



John "Jack" Lawrence

1921- 2017

A Great Gentleman

Dear Friend,

Just nine short months ago I brought you the news of Helen Lawrence's passing. And now I have the sad news that her husband of seventy-three years, Jack Lawrence, has also passed away. It seems in life-long partnerships that this is often the way things happen when two people come to define each other.

This morning my husband of 37 years and I were walking, and I mentioned that today I would be writing up my recollections of Jack. I said, "Tell me what word comes to your mind first when you think of Jack." In unison we both said, "GENTLEMAN." So above all else, "gentleman" defined Jack for us. He was polite but inquisitive. He shared but knew the secret that listening to others would ultimately prove to be the most satisfying.

Our discussion brought on a flood of memories. I met Jack about 33 years ago, but my husband Peter had known him for many years before that. Jack was in the construction business as is my husband's family, so Peter knew Jack in that context first. Peter spoke exactly as I would expect when he further commented, "Jack was respected for his honesty and integrity. He was well-regarded by his peers in business." He added, "He always led up to a question with a smile. You know he liked to inquire about you and business but he always smiled prior to his inquiry." I remember that in addition to his smile his eyes always twinkled. What makes people's eyes twinkle? I'm not sure, but it always seems like that comes from their soul.

The description of Jack's mode of questioning reminded me of our annual osprey reporting session that I wrote of in Helen's remembrance.

"An osprey reporting session with the Lawrences goes something like this: my husband Peter and myself visit an osprey platform across from the Lawrences' property on the Maurice. By the time we are done Jack has noticed our ladder and banding activity at the nesting site. He is waiting at his dock for a "full live report." This practice is not simply reserved for the Lawrences, since many of the river residents take their stewardship seriously and we are indebted to their vigilance. The watchful nature of osprey stewards has saved a great many birds. So at the Lawrences' we come down the ladder, cast off from the shore opposite Jack and Helen's, and make our way across the channel for "the report."

Jack: "Well?"

Jane: "Three healthy chicks."

Jack: "I thought so! I'll tell Helen."

In fact the osprey nest would not have been across from his home on the Maurice River had he not actively solicited having one placed there about 30 years ago. A number of people have made such requests but his request was matched by his willingness to be an active part of the process.

At that time we hadn't perfected our delivery method of bringing an osprey platform downriver and we were still using 24 foot poles, whereas now we use 16 foot poles. Those extra feet can get pretty unwieldy. Jack had a larger boat and more years of seamanship and we depended on him to tow the platform for about 4 river miles on foam floats, for a weird Tom Sawyer effect. That day we drew some attention. Jack stood lean behind the wheel and had the glint in his eye and a stiff jaw of resolve as he fought the difficult steering. I stayed in the cabin admiring his abilities and exchanging comments. At that time I did not know he had served in the Navy during WWII. But it makes a lot of sense. He was a water guy and was clearly made of the stuff that Tom Brokaw called the "Great Generation." He had that steely resolve mixed with a great warmth.

He was renovating a home in historic Brickboro in his nineties and I said to him, "Why and for who?" He said he didn't know who, "It's just what we do." And that was a good enough answer for him so it was good enough for me.

He was sharp-minded. He stayed current, using the internet in his 90's

and likely learning about it in his late 60's. He would read our correspondences electronically and make mention of our activities described in it when I would see him.

So that is what I remember, but here is what I like to believe - that he is with Helen and they are watching the sunset on their favorite Maurice River meadow across the river from their home and he has the glint in his eye that he had when he first met her so long ago in Cape May. Call me a romantic; I'll take it.

I encourage you to read Jack's obituary to gain greater insight into his life.

Once again we would like to thank the Lawrence Family for thinking of CU in their memorials. Our heartfelt condolences to Jack's daughters, Joan and Nancy, and their families.

May sweet memories of your father and mother sustain your spirits.

Sincerely,

Jane Morton Galetto
Board President

Jack Lawrence
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John "Jack" Lawrence, Jr. age 96 passed away on September 1, 2017. Born in Philadelphia, Jack lived in Woodbury most of his life and was a graduate of Woodbury High School in 1939. After retiring he resided in Naples FL and at his beloved family home on the Maurice River in Port Elizabeth NJ. He served in the Navy during World War II from 1942-1945. While he was stationed in Cape May, he met his wife

Helen. Jack and his brother Bill, took over the family construction business in Westville, John D. Lawrence Inc., the heritage of which originated in the late 1800's as a barn and home building company in Elmer NJ.

He was a member of the Woodbury Kiwanis, YMCA Board of Directors, Woodbury Architectural Review Committee, Woodbury Country Club, Carpenters Company of Philadelphia, served as President of The Building Contractors Association of South Jersey.

Jack was predeceased in December by his wife of 73 years Helen P. (nee Walton). Survived by daughters Joan Lawrence-Rhoads (Stephen), Nancy Burgese (Pasquale), brother William and grandchildren Sarah and Alexander Rhoads and Katherine "Katie" Henry.

Friends may greet the family on Saturday September 9 after 9:30am in the Budd Funeral Home, 522 Salem Ave. (Kings Hwy), Woodbury NJ. Funeral service will be at 11am. Interment private.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to: Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries, Inc., P.O. Box 474, Millville, NJ 08332 or to the Mauricetown Historical Society, P. O. Box 1, Mauricetown, NJ 08329. Memories may be shared at www.buddfuneralhome.com.

CU on the River!

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