



Mr. Howard Raymond Hallett Jr.

March 14, 1933 - January 7, 2021

HOWARD RAYMOND HALLETT, JR (March 14, 1933 - January 7, 2021)

Howard Raymond Hallett, Jr. (known to most of his family and friends as Ray), of Phoenixville, PA, died on January 7, 2021. Born in Midland, PA, he was the son of Howard Raymond Hallett and Nora Keck. Mr. Hallett graduated from Penn State University in 1955 with a BS in aeronautical engineering and as an Ensign in the Navy as part of his Naval ROTC scholarship. He then went on to serve in the U.S. Navy as an aircraft carrier pilot, eventually having over 150 landings on carriers including the Saratoga and the Intrepid. After time in Florida for Naval duty and Binghamton, NY, for his first engineering position, Ray settled his family into Phoenixville in 1960. He continued his Navy time in the Reserves in Willow Grove, PA, eventually retiring from the Navy with the rank of Captain. His engineering work took him to GE Aerospace division where he worked for 30 years until his retirement in 1991, and he was often credited with finding answers and solutions to difficult problems that others could not.

In the late 60s, when Ray's family grew to six, he used his flying prowess to explore the area and locate a spot to build his dream house on Tinker Hill Road, where he and his loving wife Nancy lived for over 50 years. As more families came and built houses on the "Hill", he and Nancy made lifelong friends who helped create amazing traditions like Tinkerthon, a two-day block party that occurred each summer at the house for 37 years. Ray instilled in his children a strong work ethic and love for family, nature, animals, and good friends. He also fostered a love of home improvement in his children by doing much of the repairs and improvements at his beloved home with them. Ray enjoyed restoring and driving antique cars, a hobby he shared with his children. Ray continued to fly recreationally in his Cessna Light aircraft for many years after his naval aviator career ended.

Ray is predeceased by his brother, Louis Anthony Hallett. He is survived by his loving wife of 65 years, Nancy Smith Hallett, and his four children, David Louis Hallett and his partner Patricia, Elaine Burgess Hallett, Michael Arthur Hallett and his wife Marsha, Amy Hallett Lareau and her husband Brad, as well as his daughter-in-law, Claudia Hallett. He was a caring grandfather to 7 grandchildren: Shane and Philip Hallett, Emily Stokes and Taylor Hallett, and Dillon, Jack, and Sara Lareau. The family is looking forward to a

celebration of life for Ray as soon as feasibly possible. Contributions in Ray's name can be made to The American Cancer Society or The Wounded Warrior Project.

Comments



“ I will forever be grateful that I was able to call Ray my Grandpa. The memories we were able to share will be the memories I will never forget. As early as I can remember, Grandpa was always a man of character, generosity, and showed what it meant to be kind. He was a man of class, and something I will always aspire to be.

Some of the best memories I was able to cherish with him was being the coveted donut boys with him. Every time I went to visit him, at least once a trip, he and I would be the ones to go and source the mornings donuts for all to enjoy. It became a tradition, was it a Dunkin Donuts kind of morning or was it a GIANT donut kind of day? Seeing the smile on his face of not only making sure I had a fun time doing it with him, but everyone's smile when we came home with that day's catch of donuts, will be a sight I will always remember. While we always took the minivan for the donut runs instead of the 1957 Oldsmobile, it did not hinder the experience we had.

Tinkerthon is what made each and every journey to visit him for those yearly events all the more special. Before each Tinkerthon, we would sometimes spend days helping him get the place ready for visitors from far and wide to visit all in an effort to have an amazing time. This is where his leadership abilities in making sure everyone did their part to help was a mentoring experience in and of itself. More often than not, it was helping him get the place ready that was just as enjoyable as the event itself. Grandpa was always the life of those block-buster parties, and making all those around him for the event happy.

While I was only able to play a few rounds of Golf with Grandpa on the course, mini golfing with him was just as enjoyable. He was a master of the game, and even in mini golf he gave us tips and tricks on how to improve our swing for big leagues. The stories he told us from an early age up into recent years always made the excitement to hear them more than the last. Those stories always taught us a new life lesson we had not heard before. The life that Grandpa led was always one of excitement and journey. From his Navy stories that sometimes swept us off our feet to how he was able to maximize the home he had built to the fullest potential with those around him was what made him truly special.

Grandpa was an amazing father, grandfather, and friend full of life stories. He has meant so much so many far and wide around the world, and he will be dearly missed. I love you Grandpa - you have taught me many lessons about life, and I will miss you.

Jack Lareau - January 13 at 03:04 PM



“ Dear Hallett Family

My sister Claudia shared with me that Ray has passed on. I would like to express my sincere condolences to all of you. My heart goes out to you.

I have so many wonderful memories of the times that I visited with you and Ray. I fondly remember the days that I spent at your house. Both Nancy and Ray were wonderful hosts for a family gathering, with Ray being the grill master. Amy was visiting and all the grandchildren went skinny dipping in the pool. We adults were watching happily, had nice conversations and so much fun with each other. Ray proudly showed me his huge antique car and took us for a cool joyride. He was really a charming and entertaining host. I loved listening to his stories. One of the greatest highlights for me was when Ray took us on a flight in his Cessna airplane over the Hudson River along the New York skyline, an experience I will never forget. I was impressed about his professionalism preparing for the departure and how he explained everything to me that had to be considered in advance, another great facet of who he was.

The coming days will certainly not be easy for you. I would like to embrace you all and wish you strength. Again, my heart goes out to you.

Love, Axel

Axel Bobert - January 12 at 10:16 AM



“ It is hard to add to all the beautiful sentiments that have already been expressed. I share them wholeheartedly. That goes to show how deeply he universally touched each and everyone who was fortunate to share his life.

When I came to the United States to start a new life, my new parents in-law welcomed me with open, loving arms. Their warmth and affectionate acceptance meant the world to me - - it gave me comfort and a sense of belonging.

Coming from a very different family dynamic, I never took Ray's genuine kindness for granted. To me he was the perfect father figure and I loved him for that.

He never failed to greet me with a big smile, showed interest in my latest endeavors and jump to action when help was needed.

He did it with encouragement, with humor, with knowledge and always with heartfelt concern for my well being.

I am grateful he was my beloved father in law. I will keep him forever safe in my heart.

Claudia

Claudia Hallett - January 11 at 09:04 PM



“ I just received a phone call from Nancy and she told me about Ray's passing. I so sorry! I want to extend my condolences to all of the Hallett Family. Ray was an amazing guy and a true friend of the Brown Family. How fortunate you all are to have had his good influence for so long! You have so much to be proud of. We will all miss seeing Ray out and about and hearing his stories!



Peter C. Brown - January 11 at 01:56 PM



“ Dear David,

I am so saddened to hear of your dad's passing. Although he and I only came to know each other in the past 15 years, or so, I felt that from the time we first met... golfing with the old GE gang... that he had become a very good friend. I always enjoyed his company; he was quite a guy.

I loved his stories; we shared mutual GE careers, although in different GE businesses. We held somewhat different, but similar, engineering management positions and that gave us a lot of common ground to talk about.

I also greatly enjoyed being able to give your dad a call at the drop of a hat, and know that if I called anytime after midafternoon, I could expect an invitation to join your mom and dad for a cocktail. I especially enjoyed his Hallett's Special Diet Scotch Old-Fashioneds... diet, only in that he would use artificial sweetener. They were delicious, as was the time I would get to spend talking with your mom and dad.

His greatest pride was being able to brag about his kids and grandkids, and he really was so proud of all your accomplishments.

I will miss your dad a lot. He was a terrific friend.

Sincerely,
Tom Davis

Tom Davis - January 11 at 01:40 PM



“ I will always remember my Grandpa as a genuinely kind and generous person. His devotion to his family and friends is something I will always aspire to.

His house was an oasis to me. I have countless happy childhood memories of summer days at the pool, playing in the field, and waking up to blueberry pancakes and bacon prepared by a man who was truly a master of breakfast food. Of course there was also the annual Tinkerthon, a weekend-long block party full of events and traditions that I looked forward to as much as Christmas.

In more recent years we would spend time together almost every weekend doing all kinds of work on the house and property. Whether we were renovating the attic, cleaning up the woods, or fixing something on his 1957 Oldsmobile, I truly loved having that time with him. We would always finish up with some lunch and talk about everything we accomplished that day.

Another skill I hope to one day emulate is my Grandpa's ability to tell an engaging story. He could start recounting an event that we had heard a dozen times before and yet I couldn't help but lean in and relive the story as if I had been right there with him. It was like re-watching a favorite movie. Then suddenly he would share a memory of some Navy adventure or road-trip that you never heard before and it would be another immersive glimpse into his fascinating and full life.

I feel truly lucky that Ray was my Grandpa. I know he meant so much to so many people. To me he was not only a mentor and an inspiration, but also a friend. Thank you Grandpa for everything. I love you and I will miss you dearly.

Phil

Phil Hallett - January 10 at 02:22 PM



“ I have wonderful memories of the short time that I got to know Ray over the last eight years, what a special caring and loving human being he was. I will always remember he was always concerned about my mom and every time I visited the first thing he asked me is how is your mother? He really was concerned about my mom's well-being I only wish he had the opportunity to meet my mom. I enjoyed his stories of the Navy and flying and his engineering experiences and sitting down and having a nice chat during a meal.

I'm sending love and blessings to all of you and healing for your journey ahead.

With Love

Trish

trish - January 09 at 04:19 PM



“ I feel so fortunate to have had the ability to spend more time with my dad this fall and winter. He was a great man who taught me so much about life and love. Being raised by a single mother who worked hard to provide for her sons during a difficult time, he instilled in me the importance of self-reliance and a good education and career. He came far from very little. He was very proud of my decision to become a teacher and liked hearing about what I shared with my students.

My dad started a tradition in elementary school of taking me out to lunch once a year, just the two of us. I was allowed to get out of school early and pick the place. This tradition continued until graduation, and I will always remember these special times. Of course, I always insisted on being picked up in his 1957 Chevy Nomad or his beloved 1960 Jaguar, a condition he was happy to fulfill.

My dad taught me to ride a ten speed, change a tire, check not only my oil but understand more about what was under the hood of a car. He also taught me about the importance of respecting nature and the importance of dogs in a family. One of the few times I saw him cry was after the loss of our beloved German Shepherd. He taught me so much more - too much to list here.

I also want to give a shout out to all of his golf buddies and apologize for not mentioning golf in the obituary. There were so many facets of my dad, and golf was definitely a love, especially after his retirement. To all his golf buddies, thanks for making those special memories for him. Sports in general were a love of his, especially Penn State football, and he was a passionate fan for life.

To all friends and family, we will have a fitting celebration of his amazing life when things are safer. Thanks to all for all the kind words over the past few days. I am grateful to have had time with him during his final days to tell him how much everything he taught me meant. Dad, thanks for being such a great father, wonderful father-in-law to my husband Brad, and amazing grandfather. I miss you so much.

Amy Hallett Lareau - January 09 at 10:29 AM



“ Just a week before my Father passed, I was with him outside the house. We were tending to things together, cleaning up the driveway, repairing the pool cover, organizing the garage. He was unable to do any of the more physical work, although he was lucid, clear, and much like his old self, I thought, which was great to see! I am so thankful for what was the last time together as Father and Son, talking about things, accomplishing tasks, having great conversation. But we were getting things done, and that is much of what my Father was, a doer. He believed in getting things done, but not just in work, as in task completion, but in life, and in both work and play, and in love of Family.

The family Home on Tinker Hill Road was designed by his hand, with straightedge, ruler, and pencil. The task before him was to design the perfect Home and location to raise a family, and he succeeded impeccably. Raising children along with our Mother, Nancy, was done with much love, care, and involvement. He was not only a Dad, but a sports coach, a helper with homework and school, and an organizer of activities that were fun, like the annual Tinkerthon, which so many folks enjoyed.

Our Father grew up in meager conditions, with a single Mom and with limited income and resources. He learned the lessons of success through effort and determination. This led to earning a Navy scholarship, an Engineering Degree from Penn State University, and a successful career with General Electric.

But with all of those accomplishments, the underlying theme was effort, doing it well and doing it the right way, with conviction. All of his children have that conviction instilled in them, thanks to him in large part. What was remarkable is that he lived his life as a compassionate and loving human being as well. He was friendly, respectful, and deeply caring for others.

To you, our Father, Thank You for being a great Father, a wonderful Husband to your Wife Nancy, and a Grandfather that our children will always remember fondly. Thank You for being a true friend as well. We will miss you greatly! -Love, David

David Hallett - January 09 at 08:50 AM



“ Syl and I offer our finest condolences on the passing of Captain Ray. We have fond memories of Rays kind spirit and gracious hospitality as we attended a number of Tinkerthons with our good friends the Waldmans of Tinker Hill Road.



Sal and Sylvia Katz of Phoenixville PA - January 08 at 06:36 PM



“ Rest In Peace to my favorite second dad. I love you and your family like my own. There are too many memories to share but years of Tinkerthon are fantastic memories of the wonderful neighborhood you helped to create. I thank you and Nancy for that. I can still hear you saying ‘Chrissy!’ when I showed up at the house. We will miss you. Love, Chrissy

christine naegle - January 08 at 02:31 PM



“ I will always remember my Uncle Ray's exuberant spirit and love of life! I have so many fond memories of him and of our families getting together at Tabor Lake in New Jersey, at the Phoenixville house for Thanksgiving, and at the Jersey Shore. I particularly remember how, when we visited the Halletts in Phoenixville, he couldn't wait to take us Dillon kids out for a spin in one of his old, fixed up cars. He was so much fun to be around and his sense of fun was infectious! He was a solid rock with a huge heart and a great laugh and he will be sorely missed. xo, niece Anne Dillon of Waitsfield Vermont.

Anne Dillon - January 09 at 05:35 PM