



Jack L. Easterday

March 24, 1928 - June 20, 2017

THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT JACK - A TRIBUTE

We are all here to celebrate the life of Jack Easterday. If Jack could be here today, he would be incredibly pleased - so many of the people he loved are here at one time in the same place. Thank you to all of our friends and family for the outpouring of love over the past few days. Each story you have shared will help keep Jack alive in our hearts and memories.

Jack was husband, father, grandfather, friend, colleague and much more. He was born in Tiro, Ohio and grew up in Shelby, Ohio. According to stories he told me, he spent a lot of his younger years playing outside with friends - mostly in a vacant lot near his home. They were adventurous at times, climbed trees, played ball, rode bicycles - and generally doing things that would have given his parents prematurely gray hair if they knew what he had been up to. He broke his wrist falling out of a tree on one of those adventures. When he was a teenager, he loved riding his bicycle out to his grandparents' farm. He also was very fond of taking off at night riding along the country roads.

Jack graduated from Shelby High School, then headed for Wittenberg University. From there, he went to Case Western, then received a degree in Electrical Engineering from Toledo University. He served two years in the army working in an Army TV station facility. He felt lucky to get chosen for that -

apparently there weren't too many electrical engineers available for the job.

He married Nancy Drehs in 1950 and he and Nancy had two children, Karen and Ron. Following the Army, he moved his young family to Long Island, NY and worked for Sperry Aeronautics designing airplane navigation systems. In 1957, he moved back to Ohio and established residency in Columbus, and spent the rest of his career as an electrical engineer at the Battelle Memorial Institute. At Battelle, he had many interesting assignments. At the end of his career he was in reliability, primarily for jobs that Battelle was doing for the United States Department of Energy. He traveled a lot in that capacity and said he was never a popular visitor. He performed a reliability audit, and reported anything that was not being done according to government specifications. Most of those projects related to the Nuclear Waste Isolation project. That same project sent him to Texas for a year (while I stayed home), then another year in Chicago, commuting to Dublin every weekend. Finally, in 1990, after 35 years at Battelle, he retired.

Jack had many passions - gadgets, tinkering, modifying, computers, music, and good food (and a hefty glass of Scotch as he watched the Charlie Rose Show late at night). Jack always ate slowly savoring every bite of his food, and family will remember he was always the last one to finish his meal. Lord help the waiter who tried to snatch his plate before he finished!

Jack and I met at Worthington Chorus. At that time he was the new President of Vaudevillities and I was assistant Director of the Chorus. We both loved to perform and both of us were chosen to do a specialty dance. Unknown by us, his friends had arranged for us to be partners in that dance.

Jack was an accomplished musician, loved to sing, played piano, was organist for his church, played drums in the Shelby High School marching band, Clarinet and Baritone Sax with the Battelle Band. He loved Big Band

music, Classical music and Show Tunes. We were subscribers to the Columbus Symphony Orchestra for over 30 years.

I was blessed to have Jack in my life. We were best friends and married for 31 years. We had 5 children from previous marriages - Ron and Karen from Jack's first marriage and Kathy, Debbie, and Anna from my first marriage. Jack accepted my family and treated them as his own. I did the same with his family. He would have done anything for any of them. I always appreciated his love for family. Grandchildren came along and we loved them and watched them grow up to have families of their own - 8 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren!

Jack was very generous and kind-hearted. He liked doing things for others. He was always there when I needed him and I knew I could count on him. He understood me, supported me, encouraged me and loved me. I loved his subtle sense of humor. I will carry that with me always.

Several people shared stories about Jack.

From Ron and Karen (son and daughter):

“Dad was always trying to find a more efficient way to do things. Growing up in Shelby, he worked at a bicycle factory putting the wheels on finished bikes. Although fiercely left handed, he used both his left and right hands to bolt both wheel nuts on at the same time, spinning them in opposite directions to be faster than anyone else.

My dad believed everything could be improved and was just not quite right as it came mass produced. Growing up, it seemed every present had been opened and “improved” – a new bicycle was customized with accessories he just knew that I would need; for an erector set he cut out foam blocks of

squares and circles, glued them in the box so wheels and parts could be neatly organized. His efforts were not always appreciated as a child, I just wanted to open a present first myself! But he was always thinking of ways to make life better.

One of his less successful experiments was an attempt to stop our new Styrofoam cooler from squeaking on road trips in the car. After spraying it with a heavy dark green enamel paint, the Styrofoam started dissolving, leaving the surface looking lumpy like a field of cobblestones. But we still used that cooler for years, as you never throw away something that still works. And the squeaking never stopped.

Another failed experiment was an attempt to develop an automatic dog food dispenser so that their pet dachshund, Snoopy, could be left at home during short vacations. The dispenser always seemed to dump out all of the food at once, and the idea had to be scrapped.

Jack had great interest in photography. Starting during the lean war years in Shelby developing black and white photos, he spoke of how he would add glass marbles to the jars of chemicals as they were used, to keep air out of the jars that might reduce their lifespan. Later, he enjoyed discussing technical aspects of photography with his father-in-law Bill Drehs, who was a Leica camera dealer. Jack had card and cards of notes regarding focal lengths, exposure times, and developing times.

In the 1960's, he converted an old fruit cellar into a fully functioning darkroom. Helping to develop films and prints in the old fruit cellar darkroom was a special privilege for Karen. After moving to Worthington in the 1970's, he again built a full darkroom in the basement so he could develop, enlarge, and print his own photos.

Jack liked being out on the water, especially during our annual family weekend trip to Wamplers Lake in Michigan, where his college friend, Don Davies had a cabin built by Don and his father. We'd arrive late on a Friday night, sleepy. All of us children, Karen and me, along with Don and Deloris' three children, were up early Saturday morning watching in quiet frustration as Jack and Don tinkered with the outboard motors and other needed maintenance tasks, wondering if we would EVER get to go out on the lake. And then we would be in a parade of boats towed in a long line down the canal to the lake, for a full day of boating, swimming, rowing, sailing, and best of all - when you were old enough - ski-boarding. The ski-board was a heavy 4x8 sheet of plywood, with rounded nose, that you could stand on as it was towed by the boat. Way before wakeboards! “

Karen (daughter) wrote:

Dad held the position in high school of principal clarinet and principal percussion, simultaneously. I never quite figured out how that worked. Of course, he also played the piano effortlessly, a gift I so admired. He could have a piece of music with only a simple arrangement in front of him, and improvise something amazing. Grandmother Easterday told me once that this skill was not appreciated in their church; she wished he would be willing to stick to the printed page and earn a little pocket money in return for his music lessons.

Kathy (daughter) wrote:

“Remember when shortly after you guys were married, me and Jack Stumph were building a house and we lived with you guys for 6 months? Good grief. That was such a generous gift! How many men would have done that? Not many.

I remember Jack playing with Jake and the trains and patiently showing him how to run them and how they work. I remember when Jack fixed a purse of

mine that broke, by fashioning a new connector (it was a Gucci purse so it was important!)

Then there were all the dinners and fun celebrations at your house - the dishes he cleaned, the chocolate exchanged, the fun discussions of current events.

We especially liked spending time with you and Jack when it was just a small group, like dinner at our house or dinner out. That's when we got to talk with Jack and hear his points of view on current events, etc. He was always very thoughtful in his perspective."

Anna (daughter) reminded me of this story:

Several weeks after the Worthington Chorus show, Jack called me and asked if I would like to go to the Vaudevillities cast party. The Vaudevillities group had been trying to convince me to join Vaudevillities and I didn't have time to do that. I thought Jack just wanted me to get to know the group which might convince me to join. I agreed to come and asked "shall I meet you there?" Jack said "Heavens..no. I'll pick you up." We said goodbye. Then it dawned on me what had just happened. I clenched my fists and marched into the room where Anna was sitting and said "that man just asked me for a date!" I didn't think I was ready to start dating. Anna said, "Go out with him Mom and have a good time. You don't have to marry the man".

Ben (Grandson) wrote:

"I remember when you decided to upgrade the treehouse. Me and my Dad came over to help, and even though it would have been way faster and easier to do it himself, Jack gave me jobs to do and let me help. I remember him wearing his favorite hat and smoking his pipe the whole time.

When we were kids, all of the family gatherings at holidays were at your house. For every meal (Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, even cookouts), Jack would say a prayer before we ate. He always took time to prepare a prayer and sometimes had it written out on a notecard. It was important to him and that always made an impression on me.

Jack was a lifelong engineer, whether the task required engineering or not! The last time I saw him was at the house when we were working on lowering the bed frame. He had a hard time getting his scooter through the turns in the hallway and kept bumping into the doorframe. It frustrated him and I could tell that even though he was sick and weak, the wheels in his brain were turning trying to figure out how to fix the problem. Once everything was done, when I went to tell him goodbye, he was leaned over the side of his chair with a 3x5 notecard, moving it around the base of the scooter. At first glance, you would have just assumed he was confused. But I watched for a minute and realized that he was using the notecard as a measuring stick, checking the radius and angles around the wheels. He had figured out which part of the scooter could be removed that would improve the turning radius and let him get in and out of the doors without bumping the doorframe. Even though he was physically limited, his mind never lost a beat. He was using whatever he had at his disposal to solve a problem.

Becki (Granddaughter) wrote:

Jack used to have some of his older books from when he was young and he and I would look through them and talk about his school experience when he was a kid. I used to look through those books (which included McGuffey Readers). Stories from those readers were some of my favorite.

We especially enjoyed talking about Latin since he took it in school also. Some of the books that he got for me at Christmas, including 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas' and 'The Giving Tree' were written in Latin . Those books are

still on my bookshelves today.”

From Debbie Hughes (Friend and Honorary Family Member) wrote:

You and Jack and Bill and I did a lot of things together. We went to dinner most Friday nights and to the Broadway Series of plays as we both had season tickets. Bill and Jack went to the farm where Jack rewired the big barn so Bill could have more lights and a heater for cattle water.

I had two phones and Jack came over and gave me a phone for the family room, basement and back bedroom so I could hook up dial-up service for the computer.

When Bill had his lung surgery, I wanted to be able to move the phone from the bedroom so he could sleep. I bought a kit to make a phone jack but couldn't get it to work. I called Jack and he dropped everything to come over. The problem was in the type of wiring and he had to work quite a while to fix it. I always appreciated his efforts.

We took three trips together. One was a sailing trip to Burnt Store Marina near Port Charlotte, Florida. One was a 15 day tour through 6 European countries.

One was a trailer trip to Myrtle Beach. We had a truck, a 24 ft trailer and a dog. Jack rented a trailer, a hitch and special stabilizer bars to keep trailer from swaying. We got off to a bad start when immediately after crossing the bridge at Parkersburg and while still in sight of each other, Jack's car stopped. AAA came. Jack was out of gas. The gas gauge was stuck and Jack didn't realize he was getting only 6 miles to a gallon of gas.

We finally got to the campground and signed in. This was a Camping World Dixie Stampede event. It included the camp site, two country shows and the Dixie Stampede which was a dinner show. The show was a western with stagecoach robbery, covered wagons and people doing trick riding. It was

held in an arena and you sat around the table tops. The waiters brought in our dinner and sat them on the table tops. Shortly they came back and took plates away and brought dessert. Now you all know Jack was a slow eater and liked to savor his food, so this whole process was very quick and definitely not "Jack's cup of tea". I'll remember his ever present camera and the good times we had. I'll miss him."

From members of the Columbus Garden Railway Society:

Jack loved helping in any way he could. He was always volunteering to help set up the public displays, fixing electrical problems, or volunteering to help new members with their railroads. He helped design and build one of the railroads, made a "conveyer" belt for a member's whimsical "snowman factory". He helped many members with electrical issues on their track. "He will really be missed."

Closing:

Jack leaves love and integrity with his family and those who know him. I am so grateful for each and every day I got to see his smile, for the lessons learned, and all the jokes we shared, and that bit of mischief in his eyes. He has left behind many wonderful memories. He has taught me through everything we've been through over the past few months to never let a day go to waste. Make the most out of every one!

Cemetery Details

Private

Tribute Wall



“ *Jack L. Easterday*

January 28, 2023 at 10:24 AM



“ *Cecil; So sorry to hear of Jacks passing I am glad I had the chance to get to know him some through CGRS. As a former caregiver myself I have a feeling for what your life has been like. Take some time to just sit back and catch your breath a little and be kind to yourself. Pat Waddell*

Pat Waddell - June 22, 2017 at 09:45 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Jack L. Easterday.*



June 22, 2017 at 04:48 PM