefferson Funeral Chapel
5755 Castlewellan Drive
Alexandria, VA 22315
(703) 971-7400
info@jeffersonfuneralchapel.com
<https://www.jeffersonfuneralchapel.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Milton W. Lee*

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM

“ In '87 two homes on sale on Tammy = A God Wink, coincidence, sixth sense took us next door to the Lee's. The realtor looked over the immediate neighborhood, saw the “Lee's Pool”, and said, “Make friends with them first. They have a pool.” No need to do that. The first person who spoke to me was Milton; second – Ivan Kessner; third – DiAnne.

We immersed ourselves in Lee food = lots; laughs = lots; learning = lots. Even our first cat would go to the Lee's and refuse to leave. Steven came home with a friend one day. and remarked the neighbors were visiting. The friend inquired how could he know that? Steven replied, “Their cat is waiting for them at our door step.”

Milton fed our pets while we were away. Recently he told me our second cat became his cat when we left. I inquired the cat knew, several days after we were left, Milton was the one feeding him. Milton said, “No, the first day you leave, that cat becomes my cat.” A God Wink “The Cat” would appear at Milton's doorstep, beginning the first day at 5:00 feeding time. That cat knew what we knew – who one may depend upon.

Sunday, April 29, 1990, 3:15 a.m. I sent Fred to deliver the paper for Distributor Crone (birthday also is April 29th.) I called DiAnne who answered in usual style - loudly and her cheerful tone. I asked if Milton could deliver me to Columbia Hospital for Women to deliver. Without skipping a beat or even checking, she replied she would send Milton right over. We arrived at the hospital without incident in their brand new car, packed with towels (that comes with a pool), all the while Milt confirmed the contractions were a consistent three minutes apart. Middle of the night, we were the only ones in that hospital corridor. I told him, “They will think you are the dad.”

Fast-forward 18 months. Repeatedly, we would have big laughs with Christopher as we pointed to each person and asked him who they were: -- DiAnne, -- Fred, -- Ma ma. A God Wink when we got to Milton, Christopher would proudly respond that Milton was “Da da!”

Looking back to the conversation in the hospital corridor, there were not two sets of ears that were hearing, but three.

We immersed ourselves deeply into the Lee lives (they had to move to get away from us), The result? DiAnne asked her two oldest grandsons, as they aged, where they would live if they had to live with someone other than their parents. DiAnne was expecting to hear: grandparents, aunt and uncle. Geez, was DiAnne impressed to hear they would move next door with Fred and Rita. A God Wink they would feel at home and loved, as if in their own homes. At the time, these grandkids may not have known what they now know. We were coached by the best.

Milton taught me how to paint, better than a contractor. Milton loaned me his hedge trimmers over and over, until I realized I might wear out his, so I asked for a pair of my own one Christmas long ago. I recently told him that. He replied that was a strange Christmas gift.

Ask Milton; you got it. He knew everything. Milt was everything to everyone: your brother, cousin, uncle, grandfather, friend, neighbor, counselor, advisor, and best "Da da!"

I needed the truth on A Mother's Prayer I wrote for Christopher's wedding. I gave it to one person = Milton. He read it, returned it, said, "I hate it." Back to pen and paper + Milton's feedback. After the ceremony, Milt said, "It was outstanding. I heard people laugh. I looked and saw people dabbing tears (crying) from their eyes."

Mid '70's Paul Harvey reported, as we grow older, we grow more like ourselves. I saw that to be true while working in my hometown's nursing facility.

Milt started out one way. He continued to grow more like himself.

The last time we saw Milt, upon awakening, Roger told him we were

*there. Milt's final word to us explains him, how we know him, and confirmed he grew more like himself.
The God Wink confirmation = "Wonderful!"*

Rita Wolberg - November 03, 2019 at 04:04 PM

AS

“ *So many fun and fond memories of Wayne or Milton; which ever way you want to address him. He was a devoted father and husband and friend. He stepped up to help whenever he could in whatever way he could.*

As well I don't ever remember him having an unkind word to say about anyone. There seem to be too few people like him left in the world these days and we all will be a little less fortunate that he is gone but a lot more fortunate that we knew him.

Rest in peace faithful servant. God bless you and your family and our deepest condolences to DiAnne on losing the love of her life. But he will be up there waiting for you when your time comes of that I am sure.

Ann Stone - November 03, 2019 at 12:53 PM

EC

“ *You knew Milt was someone special the first time you met him. I had heard stories about him from his son Steven but I didn't fully appreciate how unique he was until I finally met him. His humble, affable way immediately put you at ease and his natural curiosity for life showed in the sparkle of his eyes. He was whip smart and had an innate kindness that warmed your heart within a few minutes. He was a rare gift to the world and the love and kindness he radiated lives on in his family. The world needs more Milts. He will be missed.*

Eric Conn - November 03, 2019 at 10:01 AM

JP

Milt was the "Mr. Rogers" of The Night Vision Lab. Kind, thoughtful and so helpful to solve difficult problems that no one else could. A dear friend and colleague.

Jeff Paul - December 30, 2019 at 11:13 AM

JO

“ We first met Milt and DiAnne when our son Rob was six. Rob met Steven and the two have been life friends since. Rob played on the Pioneer League baseball team that Milt coached for years. Leon later helped him coach. We keep a picture of the team on our desk at home. What great times we all had at the end of season pool parties hosted by the Lees. We moved to the Richmond area and did not have the opportunity to see you as often. But you and the family were always in our thoughts. Leon, Rob and Steven did get to re-live the "Good old days" on their annual Golf Trip. You will be dearly missed by us, but your memory will live forever in our hearts. You were a rare treasure.

Peace, love, blessings and our deepest sympathy to the entire Lee family. You are very dear to us.

Jacquie and Leon Owens

Jacquie & Leon Owens - November 02, 2019 at 02:37 PM

NS

“ Milt, Papa, as he was known was a gracious southern gentleman, a picture perfect father and husband, and the best Spades partner I ever had. He left indelible memory with all who knew him. He will be sincerely missed but I am grateful he is at peace. Love to you Mama and all of your family, they are one of a kind and a rarity in today's world.



Noel Stallard - November 02, 2019 at 12:35 PM

CW

“How you doing neighbors?” I often heard as my parents and I walked up our drive. I would look up and with no surprise see Milton waving from the front door of his house. We would smile and call back to him. It is the number one memory that I have of him, because it happened frequently. Growing up, you don’t always realize the effect that your neighbors have on you. Milton and DiAnne lived next to my parents and it was only last year that they moved to their new home.

I’ve known Milton for quite literally my entire life. It was early in the morning on April 29, 1990 that he received a call from my parents. My father needed to quickly deliver his paper route and my mother needed to go to the hospital; she was in labor! Milton took her to the hospital and stayed by her side until my father came later that morning before my arrival. Milton was a steadfast presence in my childhood, serving as a surrogate grandfather next-door. He was there when I said my first word, I learned to swim in his pool, I admired his well manicured grass and he taught me, through action, the importance of serving family before self. He welcomed me in to play with his grandchildren when I was young and often invited my family to family cookouts and pool parties. I remember at least once when Milton picked me up from school when my parents could not. He was always a support for anyone in need.

The pain of losing Milton is now sharp. It hurts just to think that I will never hear his voice again. The pain, though is dulled by the good memories of the past. He was always a joy to be around, and supported my parents and me better than any neighbor we could have asked for. Milton will be missed but not soon forgotten.

Now I have a house and a family of my own. My wife and I are expecting our first child in March. It is sad that he or she will never get to meet my next-door grandfather. There will still be traces of him, however. Traces in how I care for my wife, how I care for my lawn, and, of course, in how I care for those who are our neighbors. Thank you Milton, for all of your love, and thank you DiAnne and family for sharing him with us.

Chris and Joslyn Wolberg - October 31, 2019 at 12:41 PM

LF

“ Libby Bruley and Family purchased the Dreams From the Heart Bouquet for the family of Milton W. Lee.



Libby Bruley and Family - October 29, 2019 at 04:50 PM

LB

“ Mr. Lee hired me as his secretary in 1976, Not long after he hired me, I think he come to realize that I was an ok secretary but my typing left a lot to be desired. The kind man that he was probably thought I can't fire her but maybe somehow he could promote her. That he did and sent me back to school and I became his paralegal. We generated many patents for Night Vision. He and DiAnne married very young and I used to tell him that he had been married all his life and he would laugh and say, "You could say that." He did so much for so many, taking neighbors to the doctor, picking up groceries for old friends that he had included as his extended family, and was always visiting the sick in his church family. We kept in touch as much as people do once they retire and he called me last year and asked for me to pray for him due to his lung cancer. And I thought this should not be happening to this loving, caring man - husband, father, grandfather, neighbor, co-worker and friend. Bad things happen to the best of people. Couple weeks ago, was Boss's Day and I sent him this funny card. DiAnne called me and we laughed together. I call him Milt now. I love him like a brother and he will always be in my heart and prayers. Elizabeth "Libby" Bruley

Libby Bruley - October 29, 2019 at 04:23 PM

DV

“ I met b just a few years ago at one of my favorite places, the bridge table. Because most of assembled group was retired, conversations were relaxed and a bit more open, so I learned a lot. With some people there is simply a palpable presence that extends beyond their physical space. Wayne was such a being in life and therefore remains such in death.

My love to all of his family and many friends.

Dana vanBever-Green

Dana vanBever-Green - October 29, 2019 at 11:56 AM

DV

'b' was the typo for Wayne!

Dana vanBever-Green - October 29, 2019 at 11:59 AM

LR

“ I have known Milton Lee for over forty-five years. Every time we came face to face, I felt a deep sense of strength of character and was always put at ease by his infectious smile and robust laugh. It was easy to see that this plain human being had a real grip on the meaning of life and his responsibility to ensure that everyone who came into his presence could feel his love.

I lost my dad in an accident when I was seventeen and never really had a chance to know him well; so when I saw Mr. Lee with his boys I felt a little envious since they were being groomed by the best.

Milton Lee truly was and will continue to be a man of the ages.

Our deepest sympathy, love and respect to Diane and the entire Lee family.

Sincerely, Tina and Leo Rosenthal

leo rosenthal - October 29, 2019 at 07:51 AM

DM

“ Our deepest respect and sympathy goes to the entire Lee family. Papa Lee was an amazing and kind man that could make his presences known should there be a need. He was always respectful to me and my family, since the 5th grade. 63 years with Momma D, is simply outstanding and a testament to the values. From the information you shared, another commonness I have is that my mother and he worked together for several years at Ft. Belvoir for the Night Vision initiative. I can almost bet Milt was one of the folks that made the holiday time quite interesting in the lab. My mother has told us stories. As adults, Papa and Momma Lee would even come to our adult softball games. There were few folks outside my parents that I attempted to immolate, but Milt and Dianne are certainly a pair to strive for. I am honored to know him and his family. I have benefited and appreciated his advice and laughter all the time during gatherings both as a teenager and adult for my children and his grandchildren. It was wonderful that Steve's children and my children have become and will remain close friends. Life came full circle. He will be missed. Thank you for sharing more about his life. You all are in my thoughts and prayers.

Denise A. McMinn - October 28, 2019 at 03:47 PM

DS

“ Denise, Tori and Austin Stegle-McMinn purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Milton W. Lee.



Denise, Tori and Austin Stegle-McMinn - October 28, 2019 at 03:31 PM