



William Curtis "Bill" Smith

August 26, 1922 - September 30, 2015

William Curtis "Bill" Smith, 93, died on September 30, 2015. Bill was born in Athens, Georgia in 1922, the son of Guy and Natalie Smith. He attended Leon High School in Tallahassee and Castle Heights Military and Junior College in Lebanon, Tennessee. At 18 he entered the Army as an Infantry Platoon Leader and served in World War II in North Africa, Sicily and Italy under General Patton. He was wounded in action twice and was awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. Bill loved being an American soldier and took great pride in his family's military heritage. He was the direct descendent of Captain Samuel Smith, the son of an indentured servant, and one of the 400 Minutemen at the North Bridge on the first day of the Revolutionary War. Upon returning from World War II, Bill attended Loyola and Tulane Universities and Florida State University and married Clara Jane Carroll in 1947. In 1949 he entered the surgical supply business and in 1961 formed Southeastern Surgical Supply Company, where he was President and Chairman of the Board.

As a longtime Tallahassee resident, Bill energetically participated in community service. He played a strong role in the Boy Scouts of America, serving as Scoutmaster of Troop 115 and later becoming President of the Suwannee River Area Council. He went on to form and become the Scoutmaster of a troop for Scouts with disabilities. Bill was the proud father and grandfather of two Eagle Scouts and was awarded one of Scouting's highest achievements, the Silver Beaver Award. In a speech he made to the

Bainbridge Rotary Club on the merits of Scouting he said, "For each one of us should be ashamed to die until we have won at least one victory for youth." Bill believed in the power of local involvement and was active in the political arena, business and in protecting the environment. He was the Chairman of Governor Reubin Askew's Inauguration Committee in 1971, Chairman of the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100, President of Northside Rotary Club, Governor for Rotary District 694, Board Member of the Nature Conservancy, President of Leon County Cattleman's Association and on the Board of Directors for the Northwest Florida Water Management District. He was President of Springtime Tallahassee and was the honorary Andrew Jackson in 1974.

Bill is survived by his wife of 68 years, the former Clara Jane Carroll; his son, Robert Mills Smith (Tallahassee); his daughters, Carroll Smith Rodriguez (St. Louis, Missouri) and Polly Smith Kleissas (Wye Mills, Maryland) and by his grandchildren Polly and Patricia Rodriguez and John William Kleissas and by his son-in-laws, Patrick Rodriguez and Constantine Kleissas.

One of Bill's fondest memories was two years ago when, accompanied by his son Mills, he joined his fellow World War II Veterans in visiting the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. on an Honor Flight out of Tallahassee. When arriving at the airport, he was kissed by Miss Maryland and later met by family members at the memorial. He knew then he was lucky to live to see that day. Bill Smith was brave, loving and strong and the consummate southern gentleman. He was adored by his family and friends. He loved sitting on the back of his pick-up truck, smoking his pipe and watching dusk roll in at his old farm in Havana. He survived the Great Depression, the Nazis, raising three teenage children in the 60s and 70s and a long marriage to a strong-willed woman, whom he cherished. It was a good life.

A graveside service will be held at 11:00 am on Saturday, October 3, 2015 at Roselawn Cemetery. Following the service there will be a reception for family and friends at the family home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Bill's honor to the following

organizations: Military Order of the Purple Heart, Tallahassee Chapter 758;
The Boy Scouts of America, Suwannee River Area Council and Honor Flight,
Tallahassee.

Tribute Wall

AW

“ Clara Jane. my heart and prayers go out to you and your family. I always enjoyed speaking to Mr, Smith. He was always such a gentleman. and it was always evident how much he cared about and respected you. May your wonderful memories hold you up and bring you much happiness to you and your family in the days and months ahead. Only my granddaughter's wedding could keep me from you tomorrow, but my heart will be with. May God be with you. Ann Hopkins Wainwright.

Ann Hopkins Wainwright - October 02, 2015 at 09:58 PM