



Robert Edward "Ed" Underwood

January 15, 1945 - September 13, 2015

Robert Edward "Ed" Underwood passed away on September 13, 2015. Ed was born in Thomasville, Georgia, on January 15, 1945 to James S. and Rachel Underwood. He grew up in Perry, Florida, was graduated from Taylor County High School and received his Bachelor's degree in Business from Florida State University in 1967. Ed began his career with the Florida Department of Transportation as a Management Analyst. Two years later at the age of 24 he was appointed as Chief of the Department of General Services, Bureau of Motor Vehicles and Water Craft, serving as the youngest Bureau Chief in state government at that time.

In 2000, Ed retired as Director of the Department of Management Services' Aircraft and Motor Vehicles Division, with over 33 years of service. He also contracted with the U.S. Postal Service to transport mail, by truck, in North Florida and South Georgia. In semi-retirement, with his love of boats, Ed was a Governmental and Commercial Products Manager for several boating companies where he was responsible for the development and sales of the company's commercial boat lines.

Ed was an enthusiastic boater and loved the Big Bend coast. In retirement, he enjoyed spending time at his beach house, boating, fishing, kayaking, hiking and being out in nature.

Ed is predeceased by his parents, James S. and Rachel Underwood. He is survived by his wife, Vickie Underwood, a daughter Carla Stephens (Mitch), and two stepsons, Zach and Isaac Smith, grandchildren Colin and Savannah

Stephens and Madison and Hunter Smith, a brother Jim Underwood (Christy), nieces and nephews Lorraine Underwood Ames (Chris), Lisa Underwood Manwaring (Lyle), and Lindsey Underwood, and other great nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Ed's life will be held at Bevis Funeral Home, 2710 North Monroe Street, Tallahassee, FL, at 11:00 am, Saturday, September 19th. Memorial contributions in Ed's memory may be made to Mayo Clinic Cancer Research, Department of Development, 4500 San Pablo Road, Jacksonville, Florida, 32224, or PAWS of Wakulla, P.O. Box 1195, Crawfordville, FL 32327. Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home (www.bevisfh.com, 850-385-2193) is assisting the family with arrangements.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

SEP **19**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Bevis Funeral Home & Crematory
200 John Knox Rd
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 385-2193

Tribute Wall

“Ed was my first friend that I remember having, as we knew each other even before first grade. Our families were practically mirror images of each other, parents being about the same age and children spanning about the same number of years. Both families attended the same Baptist church in the same small town of 2500.

My earliest explicit memory of Ed was the first day of school in the first grade. The classroom had double desks, with two students seated side by side in a single desk. Ed and I were put in the same desk, which I thought was a lucky break because it was nice to be paired with someone I knew on that nervous first day of school. However, Ed was apparently even more nervous than me, because he soon greeted me by moving his hand under the desktop and giving me a painful pinch!

The Underwoods lived on North Jefferson Street, the town's main thoroughfare. Their location could not have been more ideal. In those days and in that small southern town, while there were people we thought of as "having money," the truth is that the great majority of people did not have a lot of money. Ed's father, as I recall was a mail carrier, which allowed him to lead a comfortable middle class life.

I visited Ed at his home many times over the years. I recall that his mother was particularly likable, not aloof like adults can often be. She had very dark hair and a slightly harried or ditsy personality. So far as I recall she did not work outside the home. Ed's father was a more remote figure in my mind, and probably not home much when I visited. Ed was blend of his father's dignity and his mother's tenderness.

My visits included watching the Underwood's black and white TV in their living room, a treat because we did not yet have a TV at our house. We were limited to channel 3, Jacksonville, which was snowy, and "Sky King" was the Saturday morning show I most remember.

Ed had a great backyard, deeply extending to the road behind. He had a wonderful cocker spaniel, whose name has been lost to me in the mists of time. Ed raised rabbits and had a rabbit cage in the backyard. They also had a shed or garage that served as a shed. In that shed was a jigsaw, which unlike the practical tools my Dad had, was something boys could make things with.

Ed's neighbors included the Casey brothers. The Casey's ran Casey's store, located on Jefferson Street just north of the Underwood's and the Casey's lived next to store and the Underwood's. The Casey boys were a year or two younger than Ed and I think we're a pain in his side, as their rowdy energy contrasted with Ed's almost adult like conservative nature. But the Casey boys were smart and I remember at least one of them was a crack ping pong player, a skill he could display at the city swimming pool just two blocks away.

Ed and I drifted apart as we got older and aged up to high school, which is so often the case with boyhood friends. Ed was not in the band and I was, so that led to some parting of our interests. I remember in church that Ed knew and remembered the words of the hymns, while I focused on the melody without being conscious of the words. Ed also played basketball and football, but I recall that he rebelled a bit and may have even quit football because he took issue with the gung-ho attitude of the coach.

Ed was tall and dignified by high school standards and was probably regarded as an elder statesman by the other students. Of course, I knew him to have a vulnerable side (as revealed by that nervous pinch he gave me in the first grade), and he liked a good joke.

I lost track of Ed after high school, though I knew he had a career in state government. When we're growing up in the Deep South, almost everyone was a Democrat, which gradually reversed to the majority being republican. I don't know how Ed developed as he got older, but I suspect the traits I have alluded to kept him a person of

a liberal and fair minded disposition. Goodbye to my first friend.

Bishop Dansby - June 04, 2016 at 07:08 AM

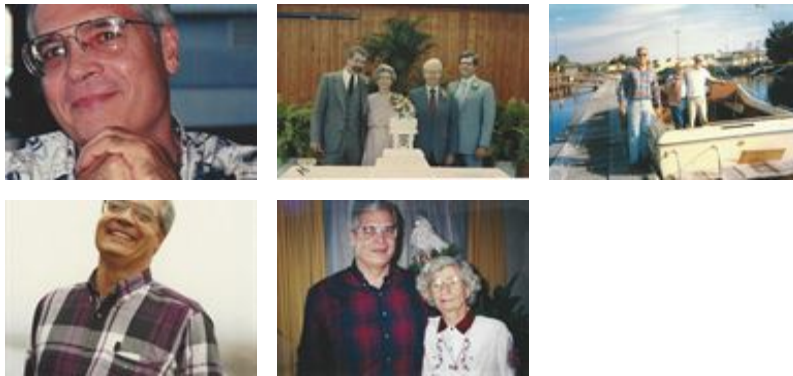
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“ *We were so sad to hear of Ed’s passing. We have so many fond memories of him hanging out with us at Keaton, but most of all he will be remembered for all the kindness he bestowed. You are in our prayers Vickie, God bless. Ronnie and Jean Nichols*

Ronnie and Jean Nichols - September 18, 2015 at 05:17 PM

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“ *85 files added to the album Life Tributes*



Bevis Funeral Home - September 17, 2015 at 01:44 PM

DM

“ *Vickie.....our condolences to you and the family.....Deane and Sue Mink*

Dr. Deane Mink - September 16, 2015 at 08:18 AM