

John H Hays

November 23, 1926 - May 16, 2014

He was the beloved husband of the late Betty Ruth (Traugher) Hays; loving father of Rebecca Ruth Hager (Grady) and Rachel Claire Greene of Mt. Laurel, N.J., and Barbara Grace Hays (Eddie) of Fairfield, Iowa. He was also father-in-law of Gene Greene. John was the dear grandfather of Bryan, Nathan (Melinda), Erin (Paul), Benjamin, Noah, Eric and Jessica; he was also the great-grandfather of Andrew, Michael, Sarah, Jessie, Eric, and Alexander James. John was the brother of Dorothy Peters and the late Nancy Hughes. John was a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II, serving in the Pacific. John was born in Gulfport, Miss. He left school in the 6th grade to help support his family. He worked for Western Union for 37 years and started by delivering telegrams on his bicycle. He retired as a Senior Engineer. Each promotion often required relocating, and he moved from Tennessee to Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and finally settled in New Jersey. After retiring from Western Union, John returned to school and proudly earned his high school diploma. He also earned an Associate of Science degree at Burlington County College.

Retiring allowed John more time for his favorite activity: giving to others. He was a Lifetime Member of the Willingboro Emergency Squad and served as an EMT for over 20 years. He also volunteered for the Red Cross to help organize blood drives. He personally donated over 10 gallons of whole blood, and participated in their pheresis program. John taught armchair aerobics to seniors in nursing homes, and regularly entertained them by playing his guitar

and singing. He also worked part-time at East Park Pharmacy.

John was devoted to his church. He was active in the Salvation Army in his youth and signed his Articles of War in 1949. He joined the Methodist church after moving to the north, and was a member of St. Paul United Methodist Church for 45 years. He was a loyal, active, and well-loved member, and sang in the choir. He served in various committees. John inspired all with his enthusiastic AMENs.

John's greatest love was his family. He treasured his daughters and loved playing with his grandchildren--as well as his great-grandchildren. He loved dogs and nature. He spent many happy hours in his garden. He was generous, patient, and wise. He will be deeply missed by everyone whose lives he touched. His was a life well lived.

Relatives and friends are invited to John's Life Celebration from 7 to 9 p.m. Friday at Snover/Givnish of Cinnaminson, 1200 Route 130 North. Viewing and visitation will be held Saturday, at 11 a.m. and funeral at 11:30 a.m. at the St Paul United Methodist Church, 201 Levitt Parkway, Willingboro, NJ 08046. Interment will be held privately.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations in John's name to be sent to Saint Paul United Methodist Church Memorial Fund.

Previous Events

Gathering of Family and Friends

MAY **23**. 7:00 PM (ET)

Givnish Funeral Home Cinnaminson
1200 Route 130 N
Cinnaminson, NJ 08077
(856) 829-8000
info@givnish.com
<https://www.givnish.com>

Funeral Service

MAY **24**. 11:30 AM (ET)

St. Paul United Methodist Church
201 Levitt Parkway
Willingboro, NJ

Tribute Wall



“ *John H Hays*

September 09, 2022 at 01:27 AM

“ This was written by his daughters and read at John's funeral by his son-in-law, Eddie Caplan.

Memories

Barbara speaking:

After Dad died, I picked up his guitar to play a few songs. I immediately had a question to ask him about a chord. It was such a sad moment. There was so much wisdom in that man, so much more I could learn from him, and I had run out of time. Then I realized that there would never, could never, be enough time to learn everything Dad had to teach. Likewise, these few notes could never express the full story of this man that we love so much.

All of us:

We had the best parents ever. Both of them were strong and independent and stubborn! (These nuts didn't fall far from the tree!) Mom always believed that we could do ANYTHING. And dad expected us to do it. We believed them. They raised three very strong girls. Dad came home once telling us of a bumper sticker that he saw on the way home. He quoted it often as his all-time favorite: "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle." Who would have guessed that Dad was a feminist?

Dad taught us to make decisions for ourselves. If we asked if we could go to a party, he would not answer yes or no. He would ask questions (When? Where? Are parents at home? Who will attend?) He would summarize the pros and cons, but in the end, the decision was left to us. Even if we made "not so good" decisions, he trusted us and supported us. We tried so hard to deserve that trust. Disappointing our parents was the worst possible punishment.

Dad was very opinionated but never judgmental. He always said it was not his place to judge. He treated everyone with respect.

The man that most of you think of when you remember Dad is not

the man that we grew up with. Dad was quiet, shy, and serious. It wasn't until he became Mom's caretaker that he learned to be more open with his emotions. He showed his love through his constant support of who we chose to be. He never raised his voice to us, but he was firm with his rules and expectations. His confidence in our ability to do anything was contagious.

Dad had an incredible thirst for knowledge. He left school in the 6th grade but never stopped learning. In addition to his electronics courses in the Navy, he took correspondence courses via mail. He learned calculus that way! He earned 100% on every single assignment. He learned Italian so he could enjoy his operas more. When he returned to formal schooling after 'retiring', he said that he was proud of his associate degree, but the high school diploma always meant more to him. Perhaps waiting for so many years to earn that diploma increased its value.

Claire speaking:

I always knew that Dad was strong and smart and humble and kind. And I know he was wise, but I don't think I really understood wisdom until about five years ago. I hope that I remember to use those wise things he taught me. The last few years have been such a blessing. He kept me strong. He was my rock. He took care of me. I never really felt like a caretaker and did my best to make him understand that. I am so grateful that I was able to spend that time with him.

Mom's sister, Aunt Peggy, was 14 when Mom and Dad married. She spent a lot of time with them and the three of them were always close. When speaking to her a few days ago, she expressed how much he touched lives, "especially mine" she said. Rachel responded, "and especially mine and especially everyone else he came in contact with." Aunt Peggy repeated, "NO. ESPECIALLY MINE!" He had that way of making everyone feel that "especially mine" thing.

All of us:

Rebecca was Dad's favorite; ask anyone. She was the first and so

beautiful . He was so proud of her. He took her to get her first “big girl” haircut in 6th grade, and--of course--he let her choose the style she wanted. In the end, more than a foot of curls lay on the floor and she was transformed into a beautiful young lady with a stylish bob. Mom was furious.

(cont.)

Barbara Hays - May 29, 2014 at 08:24 AM

(Continued)

Rachel was Dad's favorite; ask anyone. She practiced archery with him, built model planes and trains with him, replaced the roof with him. He was supportive of her rebellious independence, and called the high school to complain when the business teacher gave her a C because she wouldn't wear make-up to her job. Why, Dad asked, would a teacher require a young girl to dress "like everyone else"? He was so proud of her. She became his nurse in the final years, and toward the very end, he trusted no one else to care for him.

Barbara was Dad's favorite; ask anyone. Her birth was a scary one and the story is that Dad named her Barbara Grace because the doctor told him that if both Mom and baby survived, it would be by the Grace of God. She was the musician, sharing one of his favorite hobbies. He was so proud of her. Just when she was thinking of giving up playing the flute, he told her how good she was getting and bought her a new flute. It was a brilliant trick. She continued playing the flute and music remains a happy part of her life.

Mom and Dad's faith carried them through many rough times. When people asked Dad how he was, he always told people he was "Great! The Lord walks with me. All I have to do is reach up and He holds on to me."

Dad never gave lectures or life lesson instructions. He lived an honest, simple, and honorable life, and taught by example. We'll close with a summary of some of those lessons.

- Do all jobs--no matter how big or small--well enough to be proud of your work.*
- If you break something, of course it was an accident, of course you're sorry. But it's still broken. You have to make it right.*
- Yes you can. Of course you can.*
- Not everyone has the blessings that you do. Show compassion.*
- Never use your situation as an excuse for not doing what you need to do.*
- Look to the example of great people if you want to do great things.*
- Respect all people. Do not tolerate disrespect from others.*
- Take care of yourself; your service is needed and you need to be able to help.*
- Be patient. We're all doing the best we can.*
- Don't judge. Even if you disagree with the decisions of others, never withdraw your love and support of the decision maker.*
- Death is no barrier to love.*

We will miss him, as we do Mom, every minute of every day, but we know they're both in a better place. We are everything we are because

they loved us.

Hallelujah!

Can we get a John Hays "AMEN?"

Rachel Greene - May 29, 2014 at 10:04 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Jessica Greene - May 23, 2014 at 03:06 PM

RG

About 10 years ago, I ask Dad to make a tape for me because I realized his music was so comforting to me. Weeks (maybe months) passed and one day he handed me a tape. He said his voice was not what it used to be but this tape was one he had recorded for my maternal grandparents sometime around 1970. I hope everyone finds it as comforting as I do.

One of the songs on the tape is "Haven of Rest". A few years back, he asked his grandson, Eric, to play it on his trumpet at his funeral (it had been played at his father's funeral). Eric managed to fulfill his granddad's request and performed beautifully.

Dad wrote one of the songs on the tape, "I'll Think Only of You" for his oldest daughter, Becky, when she had to leave a boyfriend behind when we moved to NJ.

The picture was taken in 2011 when we went to visit his sisters in southern California and my son's family in the bay area. My son, Nathan, took us sailing in the bay on his father-in-law's boat. Another grandson, Noah and two great-grandsons, Eric and Alex were on board. Wow, what a great day we had!

Rachel Greene - May 26, 2014 at 07:46 AM

ML

“ So sorry for the lose of your Dad. I worked with John at Eastpark Pharmacy for many years and thought of him as a very kind and thoughtful gentile man. Marilyn Lynch

Marilyn Lynch - May 22, 2014 at 01:46 PM

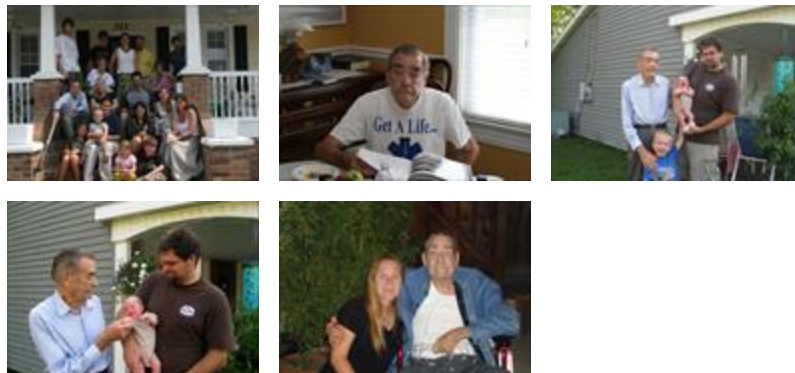
JE

“ Our dear John will always be remembered as our only male Armchair Fitness Instructor for the YMCA of Burlington County. He was such a joy. Always had a smile and hug to give. His participants loved him. Whenever I had to sub (which was rare) his class (friends) would be so concerned and express how much compassion and, love and fun he brought to them. I would then see John at East Park Pharmacy and he always remembered me even when years would go by without seeing him. I would like to extend my sincere sympathy to the family and to his friends. I can only imagine how wonderful he was as a father, grandfather, etc!!! Please be at peace knowing John touched a lot of lives with his beautiful soul!!!. God Bless!!!

Joann Erickson - May 22, 2014 at 11:43 AM

RG

“ 13 files added to the album Memories Album



Rachel Greene - May 21, 2014 at 10:43 PM

SF

“ Thanks for sharing these wonderful memories with your family in Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia and all over the Southeast. We loved Uncle John dearly! Blessings to you!

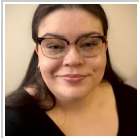
Sheena Corbitt Franklin - May 21, 2014 at 10:41 PM

RG

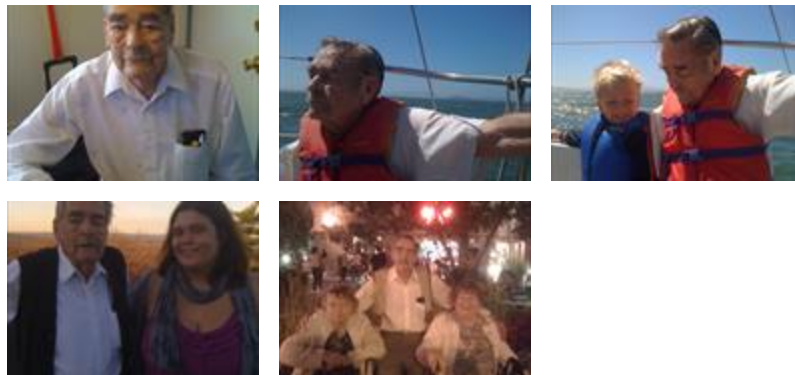
“ Rachel Greene lit a candle in memory of John H Hays



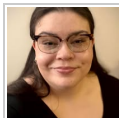
Rachel Greene - May 21, 2014 at 03:43 PM



“ 5 files added to the album Memories Album



Jessica Greene - May 21, 2014 at 03:10 PM



My Granddad was a great man, a wonderful influence, and an honest individual. I loved him with all my heart, but it was his time. God bless him. These photos are my favorite memories of Granddad.

Jessica Greene - May 21, 2014 at 03:14 PM

WF

“ I was saddened to read of the loss of your loved one. I personally experienced the grief of losing my loved ones. However, there is comfort to know the Holy Scriptures gives the assurance that God will end death, pain and sorrow. Rev 21:4
For the ones we have lost in death, there is a promise for them by means of the resurrection. John 5:28,29

Williams Family - May 21, 2014 at 12:49 PM

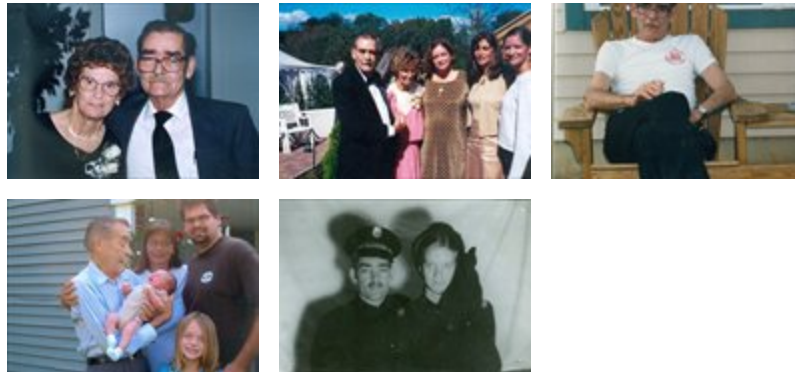
SF

“ My deepest sympathy in the loss of your loved one. May God's comforting arms be felt around you. I remember Mr. Hays as a former customer of Ward's Christian Bookshop, he had a sweet friendship spirit.
Sorry for your loss.
Suzanne Faulkner
Former Manager of Ward's Christian Bookshop

suzanne faulkner - May 21, 2014 at 06:03 AM



“ 47 files added to the album Memories Album



Givnish Funeral Home - May 20, 2014 at 02:03 PM