



Ralph H. Childers

November 16, 1935 - December 6, 2012

Ralph Childers (1935 – 2012)
Founded Rumble Seat Motors

Born in a two-room cabin in Wayne County, Kentucky, on a cold November morning during the Depression, Ralph Childers' wealth consisted of the love of his parents and grandparents. His mother said she cradled him in her arms under the cover to keep him from freezing, and when she lifted the quilts, she could see his breath in the cold room.

A tragedy befell Ralph's family in 1945 while they lived in Ohio where his family had moved around 1940. His dad, Charlie Childers, was killed in the Pacific, when his ship was torpedoed by the Japanese, leaving 4 young children fatherless. Ralph was 9 years old, but this loss became the catalyst for his intense interest in WWII as an adult. He even joined the LST Association and sought out survivors of his dad's LST 577. He learned as much as he could about life on the ship and was told by survivors that his dad, a gifted musician, entertained his shipmates by playing the banjo. Ralph was an active member of SAG, an organization of veterans devoted to the study of military history.

This was one child of the rural South who was highly motivated to improve his circumstances. In 1951, before he was even 16 years old, he left high school

in Monticello and went in search of a job in Ohio. He took small jobs before he finally found good pay as a lathe operator in Louisville, KY. Now he was making money that allowed him to indulge his goal: he bought a 1949 Buick. Buicks were always his favorite cars throughout years of collecting. He said he had often walked past a Buick showroom when he was a little boy in Norwood, Ohio, and that was the beginning of his lifelong dream.

In the Army in Germany (1957-58) where he operated an American Forces Network radio station, he took the GED and enrolled in Univ. of Maryland courses. He discovered he had a flair for public speaking. He was photographed and honored in the armed forces newspaper Stars and Stripes for his first major speech, controversial because he argued for racial equality.

He met the love of his life, Harriet, at a church picnic in Jamestown, KY in August of 1959 just as she was about to begin student teaching at Lafayette High in Lexington. One year later, they were married. (Not surprisingly, their honeymoon in Washington, DC coincided with an antique car meet in Virginia that Ralph did not want to miss.) He wanted more than his BA in Counseling at UK, so he applied for and received a National Institute of Mental Health scholarship at the Kent School of Social Work at University of Louisville. After 2 years at U of L and a year working at the UK Medical Center, he was now ready to join Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. He became a Community Action Program Director over several rural counties in Kentucky before he came to Atlanta in 1967 to work for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Delinquency Prevention. He was passionate enough about equal rights to place an "I Have A Dream" license plate on the front of his car. He eventually moved to the Office of Aging as Deputy Director. When he became eligible to take early retirement, he decided he needed to follow his dream of a full-time antique car business.

Rumble Seat Motors was begun in 1972 in Chamblee, but not until he

purchased property at the intersection of Lawrenceville Hwy and N. Druid Hills Rd in 1978 did the business really soar. With the help of his wife, Harriet, and best friend and car enthusiast, Ernest "Bun" Sikes, he led an exciting life of buying and selling antique cars all over the US, Canada, England and Sweden.

Ralph was in his element. The little boy who dreamed of owning a Buick had become an expert on vintage cars. He judged car shows, traveled extensively, taught his kids to drive all types of vehicles and made sure they had something interesting to drive throughout their teen years and beyond. When he sold his property on N. Druid Hills he moved his family and the business to Historic Roswell where he continued to buy and sell cars until Alzheimer's forced his retirement.

After a long battle with Alzheimer's disease, he is survived by his adoring family: his wife, Harriet Ann Aaron Childers, his children and their spouses, Mark and Susan Childers of Acworth, Leigh Ann and Jimmy Livaditis of Atlanta and Kristin Childers and Jeff Joyce of Atlanta. Six loving grandchildren: John and Daniel Childers, John, Lucas and Anastasia Livaditis and Juliet Joyce.

Ralph was predeceased by his parents, Charlie and Leva Childers and his brother, Perry Robert Childers of Panama City, FL. He is also survived by his 2 sisters: Beulah Crawford of Kokomo, IN and Joy Masengale of Monticello, KY.

The family wishes to thank the dedicated staff of the Veranda of Roswell and Journey Hospice who became our second family during his illness.

Ralph was known for his concern for those in need. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made online to The Atlanta Community Food Bank at <http://>

www.acfb.org

The Childers family will receive friends on Sunday, December 9 from 3-6 PM at Northside Chapel in Roswell.

Cemetery Details

Sikorski Funeral Home

3630 West George Street
Chicago, IL

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 9. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Northside Chapel Funeral Directors and Crematory
12050 Crabapple Road
Roswell, GA

Tribute Wall



“ *Ralph H. Childers*

October 08, 2022 at 11:37 AM



“ *We are so saddened to learn of your loss; Ralph's passing leaves a hole in many hearts. He left us with many wonderful memories.##imported-begin##Kerry and Kathy Dupree##imported-end##*

December 11, 2012 at 10:02 AM



“ *Interesting obit.... Your family is in our thoughts and prayers.##imported-begin##Doug & Brenda Aaron##imported-end##*

December 09, 2012 at 10:14 PM



“ *Harriet, Mark, Lee Ann and Kristin: So sorry to hear about Ralph passing. I know it has been a long struggle. Hope you all are doing OK. Maybe we can all get together in Atlanta sometime. Kim is always talking about coming to see you all, but the timing never seems to work out. Love, Pam and Ron.##imported-begin##Ron and Pam Herriford##imported-end##*

December 09, 2012 at 02:03 PM



“ *Ralph has been a good friend for many years. We have had some great times doing "car stuff". He will be missed by all that knew him. My heartfelt sympathy go out to Harriet and family.##imported-begin##George Hair##imported-end##*

December 09, 2012 at 09:13 AM



“ *We are so very sorry to hear of Ralph's passing. Your whole family will be in our thoughts and prayers during this time.##imported-begin##Don and Charlene Hale##imported-end##*

December 08, 2012 at 09:57 PM



“ *Harriet & family,*

Ralph's friendship was a blessing in our lives & through him we had the pleasure of knowing all of you. We give to you our deepest sympathy for your loss & take with us the memories of him & his great laugh.

May the days of sorrow pass quickly and your memories of Ralph linger long

Love,

Bun & Linda##imported-begin##Ernest L. Sikes Jr. & Linda Olney##imported-end##

December 08, 2012 at 08:23 AM



“ Uncle Ralph was one of a kind but he was also the best he will be missed I am sorry for our loss.
GREG CRISWELL##imported-begin##Greg Criswell##imported-end##

December 07, 2012 at 04:49 PM



“ I can only imagine the UK basketball discussion Ralph and brother "Bob" are having today in heaven - one bond among many that held them tightly together as brothers! Go Big Blue!

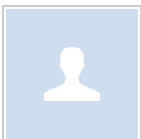
Ralph through his actions showed his love for his family and especially Harriet. Hold his love close. Love Joyce##imported-begin##Joyce I Childers##imported-end##

December 07, 2012 at 01:19 PM



“ Oh how my heart aches for you and your family Harriet. I feel sure that Frank and other members of the MetroVision clan who have gone on before us will be at the gates of heaven to welcome Ralph. God bless you. Wish I were there to give you a hug in person.
Peggy##imported-begin##Peggy Mathews##imported-end##

December 07, 2012 at 01:13 PM



“ Harriet, I'm sending love to all of you. I will always remember Ralph as the gentle, intelligent and interesting man he was.

Sandra##imported-begin##Sandra Fine##imported-end##

December 07, 2012 at 09:30 AM



“ Our thoughts and prayers go out to you and your family. Losing a father is a terrible pain. May his memory be eternal.##imported-begin##Anna Maria Hobbs##imported-end##

December 07, 2012 at 06:38 AM



“ So very sorry to learn of Ralph's loss. Harriet, you and the family are certainly in my thoughts, and you have my deepest sympathy at this sensitive time. I was moved by the write-up of Ralph's life at the visitation site. It was expressed with so much love and tenderness and made me realize what a truly caring man he was. I'll always remember his friendly and jovial manner, and his reaching out to Leo with wartime memories which he knew Leo understood and could share. I will be there Sunday to express my love and sympathy to all. God bless...
Nini##imported-begin##Nini Frangis##imported-end##

December 06, 2012 at 10:08 PM



“ The deGo's will always treasure our many years of memories of Ralph at the baseball fields. We could tell that he was a true family man! And a huge presence in the lives of his grandchildren. We are thinking about you all.##imported-begin##Lisa, Michael, Robert and Katharine deGolian##imported-end##

December 06, 2012 at 08:24 PM



“ So very very sorry for your loss. Losing a parent is never easy. Losing a father a tremendous tragedy. May his memory be eternal.

Mark and Anna Maria Hobbs##imported-begin##Anna Maria Tsiantis Hobbs##imported-end##

December 06, 2012 at 08:16 PM



“ I'm so sorry for your loss. I loved reading about his life, so eloquently written. He was much loved.##imported-begin##Laura Davis Vest##imported-end##

December 06, 2012 at 07:58 PM



“ I am so sorry to hear of your loss. Please know my prayers are with you all during this difficult time. May his memory be eternal! Love, Vicki##imported-begin##Vicki Thorne##imported-end##

December 06, 2012 at 07:48 PM