



Donald Sherwood Fraser III

July 19, 1924 - January 16, 2019

Don Fraser, born in Chicago, Illinois, was a great man with the kindest blue eyes. He passed from this earth on January 16, 2019, into eternal life. Don loved spending time with his family, active in the stock market, and rarely missed a UT football game on TV until his final illness. He was 94.

In 1933, on Don's ninth birthday, he traveled with family from Chicago to the Rio Grande Valley to Mercedes, Texas. In his new home in Texas, Don had an adventurous and curious upbringing with his horse Brownie, his cousins, Boy Scouts, and dogs Spic and Span. He often recounted stories from his frog hunting nights, telling how he hunted the frogs in shallow water with a flashlight and stick and then sold them to a local restaurateur who happily offered the delicacy on the menu. He reminisced about simpler times at the local movie theater when a milkshake was a nickel and a hamburger was a dime. It humored Don when he would talk of how he played high school football against Tom Landry, the legendary coach of the Dallas Cowboys. Even though Don raised his girls in Houston, they watched and rooted for Tom Landry and the Cowboys.

After graduating from Mercedes High School in 1942, Don enlisted in the United States Navy. He traveled from Mercedes to Houston to board a troop train. The train took him to San Diego where he was trained and eventually assigned to the wood-hulled YMS-286 minesweeper. His ship headed to

Honolulu, Hawaii, and then to the Admiralty Islands, where he and the crew began to sweep for mines ahead of the US fleet on their way to Japan. He survived five invasions while moving from island to island. The wooden minesweeper led the way through New Guinea, the Philippines, Okinawa, and then Tokyo Harbor. His ship was attacked by kamikazes and shelled in many sea battles. Don would often tell the story of a shell that struck the ship, went through the deck, and landed on a bunk of a shipmate, just feet away from where he was standing. Fortunately, it did not explode. He also recalled being in Seeadler Harbor at Manus Island in Papua, New Guinea, when the USS Mount Hood Ammunition ship exploded. The YMS-286 was damaged, but did not sink. The explosion killed hundreds of Americans on the USS Mount Hood and sank many ships in the harbor. Don never forgot the powerful explosion that knocked him to the deck. Although his time on the ship was brutal and war was hell, he would tell many humorous stories about the two castaway ship dogs, a monkey who took up residence for a short time, and the silly initiation ritual the men had as they crossed the equator. His mother would bake him brownies and mail them to him hoping they would find their way. Often times, it took six months or more for him to receive them. By the time the brownies arrived, they were moldy, but he and his buddies scraped off the mold and savored every bite in hopes they would soon be home.

When the war was finally over, Don returned to the United States and was honorably discharged in 1946. He was awarded eight stars and multiple ribbons for his service at sea. He returned to Houston, but soon realized the great flood of returning soldiers created a scarcity of jobs. He decided to re-enlist, but this time in the Army as the US was preparing for War in Korea. After four years and the cessation of the hostilities, he was honorably discharged.

Upon his return from the Army, he enrolled in the University of Texas, Austin. Don earned a degree in bacteriology and chemistry with intentions of

becoming a doctor. Quickly, he realized if he lost a patient, it would be too unbearable, so he choose a new path. Don loved UT, his experiences, and the friends he made. Up until his last living days, he would not miss the chance to watch "The Horns" play. He was a proud Texas Exes Life Member. Don's new direction lead him to the University of Houston where he received a degree in accounting. He worked for James Letsos (founder of Letsos Company) and then for Courtney Enterprises/Tipco as the comptroller and secretary for more than 35 years. He was also a Texas Notary and had both real estate and brokerage licenses.

After marrying in 1961, Don was soon blessed with his first baby girl, Donna, in 1963. Two and a half years later, his second daughter, DeAnn was born. Don adored his girls and at every opportunity shared his knowledge of vegetable gardening, the responsibility of their pet rabbits, dogs and doves, as well as useful knowledge of household maintenance as he tinkered in his garage. In 1976, Don found himself as a single parent. He raised his daughters by himself and provided them with articles girls need - dresses for parties, fashionable shoes, orthodontic braces, education, a princess telephone, and social time. He shepherded his daughters through discipline and moral values, but mostly he gave them his time, attention, and love.

Once Don finally retired in the 90s, he spent a good part of his time ballroom dancing; all of the ladies wanted to dance with him because he was light on his feet and a great leader. He was also a top-notch tennis player and enjoyed playing golf. Additionally, he enjoyed classes at the Glassell School of Art. He was an amazing artist, especially mastering the technique of watercolor. He loved Texas, country drives, all animals large and small, John Wayne, and old movies. He was a handsome dresser and enjoyed the finer things in life. He was a true renaissance man.

Don was preceded in death by his mother, Gertrude Fraser Drake (née McLaughlin) and Donald “Woody” Sherwood Fraser, Jr., and his beloved stepfather, Louis Francis Drake. He is survived by two daughters: Donna Cropper and husband Mike; and DeAnn Decker and husband Sam. He is survived by the following grandchildren: Meredith (née Macek) Hamilton and husband Josiah; Austin Robert Macek; and Fraser Drake Decker. He also leaves to celebrate his memory: cousins Francis and Fred Galey, Jackie Pantello, Pat and Tom Honeywill, David and Ashley Putman, former son-in-law Robert Macek, and numerous family and friends.

Donna and DeAnn extend their heartfelt thanks to their employers (past and present) for allowing them the time needed over the years to provide care to their father; to full time caregiver Paige May who was attentive and caring during many difficult days and nights; part time caregiver Beverly Comeaux for providing much laughter and love; Don’s 35 year cardiologist Dr. Dale Faulker and nephrologist Dr. Peter Nguyen and to all his doctors throughout the years who have retired or died.

The Funeral Liturgy will be Wednesday, January 23, 2019 at 10:30 a.m. at St. John Vianney Catholic Church, 625 Nottingham Oaks Trail, Houston, TX 77079 followed by Final Commendation and Burial at Memorial Oaks Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a contribution to a charity of your choice, or to the American Heart Association, American Kidney Fund, or Houston Hospice.

Cemetery Details

Memorial Oaks Cemetery

13001 Katy Freeway
Houston, TX 77079

Previous Events

Mass Of Christian Burial

JAN 23. 10:30 AM (CT)

St. John Vianney Catholic Church
625 Nottingham Oaks Trail
Houston, TX 77079
(281) 497-1500

Graveside Service following Holy Mass

JAN 23. 12:00 PM (CT)

Memorial Oaks Cemetery
13001 Katy Freeway
Houston, TX 77079

Tribute Wall



“ *Donald Sherwood Fraser III*

October 08, 2023 at 10:52 AM



“ *Donald Sherwood Fraser III*

October 06, 2023 at 01:12 AM



“ *Donald Sherwood Fraser III*

October 05, 2023 at 09:45 AM



“ *Donald Sherwood Fraser III*

October 05, 2023 at 01:54 AM



“ *A New Sunrise Spray was purchased for the family of Donald Sherwood Fraser III.*



January 21, 2019 at 01:35 PM