



Phillip Wood

December 11, 1940 - December 3, 2020

Phillip Raydale Wood was preceded in death by his father, Edgar LeRoy Wood, his mother Grace Deason, his stepmother Evelyn Wood and his son Geoffrey Dale Wood.

He is survived by his beloved wife Peggy Jo Wood, son Christopher Wood, sister Carolyn, step-sister Faye, half-sister Janet, daughters-in-law, Cheryl and Marla Wood-Malott, granddaughters Amanda and Abigail and great granddaughter Avery.

Phillip Raydale Wood was born December 11, 1940 in Columbia, Missouri, approximately 2 1/2 years ahead of his beloved little sister Carolyn and four days shy of being exactly one year before the attack on the Navy Base at Pearl Harbor. Both facts seem to foreshadow things to come. He died December 3, 2020 just 8 days from his 80th birthday. In otherwise good health, he was one of the many victims of COVID 19. He fought his illness for approximately three weeks, two of which were spent in the Intensive Care Unit at Baptist Hospital East.

He came from humble beginnings and overcame a sometimes difficult childhood. Raised by his father and his stepmother. He and his sister, Carolyn, shared a close bond made all the closer by what at times were challenging circumstances. He excelled in school and was an Eagle Scout, demonstrating both his intelligence and his commitment.

With few financial options, he joined the United States Navy upon graduation from High School, following in the footsteps of his father and uncle. He attended boot camp in San Diego, CA and vocational training (Navy "A" School) in Millington, TN. At the time, Millington was the largest inland Navy Airbase, and all enlisted service members whose jobs would support the air fleet were trained at Millington. He completed his training and became an Aviation Electronics Mate and was assigned to a squadron of A-3 attack planes attached to the aircraft carrier, USS Saratoga. His ship was part of the Mediterranean Fleet, and he had ports of call all over Europe. He spent approximately five years in the Navy, which was a year longer than his original four-year enlistment, due to the Cuban Missile Crisis, where his ship and squadron participated in the naval blockade

of Cuba.

While he was in Memphis for his initial training, he and two Navy buddies, attended the Mid-South Fair. There under circumstances I will only describe here as suspicious, the three young men met three young women. Soon three couples were dating and two eventually got married. Dad married my mother Peggy Jo Jenkins, and Dad's buddy Gene Hudson married my mother's life long best friend, Jo Ann Johnston.

My parents initially lived in Kansas City, Missouri near my Dad's relatives. After I was born, they moved to Memphis to be near my Mom's family. He took a job in the IT industry working as a field engineer for Burroughs Corporation.

There he learned to maintain and repair the company's large mainframes, disk drives and printers. He worked there until Burroughs was purchased by another company. Afterwards he worked at Unisys and at Hitachi before retiring from the IT world. He did not want to sit around in retirement, so he eventually decided to work for Bellevue Baptist Church, which he and my Mom attended and loved. He was still managing the print shop at Bellevue when he succumbed to the virus inflicted pneumonia.

It is difficult to adequately reflect a person's life in a few short words and it is impossible to summarize my Dad's life. So instead I will provide a few vignettes that may give you insight to Ray's character. I will start with his name. His family and early friends know him simply as Ray. When he moved to Memphis, he told everyone he met to call him Phillip. I once asked him why he did that. He told me he had first come to really know the Lord Jesus as his savior his senior year in High School. He had noted that the name Ray is not found in the Bible, but the name Phillip is. He decided he wanted to make a new beginning with a new name, a biblical name. He was a very humble man. I never once heard him brag about any of his accomplishments. He always worked hard. We were never wealthy, but we had clothes, a good home, food and above all a private Christian Education.

Sometimes to earn extra cash he would take on odd repair jobs on the side. Although he did not have much experience, he was able to fix just about anything with only a schematic and his drive to succeed. He always dismissed his effort and his effectiveness as no more than anyone else's.

His sideline business never made much money, as he had a hard time charging anyone who needed his services. He faithfully took care of a widowed friend and her family at the first church he attended upon moving to Memphis. He even invited the family to vacation with us more than once, because he knew they would not go unless they had someone to

travel with. He loved his job at Bellevue and was always willing to stay late when someone had missed the deadline needed to get ready for some printing job.

He loved learning and always wanted to get a college degree. After many starts and stops at night school, he eventually earned an associate degree in Divinity from Union University. He loved the Lord and wanted to serve Him by serving those around him. He did so quietly. He never asked for, or wanted, recognition. In one of our last conversations while he was still able to talk, he gave me the password for his online banking. A frustrating long, seemingly random set of letters and characters. When I asked him how he remembered it, he explained what the characters meant. The password referred to his wife, his children first, then himself followed by the word "last". A constant reminder he created for himself to remember to put others first.

I am who I am, only because he was who he was. And he would want you to know that he was who he was, only because his Savior, Jesus, did what He did. I have missed talking to him every day since before he passed. We will always miss him, until the day we see him again.