



Donald Jefferson Bizzell

December 8, 1938 - December 1, 2022

Donald Jefferson Bizzell, age 83, passed away peacefully on December 1, 2022 in Tallahassee, Florida. He was born in Miami, Florida in 1938 to parents Scott Parks Bizzell and Pauline Alice White. Don was predeceased by his parents and his brother, Emory Bizzell. Don leaves behind his loving wife of 45 years, Laura Wills Bizzell; children Beverly Bizzell Aiken (Bruce), Jennifer Bizzell Van Dyke (Kevin), Lorre McBride Howell (Joseph), Robert McBride, III (Martha), Jeff McBride (Rose), and Gregg McBride (Yenys). He also instills his legacy within 17 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and a host of extended family members.

Don spent his childhood in Miami. He would often go fishing in lakes, canals, the Intercoastal or the Atlantic Ocean. Among the docks from which he cast his line was Vizcaya, before it was acquired by Miami-Dade County and restored. He visited other famous homes in Biscayne Bay while doing lawn service with his step-father, including once for the notorious gangster Al Capone. Joining Don in his Miami adventures was his older brother Emory. They discovered that a boxcar a block away was both a playground and a big firework, giving them the nickname "the boxcar bandits." Donald followed his father to Georgia, where he graduated from Savannah High School, married and started a family. While working at Sears Roebuck designing display windows, his supervisor told him he needed a college degree to advance his career. So, while raising a family, Don went to Miami-Dade Junior College and

then on to Gainesville to the University of Florida where he obtained his Master of Science in Architectural Studies with a concentration in Historical Preservation. His first job out of college was with Tim Siebert in Sarasota, where he worked on the Arvida housing project.

The saying goes “last hired is first fired,” and when the ‘73-’75 recession hit, Don was let go. He searched the State and landed a job in Tallahassee. In 1974 he was instrumental in the establishment of the School of Architecture at Florida A&M University. Don’s next career move was to the Florida Department of Natural Resources where he developed new construction at Florida’s State Parks. His work still stands as the boardwalk, bath houses and museum renovation at MacArthur Beach State Park. You can watch the wildlife from his observation tower at Paynes Prairie State Park. Don finished his career with the State Department of Education where he developed and taught the building code for public schools in Florida. He was also a lifetime member of the American Institute of Architecture.

Don had a rapidly growing family in Tallahassee. In 1976, Don married Laura Wills. They blended their families and became the modern day Brady Bunch; three boys, three girls, the lovely blonde and the architect. Spouses came, and grandchildren came, and great-grandchildren came, and so did their friends and acquaintances. All were welcome in the house. All were welcome at the table. Don was always creating a handmade invitation for dinners at their house. If you had some spare time for a tour, Don would show you his workshop in the backyard or his handiwork around the house. He could create or fix anything. Laura would have an idea for a home renovation, like a different color wall, remove a wall or build a room, in no time at all, he would make it a “dream come true.” In his spare time, he would work at restoring his 1916 Ford Model T. If you had the notion, he would give you a tour of it or better yet, a ride. He loved showing it off and talking to his peers about it.

Don was a man of deep faith. In Miami, Don was a deacon at Northwest Baptist church and passed the studies to become an Ordained Minister. While in Gainesville, he was youth minister at Forest Hill Baptist Church. He regularly sang hymns to his young girls. When he came to Tallahassee, he became an integral part of Tallahassee Heights United Methodist Church. He participated in their Men's Fellowship and their Sunday School classes as a teacher. Don was a faithful servant, feeding from the church kitchen for Wednesday night dinners and Men's Saturday morning breakfast. He loved cooking with the "Kitchen Angels." He would slice the meat with precision, stir the grits (because you never stop stirring "good" grits) and of course, he would do the dishes and mop the floor. With a heart larger than life, Don always had a smile on his face, a joke ready to tell and a hug for anyone in need of one. He treated everyone with kindness, compassion and told them of the love of Jesus. When he faced memory loss at the end of his life, he never forgot how to pray and his prayers always started by giving thanks to God for the blessings in his life, foremost his family.

Don's family is grateful for the help from Brookdale at Centre Pointe Memory Care and Big Bend Hospice in preserving his dignity as he completed his final days. In lieu of flowers, a contribution in Donald's name to Tallahassee Heights United Methodists Church (Mahan Drive) would be a fitting tribute, continuing the spreading of the Gospel.

His family will receive guests for visitation at Tallahassee Heights United Methodist Church Thursday, December 8, 2022 at 12:00 noon, a funeral service at 1:00 p.m. and brief birthday celebration for Don following the service. Don will be interred at Tallahassee Memory Gardens.

Breanna Green of Bevis Funeral Home is assisting the family with their arrangements. (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com)

Previous Events

Viewing & Visitation

DEC 8. 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Tallahassee Heights United Methodist Church
3004 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Visitation

DEC 8. 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Tallahassee Heights United Methodist Church
3004 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Funeral Service

DEC 8. 1:00 PM (ET)

Tallahassee Heights United Methodist Church
3004 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Tribute Wall



“ *Bevis Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Donald Jefferson Bizzell*



Bevis Funeral Home - December 06, 2022 at 04:17 PM



“ *Love you Granddad!*



Hannah McBride - December 09, 2022 at 10:12 AM



“ *Mike & Mary Bouknight purchased the Beautiful i n Blue for the family of Donald Jefferson Bizzell.*



Mike & Mary Bouknight - December 06, 2022 at 04:31 PM