



Howard C. Tibbals

August 10, 1936 - March 20, 2022

Howard C. Tibbals (born August 10, 1936) entered life eternal March 20, 2022, surrounded by his beloved wife and eight children at his home in Sarasota, Florida. Howard's love for Christ was apparent in all he did for his family and community. A humble man of faith, he was a devout Christian raised in the church by his parents, Charles E. Tibbals, Jr. and Lillian Davidson Tibbals.

A graduate of NC State, Howard recognized the importance of education, not only for his family but also for his community's children. When the schools in his Appalachian hometown were struggling to survive, partnering with the community, he contributed his time, talents, and treasure to rebuild the Oneida, Tennessee school system. This legacy continues today.

Working alongside his father, Howard had a three-decade career as a wood technology engineer with his family's hardwood flooring business. Together, they developed many products and technologies now standard in the flooring industry. He developed a life-long appreciation for the company's employees, who were instrumental to the success of Hartco Flooring.

While the plant's sawdust often covered his work shoes, the sawdust of the circus lot filled his imagination. Through his unique and creative hobby, Howard's lifelong love of the circus and his engineering skills culminated in the

world's largest model replica of the Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus in its traveling Big Top heyday. Now housed in the Tibbals Learning Center at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida, the model and Howard's vast collection of circus memorabilia, posters, and artifacts are available for the public to enjoy throughout the year.

Howard was preceded in death by his parents, infant brother (Charles), sister (Susan Tibbals Carson), and daughter (Karen Tibbals Reed). He is survived by the love of his life and wife of thirty years, Janice. His surviving children include David Tibbals (Karen) of Pensacola, FL; Jeff Tibbals (Melodye) of Oneida, TN; Tim Tibbals (Dawn) of Knoxville, TN; Tracey Stansberry (Don) of Huntsville, TN; Glenda Gray (Chris) of Alpharetta, GA; Barry Elkins (Stacey) of Merritt Island, FL; Betsy Farrell (Peter) of Knoxville, TN; and Barsha Saliba of Knoxville, TN. He is further survived by his sixteen grandchildren (Austin Reed, Jade Wilson, Mari Tibbals, Lauren Botts, Abby Tibbals, Amanda Tibbals, Luke Tibbals, Frank Stansberry, Lisa Simmons, Jackson Gray, Jake Elkins, Reid Elkins, Blake Wyrick, Emily Wyrick, Charlie Wyrick, and Andrew Saliba), five great-grandchildren, and special friends David Duncan, Byron and Maureen Boardman, Debbie Walk, Phillip Polson, Sharon Miller Pryse, Joe Congleton, Anna Maria Troiano, and Todd Richesin.

Funeral services are scheduled at First Baptist Church Sarasota Wednesday, March 23 at 1:00 pm (live stream at <https://firstsarasota.org>), with Dr. John Cross, Pastor Bill Hild, and Pastor Phillip Polson officiating.

A reception will follow at The Rosemary, 411 N. Orange Ave., Sarasota, FL.

Burial service will occur at Highland Cemetery, Sutherland Ave., Knoxville, TN, on Saturday, March 26 at 1:00, with Rev. Drew Prince and Pastor Phillip Polson officiating.

A reception for friends and family will follow at the Tibbals' Knoxville home.

Austin Reed, Luke Tibbals, Frank Stansberry, Jackson Gray, Jake Elkins, Reid Elkins, Blake Wyrick, Charlie Wyrick, and Andrew Saliba will serve as pallbearers.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to First Baptist Church Sarasota, West Hills Baptist Church of Knoxville, or Laurel Church of Christ of Knoxville.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAR **23**. 1:00 PM (ET)

First Sarasota The Downtown Baptist Church
1661 Main Street
Sarasota, FL 34236

Tribute Wall



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Howard C. Tibbals.*



March 26, 2022 at 09:31 AM



“ *Janice, my heart breaks for your loss but also rejoices in the truth that Howard is in heaven, watching down on you and his beautiful family. He was always so sweet to me and loved asking questions about the plants at your home in Knoxville. He always made me smile. Sending you and your family prayers and hugs. Much love, Angela*

Angela Mazur - March 23, 2022 at 06:21 PM



“ *Dear Janice Sue. Our condolences in the loss of your love. Wish I had some story to tell or words to comfort but that is difficult. I do have recollections of those shared, innocent, protected years of growing up in our small town. You were a lovely person then and such natures stay with us through life. We hope those memories and the many more since will give some comfort just now and as time passes.*
Our love and prayers-

Jim & Mimi Robinson

Jim Robinson - March 23, 2022 at 02:48 PM

LI

“ My condolences to the family. While I did not know Howard Tibbals, I feel a great loss since he and his Howard Bros. Circus brought great pleasure to my family. The amazement and joy as it grew over the years was evident each time we visited. The Tibbals circus was an important reason for our 25 year Ringling membership.

linda - March 23, 2022 at 01:35 PM

HB

“ Hello Mrs. Tibbals, I was so saddened to read of Mr. Tibbals passing. I always saw him as such a gentleman and as a man madly in love with you. I will be praying for you and your family for God's comfort in this time of sorrow. I will miss him.
Hank Battie
His favorite tailor/designer

Hank Battie - March 22, 2022 at 06:24 PM

HR

“ Janice, so very sorry for your loss, but I know you find comfort in knowing he is now with Jesus. Prayer and caring thought for you and your family.

Helen Bruce Ross - March 22, 2022 at 06:12 PM



“ Dawn of Remembrance Basket was purchased for the family of Howard C. Tibbals.



March 22, 2022 at 05:03 PM

SB

“ *Janice and Family, may God comfort you and give you peace in this difficult season.*

Please know you are in our thoughts and prayers.

Your Howard was one of a kind with such a sweet, gentle spirit.

What a gift for us to have known him. We thank and praise God for the gift of him and the season He gave us to share life with him here on earth. Micah 6:8 says....O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and walk humbly with God....Howard was that man and he modeled it in excellence for us all to see with a twinkle in his eyes and a big warm smile on his face. He will continue to live on in all of our hearts and minds until we see him again.

Love in Him, Sandy and Vern Buchanan

Sandy Buchanan - March 22, 2022 at 01:54 PM

JK

“ *Sending prayers for healing and comfort. I remember the amazement of seeing the miniature circus when I was young as well as at the 1982 World's Fair. What an incredible legacy Howard leaves behind.*

Jeanne Kidd - March 22, 2022 at 11:06 AM

AN

“ *Howard was one of the giants of our industry. He was a spectacular human being, and I was honored to have met him. His contributions will no doubt live on forever. Sending thoughts and prayers to Howard's family in this very difficult time.*

Anonymous - March 22, 2022 at 09:59 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Howard C. Tibbals.*



March 22, 2022 at 09:07 AM



“ *Such a gentle man, always love the stories of the circus and appreciate Howards love to share his time and talents with others. First Sarasota has lost a precious man who loved God with all his heart and soul but his legacy for the love for his church will be never forgotten. When it is all said and done will you be found to be faithful YES Howard, a job well done. Sending love to Janice and all the family we will be praying Mary Ellen and Fred*

Fred Shrode - March 22, 2022 at 06:48 AM

RJ

“Howard was an integral part of my life for more than 50 years as I worked for and with him during most of my career at Hartco and attended church with him from my early years through the time when he moved from Oneida. His intelligence and dedication to his work, hobby and community are well documented. Less often mentioned was his infectious sense of humor. It wasn't unusual to hear a loud "Hee-Haw" all the way at the other end of the office when something tickled his funny bone. Although I wasn't around him often during his later years, it was refreshing to see him mellow and cherish his retirement years. His love of life, family and friends is obvious when you see that trademark smile in almost every picture of him. My condolences to his wife, children and extended family in their loss of his earthly presence.

Ronnie Jeffers

Ronnie Jeffers - March 21, 2022 at 11:15 PM

JL

The smile.....that was his trademark! I grew up in the church in Oneida where his dad served as an elder and his mother was one of "The older women who taught the younger women" how to conduct themselves. His mother gave me a wedding shower and a baby shower. Our children grew up together and those that have stayed in the area continue to be key in our rural mountain hometown. Low key, but still such contributing members of the community. He is missed.

Jo Newport Latimer - March 22, 2022 at 09:00 AM

CA

“ My deepest condolences go out to Janice and the entire Tibbals family in the loss of a truly loving gentleman whose smiles and jokes reached out to every person he encountered. He enriched my life greatly, sharing his experiences and generosity, as I saw him pour himself into others' lives, also. He touched so many lives, and his Christian influence will multiply through countless generations to come. My love to Janice & and the family. Carleen Anderson

Carleen Anderson - March 21, 2022 at 09:21 PM

DS

“ I am sure I join countless others in offering our heartfelt condolences to Janice and the entire Tibbal's family. Howard was a great person, a great philanthropist and just a wonderful human being. He leaves a lasting legacy in Sarasota, Tennessee and beyond. Howard, we are truly grateful for all you did. Your have left the world a better place.

Declan J Sheehy - March 21, 2022 at 04:20 PM

JT

“ John Kiernan & your Mid-South BD team purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Howard C. Tibbals.



John Kiernan & your Mid-South BD team - March 21, 2022 at 04:10 PM

RN

“ I join others in offering my sincere condolences to the family. I knew and admired Howard for all he did for the community and for Circus. He was a great man.

Sincerely,
Fr. Richard Notter

Richard E. Notter - March 21, 2022 at 04:03 PM

RA

“ I have wonderful memories of Mr. Tibbals and his family from my childhood. My first time to see a circus was because of their generosity to take me. I am sorry for his passing. My deepest condolences to each family member.

Rebecca Acres - March 21, 2022 at 01:41 PM