



Peter Nathan Maxwell

June 1, 1930 - December 24, 2023

Peter Maxwell will always be remembered for his selfless devotion and caring for his ailing wife, Arlene. After years of being her hands-on caregiver in their Tavares lakefront home, they moved to a community where she could be in memory care, and he could be close by in assisted living. Peter spent his days with her walking, then pushing her wheelchair until she eventually became bedridden. For months, Peter sat by her bedside all day. Though near the end, she was not able to communicate or respond, Peter constantly sang to her, repeated rhymes and never missed the opportunity to tell her several times a day how much he loved her.

Peter was born in 1930 in Durant, Oklahoma. He often talked about his early life and the poverty faced by his family. Work was scarce for his father. In search of odd jobs, Peter's family walked from Oklahoma to Virginia. When that opportunity ended, the family walked again but this time to Florida. Along the way, livestock trucks would give them a ride. Between rides they found watermelons and oranges to eat. Peter and his family eventually settled in Lady Lake, Florida.

Peter enjoyed growing up in Lady Lake. He enjoyed delivering the Grit Newspaper and spending time in the log cabin, the town's gathering space whose doors were never locked.

After graduating from Leesburg High School, Peter began his railroad career by working for the Atlantic Coastline, then Seaboard Coastline and then Amtrak. He began in railroad telegraphy as a morse code operator. This work enabled him to become a radio operator when drafted by the Army during the Korean War. He was fortunate to be stationed in Austria.

After the war ended, Peter returned to the railroad and learned to “throw a switch to allow trains off a branch line”. As a Railroad Operator he learned how to handle Railway Express shipments. This job was particularly stressful when he had to manage a crate of smelly fish that spilled off the Railway Express wagon; and similarly, when a carton of baby chicks spilled on the tracks while the No. 76 train was approaching from the south. And as the Passenger Agent for the Florida Special, he had to jump off a moving train with his suitcase on trips between Miami and New York because at that time Winter Park was not a station stop.

Eventually Peter moved to Amtrak and became Station Supervisor of the Orlando Station on Sligh Boulevard. Peter was later promoted to District Supervisor, which covered most of Florida. In 1990, Amtrak awarded Peter the President’s Award for Achievement.

For several years Peter tried to get Amtrak to make repairs and improvements to the 1926-built mission style Orlando Station. When he met the founder of the City of Orlando’s program called “Citizen’s Keep Orlando Beautiful” a partnership began to restore the station. In 1991 Peter was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for his efforts in raising \$500,000 in donated materials and recruiting dozens of volunteers to work on the renovation of the Orlando Station.

Inside the Station’s waiting room was a large Gruen clock – it was a main feature of the room and one that Station workers relied on to announce the

arrival of trains. In the 1980's the clock stopped working and eventually it was replaced with a smaller one. At retirement, Peter was given the Gruen clock as well as the Station's large Baggage Room sign as mementos of his time managing the Station. He eventually restored these items and donated them to the Central Florida Railroad Museum in downtown Winter Garden.

After retiring from the Railroad in 1991, Peter and Arlene had a wonderful time together as antique dealers in the Mount Dora area. Peter was known as the "Holiday Man" as his booth displayed dozens of collectible blow molds and holiday decorations. He also loved all eclectic memorabilia. Arlene had a separate location, specializing in antique linens.

In Peter's later years, he started running for exercise. He ran his first 5K race at the age of 65. Once Peter moved to assisted living, he continued his exercise by walking the corridors while monitoring his 10,000+ steps a day with his Fitbit.

Peter was a devout Christian, and he cherished his relationship with God. He was a former deacon of the Killarney Baptist Church when he lived in Winter Park. After moving to Tavares, he and Arlene became members of the Morrison Methodist Church in Leesburg. Peter often spoke about his active participation in the Inquires' Class, as well as the wonderful relationships he and Arlene made with the members of the Class.

Peter is survived by his children: Mitzi Maxwell (Howey-in-the-Hills, FL), Kim Liberty (DeLand, FL), Kristen Moore (Orlando, FL), Sherri Kimmell (Atlanta, GA) and his four grandchildren.

Arrangements entrusted to Beyers Funeral Home of Leesburg, Florida.

Previous Events

Burial Service

JAN 3. 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Hillcrest Memorial Gardens
1901 County Rd 25A
Leesburg, FL 34748

Tribute Wall



“ *Beyers Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Peter Nathan Maxwell*



Beyers Funeral Home - December 29, 2023 at 05:06 PM

ML

Very beautiful Memorial.

Miriam Lowder-Thomas - January 01, 2024 at 07:05 PM

ML

“ *Miriam Lowder-Thomas lit a candle in memory of Peter Nathan Maxwell*



Miriam Lowder-Thomas - January 01, 2024 at 07:06 PM

ML

“ I would like to express my deepest sympathy to Peter’s family for the loss of a great man. I came on as a Caregiver for his wife Arlene and ended up gaining two special friends, Chicky (Arlene) and Peter. We’ve had good conversations. We laughed and laughed, disagreed on somethings and laughed again. One thing Peter didn’t play about was his Love for his Chicky. It was his way or no way. I understood his way and that’s why we got along. LOL. Peter, you will be missed. Say hello to Chicky for me.

Love,
Miriam

Miriam Lowder-Thomas - January 01, 2024 at 07:02 PM