



## Frank Lewis Klaasse

April 7, 1933 - August 30, 2023

Our dear daddy Frank Lewis Klaasse drifted away to the heavens, passing by a beautiful full moon, early on Wednesday morning, August 30th, 2023, surrounded by his three fiercely devoted daughters. Our daddy was indescribably special to us – never wavering in his intentional love for us, and to all those that he touched throughout his life of 90 years.

Daddy was born on April 7, 1933, in Lancaster, Wisconsin to Leonard Simonds Klaasse and Lulu Lora Lewis and was raised in Stanton and Grand Rapids, Michigan. He joined the United States Navy at the age of 17, a day before the Korean War broke out, studied electronics in the Navy and served on a naval ship. After attending the University of Michigan, he was recruited by Provident Life & Accident Insurance Company into their actuarial program, and quickly headed down south to Chattanooga, where he began his long career at Provident, later becoming a corporate Computer/IT and actuarial senior executive. It was there, through a company sponsored Square Dance event, that he met and quickly fell head over heels in love with another Provident employee, our sweet mom, Betty Jean Riggs Klaasse. Mom and Dad were married within six months and began their life together with Dad becoming a very successful business executive while actively helping to raise his family of all girls.

Daddy came from a long line of Presbyterian ministers that were educated at Princeton University, instilling a lifelong devoted faith in him that he passed down to each of us. While being raised in Michigan with his siblings, older

sister Betty and younger brother George, he developed his love of music from his music teacher father, to whom he was very close. When he was only 11 years old, his mother died suddenly and he was forced to grow into a young man much too early. He never used his hardships and life challenges as excuses, but rather seemed to channel them into positive changes throughout his entire life.

After our parents were married in 1955, while Mom stayed busy at home working hard to raise us girls, Daddy devoted many long hours studying for his rigorous actuarial exams, a decade long process, that culminated in his earning the highest designation of Fellow of the Society of Actuaries (FSA). Through this knowledge and expertise, he significantly contributed to the growth of Provident as a leading national insurer. While at Provident in the early 1960s, Dad was tasked in leading the small team that would convert paper-based medical and dental claim payment and other outdated paper processes to a recently developed method through a new device - the IBM computer. His team was there when it was delivered in a very large crate and they began the years long work of modernizing the detailed methods and processes that are still used in the insurance industry today.

Even with all his long dedicated hours supporting his career, he always made time for his family, and his countless ‘Renaissance Man’ hobbies and his church family.

Early in his family life, at the start of each day, he would wake his girls up and we’d all sleepily march to the hallway full length mirror. We would stand there, stair-stepped, with our sleepy faces staring back at us, do a full-body stretch and say in unison “Boy, do I feel good!”. Then we would break out in song... “I feel better all over, more than anywhere else, that’s exactly how I feel!”. He would then lead us in singing, from the musical Oklahoma, ‘Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin’: Oh, what a beautiful morning; Oh, what a beautiful day. I’ve got a beautiful feeling, everything’s going my way! And that’s how our days started with our dad in our modest house on Pisgah Avenue.

Dad had so many hobbies that he excelled at with planning precision,

analyzing outcomes and timetables to finish. He was a master woodworker, building countless items of furniture for our home and our individual rooms, even into our married lives. He was a master gardener his entire life, always having a bountiful garden, and canning and harvesting for the winter. He was a beekeeper; a wanna-be farmer in our neighborhood, where he helped us raise all kinds of animals, including chickens, ducks, gerbils, hamsters, rabbits, guinea pigs, birds and of course, all of our wonderful dogs. He drew the line at cats though!

Dad was an active outdoorsman - camping, hiking, and fishing – always with one or more of his daughters, teaching us the beauty of the outdoors. He loved body surfing in the beach and swimming in the lake, where he often started off April with a cold, icy swim. Once, when his North Georgia lake froze over with a very thick layer of ice, Papaw taught his grandchildren how to ice-fish like he did while as a boy in Michigan. He threw the baseball with us, skateboarded with us and sailed his bike over ramps we had built. Daddy also taught us how to sew and knit and make quilts. He made sure we knew the difference in regular and Phillips head screwdrivers and the name of each of his woodworking tools, as we were his workshop assistants. He sang in the church choir each Sunday morning. He celebrated his 75th birthday with a tandem hang-gliding adventure and even survived a Delta plane crash in 1974. He served as President of the Chattanooga Opera & Symphony Association for several years, where he also performed in many operas. Dad was active in Toastmasters, Dale Carnegie Institute, also mentoring high school athletes at Brainerd High School, tutoring students in math, taking any math class at UTC “just for fun”. He was President of the local Square Dance community. He willingly served in leadership positions in most organizations in which he participated. Until the last couple of years, Dad was always active and busy, and never seemed to sit or slow down. However, he never boasted about all that he supported or was involved with – just a quick-witted, simple, and humble man who was most comfortable in his retired life in flannel shirts

and blue jeans, most every where he ventured.

Later in life at age 57 and after our mom passed away, Dad married Nancy Cleveland, meeting through their mutually shared hobby of square dancing. They traveled together and also built a lake home on Lookout Mountain, where they both became very active in their loving church community, Trenton United Methodist Church. They poured their retired lives into gardening, charity work with the church, and supporting those that needed it – through smiles, talents, expertise as well as providing scholarships for students in need. Dad delivered communion to those in hospitals or at home who couldn't make it to Sunday services. Dad developed several close friendships through his church community. Over the many years, he always took the time to call many friends and family members and sing 'Happy Birthday' to each of them, making sure they started their special day with a song and a smile.

Daddy joins in heaven his father, mother, sister and brother, as well as both of his loving wives, Betty and Nancy. He leaves behind his eternally grateful daughters for his life of active, passionate, intentional love for us: Debi Gass (John IV), Margaret (Peggy) Glascock and Barbara Jean Klaasse. He also leaves behind his grandchildren, Betsy (Mike) Lavender with great grandchildren Ben and Maddie (Silver Spring, Maryland) and John V; Savage Jr. (Alexandria), Temple, Riggs, Max (Lauren) and Rody Glascock along with their dad, Savage Glascock, Sr.; and May and Hank Haniszewski.

Our daddy lived life to the fullest, living each day with intention, purpose, and love for us. He raised us to be independent women, always encouraging us to be anything we wanted without limitations – and always teaching us to be honest above all else. Daddy was more than a father to each of us – he was our best friend, our biggest advocate and cheerleader - never, ever giving up the opportunity to give us a big giant hug with a loving, look at you straight in the eye "I love you", until the very end of his long, wonderful life on this earth. We know he is square dancing in heaven with all his family of angels and will wait for us to join him on this next grand adventure.

A Celebration of Life for Frank will be held on Sunday, September 3rd at 3PM

with visitation from 2-3PM at Ryan Funeral Home in Trenton, Georgia. Feel free to wear your blue jeans as our Daddy definitely would have! Contributions may be made to Trenton Methodist Church.

Expressions of sympathy may be shared at [ryanfuneralhome.net](http://ryanfuneralhome.net).

Arrangements entrusted to Ryan Funeral Home & Crematory, Trenton, GA.

# Cemetery Details

## Chattanooga National Cemetery

1200 Bailey Ave  
Chattanooga, TN 37404

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP 3. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Ryan Funeral Home and Crematory  
11415 S Main St  
PO Box 506  
Trenton, GA 30752  
(706) 657-7525  
steven.ryan@ryanfuneralhome.net  
<https://www.ryanfuneralhome.net/>

## A Celebration of Life

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# Tribute Wall



“ *And now, I've read his obituary, which is wonderful, wonderful!*

John Cowlshaw - April 06, 2024 at 04:35 PM



“ *Wow! Called today hoping to wish him Happy Birthday for his 91st birthday tomorrow, and phone not in service. I know what that means.*

*I'm so sorry I didnt know, about his death or his memorial service.*

*There is SO much i could write here.*

*I am his cousin, thru his father, Leonard Klaasse.*

*We spent holidays together as kids.*

*He taught me the joys of algebra when I was only a 6th grader.*

*He and his wife and girls visited my mom and dad at Silver Lake (Michigan) and i would see him then.*

*I flew my little two-seater to the airport near his previous home (Rising Fawn?), and met Nancy and saw his little garden.*

*His older sister died a few years ago.*

*And his brother George and his wife Deanna leave children (Tom, Stacy, Steve, Scott, Rhonda) in Michigan.*

*Godspeed to you, Frank!*

John Cowlshaw - April 06, 2024 at 04:18 PM

MH

“ *He was good to me, and I owe a LOT to him for helping me get my life back a long time ago.*

Margaret (Margie) Hannah - November 02, 2023 at 10:03 PM



“ *Frank Lewis Klaasse*

October 09, 2023 at 03:12 AM



“ 190 files added to the album LifeTributes



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**Ryan Funeral Home** - September 03, 2023 at 02:25 PM



“ *I had the pleasure of meeting Frank and one of his Daughters while sitting nearby in the Everlan dining room. You could tell how happy Frank was to have his beautiful Daughter there. Such nice people. I was very sad to hear of Frank's passing. No doubt he was warmly welcomed by many family & friends as he stepped across the veil. My deepest condolences to Frank's Daughters and extended family as they bid Frank goodbye at his celebration of life.*



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**Rebecca ONeal** - September 03, 2023 at 01:39 PM



“ *Pop, you will never know how much I will miss you! For being the man every little girl needs in a grandfather! For loving and cherishing my nanny, and showing us all what a beautiful marriage should look like! Birthday wont be the same anymore with out the joyous birthday phone calls, and many many mores you sang me.*



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**Samantha Cleveland** - September 02, 2023 at 06:11 PM

JL

“ *Debi, Peggy, Barbara and families,*

*The loving tribute to your dear father spoke to the respect and admiration you had for the man who lived a full life and enriched yours with positivity and joy. The care and intentional love he shared will always be with you, your children, grandchildren and generations to come.*

*Please accept our condolences and wishes for happy memories for a life well lived.*

*Julie and Steve Lavender and family*

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**Julie Lavender** - September 02, 2023 at 12:00 PM