



Harlen L. Northup

June 9, 1936 - August 3, 2023

At 12:45pm, on August 3, 2023, a longtime resident of our community passed away. Mr. Harlen L. Northup, 87, of Okahumpka, FL, departed this life from a nursing facility located in Lady Lake, FL. His passing was based on lingering complications stemming from an aorta valve replacement earlier in February of this year. What was observed by all, was a man with strong convictions, fighting bravely for almost six months to stay alive, regardless of the odds. He loved life. Fighting by his side, was his wife and best friend (Frances), of 67 years this Labor Day weekend.

Long before Harlen and Frances (Collinge) were high school sweethearts, a strong baby boy named Harlen LaVern Northup was born on June 9, 1936, to Homer Harley Northup and Lula Mable Glasgow of West Point, Iowa. He grew up in the country and attended rural country school. He learned how to fish and hunt. While living in the country, he had a few pets: a raccoon and a cherished cat and dog. When Harlen's father moved the family closer to town, he was able to attend a regular elementary school, where he first met Frances. Ice skating was one of his favorite hobbies in the winter and he enjoyed skating on the Des Moines River. It was Harlen who taught Frances how to ice skate. Before these two got into high school they had paper routes. In high school, Harlen played basketball and sang in the school choir. He enjoyed tumbling, wrestling and wood shop. He worked part-time as a lifeguard at Lacey State Park, and on a family, farm owned by Ellis and Lura

Collinge, (Frances' parents), who were soon to become his in-laws. After they both graduated from Keosauqua High School in Keosauqua, Iowa in 1955, Harlen took a position with the Santa Fe Railroad. They were married on September 2, 1956, and enjoyed their early years together until Harlen was drafted by the United States Army at the close of the Korean War. He served his country bravely in the mortar division. Once his required time was served, Harlen was released with honorable discharge in the early 1960's and headed back to Frances to resume their future in Florida.

Florida is where Harlen and Frances spent most of their lives. It is in Tarpon Springs, FL where they first put down matrimonial roots and purchased their first home. Here is where they played most of the time with swamp buggies, camping and constantly going to the Gulf shore. It is where he first took up the trade of building construction and soon specialized in laying ceramic tile and marble. Both his in-laws and his parents came down from Iowa to enjoy the nice weather Florida offered. During their time in Tarpon Springs, two children were born to this pair. He was still a ceramic tile and marble installer and had become partners in the construction business. Unfortunately, Florida was growing fast, so Harlen decided to move his family to a sleepy community located in the interior of the state called, Okahumpka, in Lake County.

Okahumpka and all of Lake County is where Harlen created his future that lasted until his last breath. He truly was an entrepreneur and set his sights on being self-employed, being a contractor, laying ceramic tile and marble in a new community. He set good goals, held high standards and expectations that led him to respected general contractors in need of his skill. The tile profession served him well for almost 50 years. His duty to the family ensured a roof over their heads, food on the table, clothing on their backs and a little extra left over to save for a rainy day. The land, he and Frances purchased, was from a local man named, Mr. Hack Brewer. This acreage consisted of a home that overlooked a rolling field that led down to a small lake and graceful

live oak trees. Over the years, Harlen and Frances planted cedar trees, magnolias and crepe myrtles that today tower the property. It is here that he needed a tractor. He and Frances decided they wanted to give their kids some down home values, so they raised many types of farm animals, including peacocks. It was not unusual to see the male peacock fanning his feathers in full glory. Harlen also enjoyed studying the poisonous snakes found on his property along with alligators. This is where his airboat came in handy. He also enjoyed water skiing, sail boating and touring in his pontoon boat. He was always busy on this property, with multiple projects. He loved welding and tinkering on anything mechanical. His last project, which still needs his final attention, was a 1942 Ford tractor. He loved tractors.

He loved tractors so much that he started collecting them and going to antique tractor shows and swap meets across the nation. Because of Frances' love of travel, he was able to visit all 50 states. One of his prized possessions was his RV. Although he had several airstreams that he enjoyed restoring, by far he preferred driving his RV. He also had the good fortune to visit all of the Canadian provinces, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Poland, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, the Caribbean, the Panama Canal zone, Mexico, and Columbia. He loved traveling on European trains and cruising on the open seas too.

Harlen's drive to stay busy led him to many interests. He was curious and his inquisitiveness and keen intellect drove all his pursuits. He was a self-made man. He chose not to rely on others and enjoyed spending most of his free time creating in his "shop." Playing with his family and exposing them to new experiences was high on his list. He wanted to learn how to snow ski, so he made sure he gave this experience not only to himself, but to his entire family, so he drove his family first to Georgia, then later to North Carolina to try this

sport. His final ski trip took the entire family by car to Colorado during Christmas break. He wanted to see and ski the Rockies. Harlen was committed to working hard and being punctual; he expected those around him to do the same. He believed in making sure his family knew how to care for their vehicles. He was old-fashioned.

He was the kind of man that loved John Wayne movies and listened to Gospel music. He believed in God and loved his wife and family. He had his own way of thinking and did not care about fitting in socially. He pushed to live, and had no fear of operations, as he believed the operation might make him stronger. Harlen lived with purpose. His last thoughts were about construction.

Remaining to cherish his memory: wife Frances, son Harley E. and his wife Lisa (Blakemore) Northup, daughter June A. and husband Chris Presley, grandchildren: Alicia Northup, Lauren (Andrew) Goring, Sarah Northup, and Kaitlyn Northup, great-grandchildren: Twins Freddie H. and Jean L. along with their younger sister Jennifer Cotto. He was preceded in death by his parents, Homer H., and Lula M. (Glasgow) Northup, his younger brother Carl E. Northup.

A visitation will be held on Saturday, August 12th, 2023 from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM with a small family service beginning at 3:00 PM at Beyers Funeral Home Chapel located at 1123 W. Main St in Leesburg, Florida. Harlen will be laid to rest in Oakland Cemetery, Keokuk, Iowa at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please leave an offering in his name to the Alzheimer's Association.

Arrangements entrusted to Beyers Funeral Home of Leesburg, Florida.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 12. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Beyers Funeral Home & Crematory
1123 W Main St
Leesburg, FL 34748
(352) 787-4343

Family Service

AUG 12. 3:00 PM (ET)

Beyers Funeral Home & Crematory
1123 W Main St
Leesburg, FL 34748
(352) 787-4343

Tribute Wall



“ *Beyers Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Harlen L. Northup*



Beyers Funeral Home - August 12, 2023 at 10:19 AM

JD

“ *My Uncle Harlen, I will miss you! He was the only other person (besides my Grandpa Ellis) I would allow to call me Joycey 🤔*

He showed me how to tan rattle snake and alligator hide to make leather goods in his "shop" in Florida. Uncle Harlen took my sisters and I on his airboat which was the most fun ever! We really loved coming down to visit the Florida relatives. Uncle Harlen always had some new thing or project to show us. Rest in Peace with our Lord 🙏 I love you and will miss your stories.

Joyce E Collinge Davidson - August 09, 2023 at 10:05 PM