



Mr. Merrill Persyn

November 12, 1926 - April 19, 2020

Merrill Persyn died at his home in Alpharetta, Georgia on April 19, 2020. He was born November 12, 1926 in Boswell, AR, the son of Clarence Willard (Bill) and Mildred Sylvia Persyn. He spent his childhood in and around Manhattan, Kansas. Merrill enlisted in the U.S. Navy during World War II, serving as a Radioman on amphibious ships in the Pacific Theater. Following the War, he returned to Manhattan where he worked in a variety of physically demanding jobs in grain mills, construction, and freight loading and transfer. During this time, he also attended college and built his own home, doing most of the work himself.

In 1949, he married Alice May Graves, of Manhattan, KS. To this union were born two children, John and Sandra (Sandy) Persyn. Although this union ended in divorce, Merrill considered himself blessed to subsequently meet and marry the love of his life, Holly (Hay) Oppenhuizen in 1965, absorbing her two young children, Mark and Nancy into his life.

Merrill worked for 34 years for the Grand Trunk Railroad having served as an agent at stations throughout Michigan, and then as a manager in Detroit. Following his retirement in 1988, he and Holly moved to Spring Hill, Florida, where he immersed himself in retirement as deeply as he had his profession. He energetically and actively participated in his new hobbies of golf, square-dancing and round-dancing, and bridge-playing with his wife and friends in the Timber Pines community. Together, Merrill and Holly shared more than 50 years of committed marriage including more than 30 years of well-deserved retirement filled with activities they enjoyed, with friends they valued, and with family they loved that has now grown to three generations of descendants. Recently, Merrill and Holly moved to Alpharetta, Georgia to be closer to family during the inevitable slowdown and declining health that accompanies such a long and active life.

Surviving are his wife, Holly; children: Sandra (Sandy) Persyn, of Shawnee, KS; John Persyn of Leavenworth, KS; Mark Oppenhuizen and wife, Penny of Bainbridge Island, WA, Nancy (Oppenhuizen) Bender and husband Steve, of Cumming, GA, Sherrie (Lund)

Persyn, of Basehor, KS; grandchildren: Kaleena (Persyn) Grasela and husband, Joseph; Sarah Oppenhuizen; Peter Oppenhuizen; Emily (Oppenhuizen) Malbouef and husband, Nicholas; Mark Bender and wife Kaho; Ryan Bender and wife, Lisa; and Elizabeth (Betsy) Bender; and great-grandchildren: Haley Bender, Cody Cowart, and Chase Bender.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his brothers John Leonard Persyn, Lewis Loren Persyn, and James Lester Persyn; and his sister, Flossie Louise (Persyn) Chitwood.

No services are scheduled at this time. A memorial service to honor the memory of Merrill Persyn will be planned at a later date for family and close friends.

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Merrill Persyn*

October 08, 2022 at 11:37 AM