



Roy Stribling Phillips

MAY 13, 1921 - JAN 2, 2021



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Roy Stribling Phillips was born on Friday, May 13, 1921 in Clifton TN. He is survived by his daughter Gail of Memphis TN and son Gary of Iuka MS. He lost his wife Emily - his shipmate and dancing partner for 68 years in June of 2019. Two brothers and two sisters have predeceased him. His parents moved to the former Panama Canal Zone in 1924, a few years after the canal opened for traffic. His father served as a quarantine doctor for the U.S. Government and as a clinical doctor for the Canal Zone for 30 years.

Roy loved the life on the Canal Zone especially fishing and sailing. At age 15 he sailed completely through the Panama Canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific alone on a 12 foot sailboat. They would not open the locks for such a small craft so he had to be pulled through each chamber behind a large ocean going vessel. Roy considered it a privilege to be one of the few who grew up in the Panama Canal Zone and later went to work there. The Panama Canal Zone was given back to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999 and the Canal Zone no longer exists. After graduating from Balboa High School and attending Balboa Junior College he entered the United States Naval Academy in 1940 with a Presidential at-large appointment. He graduated on June 9, 1943 with the Class of 1944. His class was the first to start out on a three year course due to World War II being imminent. He served in the Pacific area, first on a destroyer operating with a fast carrier task force and later on the battleship USS North Carolina. He participated in battles at Tarawa, Saipan-Tinian, Iwo Jima and the surprise naval bombardment of Tokyo at night from the USS North Carolina. He was present on board the USS North Carolina in Tokyo Bay for the final surrender. During his service in WWII Roy earned the American Defense Service Medal with one star, the American Area Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal with eight stars and the WWII Victory Medal. He resigned his Navy commission in 1947 and joined the Navy Reserve from which he retired as a Commander in 1981. During his Navy Reserve



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time he was the Commanding Officer of the Navy Mobilization Unit for the Mid-South area located in Memphis. After WWII he returned to the Panama Canal Zone first to work on the Third Locks Engineering studies then as a Locks engineer for the Canal Locks Division. In 1950 he met his wife Emily who was visiting her sister in the Canal Zone. When Emily left the Canal Zone to return to Shreveport LA. Roy followed her, much to her surprise and finally coaxed her into marrying him after only six weeks of courtship. Although it was a short whirlwind courtship their love for each other proved eternal.

Roy and Emily left the Canal Zone in 1953 and returned to the United States. They settled in Memphis where Roy was employed as Maintenance Engineer for the Quaker Oats Chemical Plant. In 1956, Roy helped his Dad build a cabin on Bear Creek near Iuka MS and with his wife and children enjoyed years of fishing and sailing especially sailing at night when all was peaceful and quiet. Roy and Emily learned to Square Dance in 1975. They met many fine people during 36 plus years of square dancing and country western dancing. Their lives were enriched by the friendship and fellowship of the many dancers they came to know over the years. After retiring from Quaker Oats Chemical Plant in 1983 he took up golf with a group of square dancer golfers and some other retirees and they played 2-3 times a week even during the winter months (sometimes with ice on the greens). He thoroughly enjoyed the friendship and “encouraging” remarks of his golfing buddies and occasionally was able to win a few scats (nickels) from them.

Roy will be missed by family and friends. A memorial page has been set up at www.ROYSPHILLIPS.COM

The Family greatly appreciates the kindness and care provided by Home Instead Caregivers Elaine and Sonia, Private Duty Caregivers Lisa, Deliesha and Annie and Crossroads Hospice for their support and assistance. There will be no visitation. Private interment will be in Memorial Park Cemetery.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Roy by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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