



Herschel Ray Worthey, Jr.

September 1, 1927 - September 11, 2021

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9/1/1927 - 9/11/2021

Reverie

By Ray Worthey

As smoke drifts up so laz'ly
Like a phantom to the sky
So goes the formless essence
Of dreams for you and I.
Now they appear so vaguely
Half formed and never grasped
Like tiny bits of driftwood
In drowning arms enclasped.

Herschel Ray Worthey, Jr., passed away in his sleep on September 11, 2021. His family will miss him very much since he filled his life and ours during his 94 years with so much love, learning, mentoring, generosity, adventure, humor and fun. But, we are comforted that he and his wife and best friend, Mildred A. (Kornegger) Worthey, are together again.

Ray was born in Urbana, IL. He graduated from Champaign Senior High School 5/25/1945, and then on 8/4/1945, he enlisted in the US Navy. He was honorably discharged from the Navy 8/18/1946. He graduated from University of Illinois on 8/25/1950 with honors with a B.S from the Division of Special Services for War Veterans. He met his wife Millie while at University of Illinois, and after she graduated in 1952, then they married on 6/20/1953. Ray was a member of the Seafarers' International Union of North America (merchant marines) from 1947 through 1952. His time in the Navy and the merchant marines where he served on the Great Lakes and around the world started his lifelong love of sailing, traveling and learning other languages.

In 1953, they moved to Texas so that Ray could accept a job in Houston, and so Millie could become a Home Economics teacher at the high school in Crosby, TX. Ray joined the Jaycees, became a volunteer fireman, and helped with typical small town events like parades, the rodeo and with fish fries at the Methodist Church that Millie and he joined. They lived in a garage apartment at the home of Othello and Ora Hare, a local businessman / banker and his wife, who were like another set of parents for Ray and Millie. Their daughter Jill and later their daughter Lisa were born. Ray acted as his own general contractor and built a house. Their son Bill was born, and then Ray resigned from his job at Jefferson Chemical in Houston and took a position with Columbia Nitrogen that was building a new plant in Augusta, Ga. They lived in Augusta from late 1962 until October 1982. At their first house in Augusta, Ray again showed his skills by building a rock wall garden the length of the steep boundary line of their backyard and later an A-frame fort for Bill. He bought a project car, a cute aqua MGA sports car. Ray and Millie joined the Augusta Sailing Club (ASC) in the sixties and bought a Flying Tern sailboat. Millie and Jill alternated crewing for Ray during races. The family traveled to regattas around the Southeast and later went to the national Tern regattas in Maine and Massachusetts. Ray was Commodore of ASC for 1969. He still had time to go camping and hunting with his friends and later with Bill when he was older. The family moved to their second house in Augusta, and again Ray showed his skills by getting the pool in great shape in time for his daughter Jill's sweet sixteen birthday pool party. Just one of many times when Ray worked with Millie to make great memories for his children. We remember him trusting us as teenagers with Master's Golf Tournament badges that others had lent him so we could go to the tournament, allowing us to choose the colleges and our majors and supporting us, sending each of the three of us overseas for a summer when we were in college, and in so many other ways being a great parent and friend to us.

October 1982, Ray and Millie started another adventure. Ray retired at 55 as Manager of Procurement and Distribution from DSM Nipro (formerly Columbia Nitrogen) and became a Division Manager with Farmers Favorite Fertilizer and managed their fertilizer plants in Moultrie and Macon, GA. They moved to Moultrie. Ray became involved in the community with Sun Expo, was president of the Georgia Plant Food Educational Society in 1989, and supported the Arts Center and Federated Guild that Millie was involved with. But he still found time to buy a new sailboat, hunt, help Millie with landscaping their new home, and read an incredible amount of books. They traveled to see their 3 children as often as they could. In Fall 1992, Ray retired and they traveled more frequently- on sisters trips to meet Millie's three sisters and their husbands at various places in the Midwest and the South; on visits to their children - Jill in La Grange, TN; and Bill and Lisa and her husband Scott in Metro Atlanta; and on numerous foreign trips.

The next adventure was becoming the amazing grandparents that he and Millie were to their two grandchildren Teddy and Claire. They made the drive from Moultrie to metro Atlanta regularly, went on family summer vacations to numerous National parks, and they started the tradition of frequent spring break or summer trips to St. George Island, FL.

Also in retirement, Ray returned to his poetry, and in 2002 provided his three children with copies of 56 of his poems in ring bound notebooks so that he could send them new poems later to add to the collection. In 2002, he wrote that he dedicated his poetry to the love of his life, Mildred Kornegger Worthey, and to his children, Jill, Lisa, and Bill, the pride of his life. He wrote in his dedication in the poetry notebook, , “It is my hope that some part of this expression will pass to them for loving consideration of a part of the author’s life which he kept largely to himself.”

We had 94 years with him, but wished for more. Glad that he is now in heaven with the love of his life, Millie, and his son Bill who died too early in 2004.

Ray was preceded in death by his father, Herschel Ray Worthey, Sr.; his infant son Matthew Ernest Worthey; his mother Geneva Hites Worthey Wardlaw; his sister Dolores Jeanne Worthey Stender; his son William “Bill” E. Worthey; and his beloved wife of 64 years, Mildred A. Kornegger Worthey.

Ray is survived by his daughter, Jill W. Cox, of La Grange, TN; his daughter and her husband, Lisa W. and Scott H. Keller of Lilburn, GA; his grandson, Teddy Keller and his wife Amber Keller; his granddaughter Claire Young and her husband Jon Young; and his great grandchildren, Rhett, Piper and Margot Keller; his brother Eddie Worthey.

There are no services planned at this time. In lieu of flowers contributions can be made in Ray’s memory to Alzheimer’s Association <https://act.alz.org>, The Nature Conservancy in Georgia nature.org; or to the organization of the donor’s choice.

Condolences may be sent or viewed at <http://www.wagesfuneralhome.com>. Tom M. Wage s Funeral Service, 3705 Highway 78 West, Snellville, GA 30039 (770-979-3200) has been entrusted with the arrangements.

Comments



“ From his oldest child Jill Worthey Cox:

Once I asked Mom: “Why did you marry Daddy?” She said : “I knew I’d never be bored”.

Of course, the love of his life captured the essence of the man ----- curiosity.

He was a book-loving seeker of knowledge and new experiences.

Books were a life-long passion and companion. He lived his entire life with books. He used them to be the man he wanted to be and to live the life he wanted to live. They educated him, transported him around the world through his imagination, inspired him to write poetry, and answered his unending questions. Some examples are: sailing (learned to sail and built his dinghy Dandy from books) and home-building (designed and built our Texas house from books).

The arts were a passion as well.

He loved all music and loved playing his harmonica and concertina. His particular favorite was classical music. On Sunday mornings, he read the funny papers to us kids with Scheherazade or The Nutcracker playing.

He appreciated and collected art (prints, paintings, sculpture, pottery) throughout his life. His collection of Japanese block prints that he gave to me enrich my life daily.

Also, his curiosity led to an interest in and appreciation of other people. When traveling, he liked to ask questions to learn about people and hear about their experiences. He could carry on a conversation with anyone.

Adventure – Daddy instilled it in me early. At age of three, I wrapped my arms around his neck and he swam into the Gulf of Mexico. Just the two of us on a great adventure.....

Lisa Worthey Keller - October 20 at 07:17 AM