



Russell E. Griffith, Jr.

September 15, 1923 - July 12, 2017

Russell E. Griffith, Jr., died July 12, 2017 in Sarasota, Florida after a brief illness. The son of the late Russell E. and Mary Kathryn Griffith, he was born Sept. 15, 1923 in Akron, Ohio.

He graduated from Huntington High School and earned a bachelor's degree from Huntington College in 1947.

Russell and the former Marilyn M. Kauff were united in marriage in Huntington, Indiana on September 28, 1946. In 1948 the couple relocated to Oxford, Ohio and became associated with Miami University. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Miami and a doctorate from Indiana University.

Dr. Griffith taught at Miami University for 40 years and was Professor Emeritus of Zoology-Physiology. He represented Miami University in establishing Wright State School of Medicine in Dayton, Ohio.

He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, and later as an officer in the Naval Reserve Unit in Hamilton, Ohio, including three years as Commanding Officer of the unit.

He has been a member of Kiwanis for more than 50 years, and served as

President and Lt. Governor of the Ohio Fifth Division.

Dr. Griffith has been awarded Citizen of the Year in Oxford in 1966, Most Outstanding and Effective Teacher at Miami in 1971, and along with his wife, Parents of the Year at Miami in 1979.

Dr. Griffith is survived by his wife, Marilyn, of Sarasota, Florida, children Sondra Witherington (Roy), Sarasota, Florida; Judith Ransom (Scott), Winchester, Tennessee; Barbara Hottle (Robert), Hillsboro, Ohio; David Griffith (Elaine), Maitland, Florida, and Russell Griffith III (Cynthia), Encinitas, California; grandchildren Lisa Torres, Jason Swift, Matthew Averbeck, Tracy and Audra Ransom, Whitney Cowles, Laura Brooker, Allison Gabbard, Susanna Faraday, Michael and Daniel Hottle, Rachael and David Griffith, Mitchell and Connor Griffith; his brother, Harold D. Griffith (Beverly), sister-in-law Dorothy Hart and numerous great grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brother, Col. C.W. Griffith.

Visitation with the family will be Friday July 14, 2017, 7PM at Toale Brothers Funeral Homes, Colonial Chapel.

Services and burial will be held Tuesday, July 18, 2017 in Oxford, Ohio.

Rememberances to the charity of your choice.

Tribute Wall



“ *This is so late that I don't know if you will even see it, but I just found out by "googling" that Rusty had past. The memories so many have of him has been well expressed. He was my husband's mentor through Miami--and he did always see the best in people. He teased me continually, always drawing on my shyness to make me laugh and not take myself so seriously.*

The early 60's were the beginning years of change and were good years at Miami. As the only Canadian there, my husband found a friend and teacher who always urged him on to better things.

Marilyn and family, my hear goes out to you in your loss. It is a year later but I'm sure you are all still missing him. I'm sorry I lost touch with you all but the distance often seemed too great. He left a world of memories with so many. We will all miss just knowing he was part of our world.

Karen Buschlen, Okotoks Alberta

August 07, 2018 at 12:00 AM



JS

“ I just found out today (Aug. 15) about Russell's passing last month. I joined his European tour in the summer of 1970. We were a group of twelve people. Marilyn and their son were on the trip with us. It was absolutely one of the most memorable experiences of my life. We traveled by train through 13 countries in seven weeks. Russell would always give us an introductory walk through each city upon our arrival. His fast walking pace was exhausting. We were then given free time in the following days to explore on our own. His good humor sustained us for the long hike through Europe. My wife, Josette, and I want to express our sorrow at his loss and to let the family know how much we miss him. His caring for others and his good example will be among our cherished memories.

Jerome Stanley - August 15, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Gs:

We are sorry to hear of the death of Mr. G. There are so many fond memories of our time as neighbors on Oak Street in the 1960s and Xmas trips to Pompano Beach Florida, and the trip one summer to the north woods of Minnesota. I also recall Mr. G sitting with me and 2 friends to schedule out an hour-by-hour 6-week trip to Europe in the summer of 1973 (13 countries in 6 weeks!). Mr. G provided us with a day by day and night by night itinerary for our trip to Europe, mostly off the top of his head. I will never forget how he would shout "Mercy", feigning surprise, cracking up all in the room. We hope you are recalling lots of great memories of your dad and husband. He will be missed.

Chris (and Barb Ingersoll), Columbia Missouri

July 23, 2017 at 12:00 AM

CN

“ I had never heard of Rusty Griffith until one day in 1983 when the telephone rang in the hallway of a Brooklyn brownstone where we rented a room. The voice on the other end identified himself and asked for my husband, Steven, who was not at home. "Oh well, I'll tell YOU so you don't have to wait a minute longer, but promise me he'll call me collect the second he returns. He's been accepted to WSU School of Medicine! And he can throw away his black suit he interviewed in...he won't need it anymore."

"But that's the suit he married me in!" I said. (The only suit he owned.) "Well, he looked like an undertaker in it, but we want him anyway!"

How could you not like a man with such honesty and humor from the beginning? Rusty shepherded us from Day 1 at WSU and never let us go. When we returned to NYC. When we joined the Navy. When we had our 2 babies, traveled the world and eventually settled in MS. Through writing and phone calls, we've been friends for 34 years and were blessed to see each other face to face in Tampa in 2010. His compassion, kindness and genuine caring was always evident, as was his love for his family, travel and living life to the fullest.

We were just two of thousands of people crossing his path for a brief 4 years of time, and yet he always managed to stay in touch, through joys and sorrows and distances. A big heart overflowing with love, enough love for not only his family and closest friends, but for a poor student and his new bride/actress wife...forever. That was the Rusty I knew and loved and already miss like crazy. Marilyn, I am so very sorry for the loss of your wonderful husband, and to all of the family, my heartfelt condolences.

Catherine Nowicki

Catherine Nowicki - July 22, 2017 at 12:00 AM

SN

“ *Why Rusty liked me, I don't know. It was a special talent he had for seeing the good potential in people. Seeing this potential he made it actual.*

Someone was defiantly looking out for me on the day of my medical school interview. Dr. G walked in. Those were wise eyes that could see the possibilities in people and enjoy the process of watching them become the people he could see in them. I would not be who I am today if he hadn't believed in me. After the interview we shared a smoke, unfiltered of course! Heaven, instant bond.

Throughout the years of medical school, the Navy, residency, fellowship and career he was always there, wind beneath wings he believed in and help sustain. So many flew to their potential on currents he created.

Now my shipmate has crossed the bar and sailed ahead out onto a vast and brilliant sea. I believe we will know one another again. As in those days of the sauna and frozen pool dives back in Oxford, we will celebrate one another and live in joy.

May peace be on the Griffith Family. Thank God for the life of Dr. Rusty Griffith.

Steven Nowicki - July 22, 2017 at 12:00 AM

SP

“ *What a legacy Dr. "G" has left all of us! I will miss his sense of humor most of all. A special memory was during a summer session when he pierced my ears with Marilyn's sewing machine needle between classes in the zoology lab. (My mother insisted I have a doctor do it.) :)*

We met many times for lunch in Oxford when he was "up north" or at reunions, as well as several times at my home. A freak snowstorm in Houston on his way home to Ohio from McAllen provided an impromptu overnight stay at my home in Sugarland, TX.

What a special professor, dear friend, and caring man. I will miss him, especially at Christmas when he always sent a newsy update.



Sally Pewitt - July 15, 2017 at 12:00 AM

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Sally Pewitt - July 15, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ *Please accept my sincerest condolences for your loss. May you find comfort in the words found at John 6:40. CR*

July 15, 2017 at 12:00 AM

LS

“ I was lucky enough to marry into this wonderful family. I must admit to being intimidated by Rusty, when we first met. I had never met someone so educated or world travelled. Being a young girl from Tennessee, thinking I had really traveled because I left my small town to move to Florida! Rusty was always there to raise the bar a little higher. As I grew into the woman that I am now, our bond grew. He took pride in my children, at the same time, never letting them settle. I never have met someone that had more faith in the possibilities of others. I think it was because he was so humble about his own accomplishments, that he didn't see them as anything that you too could not have done. In recent years, he would always make a point to tell me that Jason marrying me was the best thing that he ever did. I thought I had done a pretty good job hiding my insecurities these 24 years of marriage. Somehow, Grandpa Rusty knew what I needed to hear. His approval and love and faith in me, when I didn't always have it in myself, will have a lasting effect on me. Biologically, he was my husband Jason's grandfather and great grandfather to Michael and Meredith. Somewhere along the way, he became my grandfather too. I will miss him.

Lisa Swift - July 15, 2017 at 12:00 AM

SP

“ Sally Pewitt lit a candle in memory of Russell E. Griffith, Jr.



Sally Pewitt - July 15, 2017 at 12:00 AM

CH

“ Sending my love and prayers to all. I have fun memories over many years of Russell and Marilyn's visits to Hillsboro. Wish I could be there at this time. I send hugs to the Griffiths, my brother and sister-in-law, and my nieces and nephews.

Carol Hottle - July 14, 2017 at 12:00 AM

DC

“ May your hearts soon be filled with wonderful memories of joyful times together as you celebrate a life well lived.

Dan/Betty Cowles - July 13, 2017 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ Marilyn, sorry to hear about Rusty...lots of good memories and laughs with him...my best is when he asked me a question in a 8AM biology class at Miami and I had dozed off. I am not sure I have ever lived that one down...remember him too on the sidelines as a yard marker official...all my best to you and your family.
Dave Smiley

Dave Smiley - July 13, 2017 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ Mrs. Griffith, your husband, Dr. Griffith, was John Wayne to me. He had the voice of John Wayne, he had the heart of John Wayne, and he had the humor of John Wayne. That is meant as a compliment. I loved running into Rusty, as a kid, young adult or seasoned adult. He would always look me in the eye and say, "What trouble have you been into lately, Taylor?" I felt recognized as the "rebel." Dr. Griffith and you are part of that amazing group of parents that we all grew up with in Oxford. You do represent the Greatest Generation to us. I/We were so blessed to have you as role models. What an amazing impact you both have made on me, and us. I am so sorry for your loss.

And to the Griffith kids, thank you for sharing your pops with me. He sure did make a difference. My thoughts are with you all.

Blessings to the entire family, Janis Taylor

Janis Taylor - July 13, 2017 at 12:00 AM