



Herman "Bubba" Henry Von Harten Jr.

August 18, 1930 - October 12, 2017

Herman Henry "Bubba" Von Harten, Jr., husband of Patricia Butler Von Harten, passed away October 12, 2017 at his residence.

Von Harten was born August 18, 1930, on Lady's Island, S.C., a son of Bertha McLean Von Harten and H. H. "Captain Geech" Von Harten. He grew up in downtown Beaufort, S.C., graduated from Beaufort High School in 1947 and attended Rice Business College in Charleston, S.C.

Von Harten served his country proudly in the U.S. Air Force from 1948 to 1952. He survived the bitter cold of the Korean War during the 17 months he was deployed there as a radar operator.

After the war Von Harten went into the shrimp business with his father and brother. "H. H. Von Harten & Sons Sea Food Company" operated a fleet of shrimp boats in the waters stretching from Beaufort to the Gulf of Mexico. Their main ports of call were Beaufort; Key West, Fla.; Apalachicola, Fla.; Pascagoula, Miss.; and Freeport, Texas.

After marrying and starting a family, Von Harten returned to the Lowcountry in 1965 and established Von Harten Seafood on Lady's Island. The operation included a dock, packing house, retail fish market, wholesale seafood distributorship and boat yard.

At first Von Harten and his growing family lived in an apartment above the fish market, which was situated in a rambling forty-year-old garage overlooking Factory Creek. Later they moved to the Hundred Pines neighborhood of Beaufort. The house in town was convenient to the waterfront, and Bubba could take a boat to work on the days when the swing bridge broke down.

In the late 1960s Von Harten utilized his boat yard to manage the design and construction of three modern steel-hulled shrimp trawlers, the Sea Island Lady, the Young'n, and the Lady Grace.

In the 1980s Von Harten helped his wife open and operate Capt. Geech's, a locally-beloved seafood restaurant next to the fish market on Lady's Island. The name of the restaurant was noted by Tom Hanks when he was filming Forrest Gump here. When Hanks subsequently directed a picture of his own, That Thing You Do, he gave the name "Captain Geech and the Shrimp Shack Shooters" to a fake rock band in a film-within-a-film, thus enshrining the restaurant's name in pop culture.

After closing Von Harten Seafood in 1989, Von Harten became captain of a friend's shrimp boat. It was just his luck that it was the year Hurricane Hugo struck the South Carolina coast. Always a man of courage, and mindful of his forefathers' reputation for bravery at sea, Bubba considered it his duty as captain to safeguard the boat during the storm. He risked his life to ride out Hurricane Hugo on the Beaufort River. Fortunately for his family and others that cared for him, on that terrible September night providence spared Bubba, the boat he captained, and his beloved Beaufort.

As he neared retirement Bubba was employed by the Beaufort County School District. In addition to being a maintenance worker he was also asked to captain the school's boat. His job was to deliver people and parcels to the remote Daufuskie Island School. After he retired he continued to work as a contract worker for deliveries to Daufuskie. He also volunteered for many years as a reading teacher at Beaufort Elementary School.

In addition to being a shrimper and businessman, Von Harten was a committed public servant. He was on the S.C. Department of Natural Resources Marine Advisory Committee for many years. He served multiple terms as president of the South Carolina Shrimpers Association, and also was president of the organization's northern chapter on an ongoing basis. In 1976 he became a founding board member of the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, which twice honored him for decades of meritorious service to advance fisheries research. He also made trips to Washington, D.C., to lobby for improved trade regulations regarding the domestic shrimp industry.

Von Harten was a charter member of the Lady's Island-St. Helena Fire Department, where his roles included treasurer, assistant chief and chief. He was also a founding member of the Lady's Island Business and Professional Association. Von Harten also was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Beaufort, where he served as an elder, deacon, Sunday School teacher, youth group leader and building maintenance volunteer.

Von Harten was a long-time board member and treasurer of the Beaufort County Historical Society. As a member of Gideons International, he was dedicated to Bible distribution at

local hotels and military bases, and was a frequent speaker at churches in the region. He was also a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, the 911 Golf Group and the Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club. In 2011 he published a memoir, *Little Geech: A Shrimper's Story*, which he was honored to present at the South Carolina Book Festival in 2012.

Von Harten's main passion in life was flying airplanes. As a teenager he used his wages to pay for flying lessons at the airstrip that used to be on Pigeon Point. He held a pilot's license before he received his driver's license.

We will always remember how his eyes would light up when he talked about flying. But above all, we will miss his caring nature, and the kindness and generosity he showed to anyone in need.

Von Harten was preceded in death by two sisters, Mildred Von Harten Rayfield and Catherine Von Harten Ericson.

Survivors include a brother, Harold Lee Von Harten and his wife, Frances Mathis Von Harten, of Lugoff, S.C.; two daughters, Laura Lee Von Harten and Tracy Lynn Von Harten of Beaufort, S.C.; a son, Herman Henry "Bo" Von Harten, III, and his wife, Amber E. Von Harten, of Charleston, S.C.; a son, Raymond Alan Von Harten and his wife, Sarah Stewart Von Harten, of Alexandria, Va.; and two grandsons, Joshua Kiernan Von Harten and Jacob Butler Von Harten of Alexandria, Va.

A memorial service will be held on Monday, October 16, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, Beaufort, SC with a reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall.

Memorials may be made to First Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 1226, Beaufort, SC 29901 or Gideons International, P.O. Box 72, Beaufort, SC, 29901.

Arrangements in care of Charleston Cremation Center And Funeral Home.

Comments



“ Please accept my deepest condolences in the passing of Bubba. We had a lot of fun when Pat and Bubba were dating in Key West. I'll never forget our all night fishing trips.
It was an honor to be in Pat and Bubba's wedding. Rest In Peace. Paula and Bill Bushelle

paula bushelle - October 19, 2017 at 07:34 PM



“ From Anne & Rick Pollitzer purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Herman "Bubba" Henry Von Harten Jr..



From Anne & Rick Pollitzer - October 17, 2017 at 04:48 PM



“ What a full and accomplished life. Always liked your dad. Very. genuine. Having lived on Factory Creek, I have fond childhood memories of Von Harten's Seafood on Ladys Island...from the bustle and sounds of daily enterprise to the smell of shrimp and raw cut fish, to the oil and diesel fuel down by the docks. It all feels like last week.
God's peace to you and family.

Wyatt Pringle, Jr. - October 17, 2017 at 09:45 AM



“ Mr. Bubba was a kind hearted person, would do anything in the world he could for you. He always helped out here at the Beaufort County School District Office when we called him. I had not seen him for quite a while. He will be truly missed by all.
Sending prayers and strength to the family.

Angie Lopatka

Angie Lopatka - October 16, 2017 at 02:38 PM



“ From the Mclean Family: the Von Harten's were always a fun, lively family. My best memories were of traveling with my Aunt Bertha, the Von Harten matriarch, and visiting in Beaufort. Although Bubba was really first cousin, he was more like a kind, gentle Uncle. He will be greatly missed by all. I know he is flying that plane of his to some new destination.....you know he never did like to stay put too long. Our hearts goes out to his family and friends - love, Lillian, Roy, and Diane

Diane McLean - October 15, 2017 at 09:59 PM



“ PS: a donation was made in loving memory of Bubba to the Gideon's International.

Diane McLean - October 15, 2017 at 10:01 PM



“ To Sarah, Ray, and the entire Von Harten clan: I send my sincere condolences on the passing of Bubba. I know from Sarah how much he was a part of your lives, and how much your little guys loved him, too. May he rest in peace. Please know you are all in our hearts, thoughts and prayers at this time and always.

Much love,

Irene, Andy, Noah and Josh Ilachinski



Irene - October 15, 2017 at 05:34 AM



“ The Sealy family- Curtis,Paul,Chris,Betty purchased the Lily and Rose Tribute Spray for the family of Herman "Bubba" Henry Von Harten Jr..



The Sealy family- Curtis,Paul,Chris,Betty - October 14, 2017 at 10:15 AM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Herman "Bubba" Henry Von Harten Jr..



October 13, 2017 at 10:10 PM



“ My heart is heavy tonight reading of mr. bubba's passing. As A child my father worked along side him for a while. Seemed like everytime Ms. Pat was pregnant, so was my mother. I grew up with The Von Harten children and I remember getting married how Mr.Bubba flew Laura up to Walterboro for my wedding. I also Remember those shrimp boats and the fish Market. some of my fondest memories as a child playing around there when we visited and seeing the shrimp boats. as an "un official" yankee these days.. i miss that seafood. Connecticut seafood just ain't the same. My sincerest Sympathy and condolences to the family. I send loving and healing vibrations to you. ... Donna Rae Callahan

Donna Rae Callahan - October 12, 2017 at 09:40 PM



“ Jim Bartholomew and Family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Herman "Bubba" Henry Von Harten Jr..



Jim Bartholomew and Family - October 12, 2017 at 07:46 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Herman "Bubba" Henry Von Harten Jr..



October 12, 2017 at 03:50 PM