

## Jack Donald Gwaltney

April 26, 1928 - June 25, 2020

Jack Donald Gwaltney, 92 passed peacefully on Thursday June 25, 2020 following a courageous battle with Alzheimer's. Preceded in death by wife Ethelene, he is survived by his sister Bettye Wills, daughter Jan Helfer (Rick), son Jeff (Karen) Gwaltney, grandchildren Erica (Simon) Blank and Sarah (Andrew) Fulk, and great grandchildren Eleanor, Ivy and Calvin Blank.

Born April 26, 1928, Jack grew up humbly in the Hickman Community of Smith County, TN. Following graduation from Tennessee Tech, Jack began his career with National Life Ins Co., where he worked for 41 years. He was the American success story, rising from an entry position to become a company Vice President, and eventually serving as the National President of HOLUA, the insurance industry's premiere underwriting organization. He was a man of faith; deeply devoted to loving his wife and family, and found joy in his career, travel, sports, and golf, once even playing at Augusta National and attending The Masters twice.

A man of honor and integrity, Jack always supported his staff, colleagues, and friends; never once putting his interests above theirs and always protecting "his people." Jack was everything the best husband, Dad, father-in-law, grandfather, colleague, and "golf bud" could be, and Dad/"Pa" will be missed deeply and remembered forever.

Graveside Services and Interment for Mr. Gwaltney are scheduled to be conducted at the Brush Creek Memorial Gardens on Sunday, June 28, 2020 after the 2-4PM Visitation.

Visitation with the family will be at the Gordonsville Chapel of Bass Funeral Homes on Sunday from 2PM until departure for the cemetery at 4PM.

**BASS FUNERAL HOME, GORDONSVILLE CHAPEL, DIRECTORS**

# Cemetery

---

## Brush Creek Memorial Gardens

7 School House Circle  
Brush Creek, TN, 38547

# Events

---

**JUN 28** Visitation 02:00PM - 04:00PM

---

Gordonsville Chapel of Bass Funeral Home  
71 E Main Street P. O. Box 248, Gordonsville, TN,  
US, 38563

**JUN 28** Graveside Service 04:00PM

---

Brush Creek Memorial Gardens  
7 School House Circle, Brush Creek, TN, US, 38547

# Comments

---



“ Dad - I have missed you every day this past year. My life isn't the same without you here. Please hug Mom for me and know how much I look forward to seeing you both.



jeff gwaltney - July 01, 2021 at 11:43 AM

---



“ My best, missed every day amd lived beyond words.  
Forever Dad



jeff gwaltney - February 04, 2021 at 05:06 PM

---



“ Below memory from Mr Bob Bell, who worked with and knew Dad for 40 years at National Life Insurance Co, which then became American General Insurance

FELLOW NATIONAL LIFE RETIREES

“Many of you have seen Jack's son Jeff as he made sure his Dad could attend NLT lunches.

Jeff learned the lesson of the important things in life from a MASTER TEACHER.

Many of us at NLT were blessed to have learned from that same teacher.

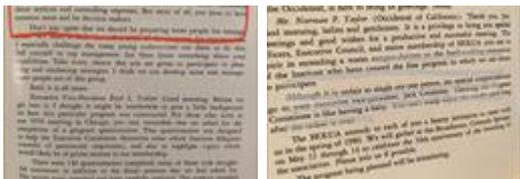
I think you will be happy you had time to read a little more about JACK GWALTNEY.”

Jeff Gwaltney - July 02, 2020 at 09:30 PM

---



# “ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Jeff Gwaltney - July 02, 2020 at 03:12 PM





“ IHOU - Tribute to Dad  
 President 1979, Chairman 1090

I remember after graduating from Belmont that by then, the early 80's, Dad has ascended to the Executive Committee of IHOU - the Institute of Home Office Underwriters- the nationwide largest and most prominent Association of Insurance Underwriters. He had served on every committee, selecting prominent hotels for the annual national convention, the as Secretary/Treasurer, the n Vice President. Finally his time came when he was chosen for the national honor of presiding as President, then Chairman.

His convention in 1979 as President was held in San Francisco, at the prestigious Hyatt Regency, where he presided over all convention and meeting agenda and activities, and my Mom Ethelene, chaired all spouse activities and events. A picture of them shows how proud my Mom was of Dad, and I was so proud of him I could burst. In 1980, he would serve as Chairman of this meeting in Chicago.

Dad was so well respected throughout his industry nationwide, a true leader. Though hi speech remarks below are not atypical, of note is his emphasis for the industry and member companies to focus on the need to “ train more leaders, not just managers.” That was Dad; he knew the power of leadership and championed that even back over 40 years ago, as he did his entire life.

An American Success Story of a humble man born and raised on a tobacco farm in rural Hickman TN.

I love you so much Dad; and was always so proud of you and your biggest fan, as you were for me. I will miss you until forever we are together again.

All my love,  
 Jeff



Jeff Gwaltney - July 02, 2020 at 03:09 PM

---



“ I saw Dad care for Mom for almost 15 years as she declined with Shy Drager disease ( a systemic organ failure akin to ALS). He demonstrated a true 1st Cor 13 love that I had never witnessed up close before. They were a love story straight from the book/movie The Notebook. He tended to her every need no matter how small or herculean and ensured she never spent one day in a hospital nor facility until she passed away at home Easter Apr 5, 2015. It was my honor and privilege to help Dad care for Mom full time from 2010 until she passed and we discussed what true love really meant and the depth of a lifelong commitment. Dad, I will always remember the lessons you taught as you lived as a man of actions not just words. You truly walked the walk...



Jeff Gwaltney - July 01, 2020 at 05:09 PM

---



“ Mom and Dad’s Wedding Day - July 21, 1950 (married almost 65 yrs when Mom passes Easter Sunday Apr 5, 2015. A live to rival “The Notebook!”

Mom and Dad I’m dating days...

Dad showing a prize cow (tobacco crop and cattle paid for that Tennessee Tech college tuition)

Dad in 1944 (16 years old)



Jeff Gwaltney - June 30, 2020 at 02:54 PM

---



“ I remember once returning from our very modest family trip to Daytona Beach or Panama City, that I had to use the bathroom so Dad stopped at a simple gas station in Georgia. I was old enough to go by myself, but little did we know the bathroom doorknob would be broken, and I locked myself inside and couldn't get out! There was a transom above the door and Dad crawled thru to rescue me; as he rescued me many times through my life. Thanks Dad!

Jeff Gwaltney - June 30, 2020 at 02:40 PM

---



“ A family story often told over the years...

one weekend when we were visiting Dads parents (Fred and Willie Gwaltney) at the farm in Hickman. Dad had volunteered to help Pop (Fred) with the unenviable task of castrating pigs. Of all of sudden our play was interrupted when Pop and Dad came running to the farmhouse because the pig had tribes and bitten Dads finger almost off. Barely hanging, they rushed to Carthage for the doctor who was able to save it and sew it back on.

While Dad was being medically attended to, I was told to stay back at the farm, which I did. And I promptly marched to the pigpen, and proceeded to gather and throw rock after rock after rock at the pig who bit Dad's finger off, screaming at him and letting him know if he messed with Dad, he'd answer to me! The pig swelled for mercy and I think if he could have talked, would have begged for forgiveness!

Dad and I always had each other's back were always each other's protector!

Jeff Gwaltney - June 30, 2020 at 02:39 PM

---



“ I remember after graduating from Belmont that by then, the early 80’s, Dad has ascended to the Executive Committee of IHOU - the Institute of Home Office Underwriters- the nationwide largest and most prominent Association of Insurance Underwriters. He had served on every committee, selecting prominent hotels for the annual national convention, the as Secretary/Treasurer, the n Vice President. Finally his time came when he was chosen for the national honor of presiding as President, then Chairman.

His convention in 1979 as President was held in San Francisco, at the prestigious Hyatt Regency, where he presided over all convention and meeting agenda and activities, and my Mom Ethelene, chaired all spouse activities and events. A picture of them shows how proud my Mom was of Dad, and I was so proud of him I could burst. In 1980, he would serve as Chairman of this meeting in Chicago.

Dad was so well respected throughout his industry nationwide, a true leader. Though hi speech remarks below are not atypical, of note is his emphasis for the industry and member companies to focus on the need to “ train more leaders, not just managers.” That was Dad; he knew the power of leadership and championed that even back over 40 years ago, as he did his entire life.

An American Success Story of a humble man born and raised on a tobacco farm in rural Hickman TN.

I love you so much Dad; and was always so proud of you and your biggest fan, as you were for me. I will miss you until forever we are together again.

All my love,  
Jeff



Jeff Gwaltney - June 30, 2020 at 01:09 PM

---



“ Even when his career was busy, Dad would ensure he was home by 5:30 every day in the summer to be my catcher, and then after dinner we'd go back out til we couldn't see...as he taught me to pitch in Little League. I remember he was so proud when my fastball got so hard he needed a sponge from our kitchen because it bruised his hand

Because of his commitment and love, I became quite a Little League pitcher and it always made me feel so good to see Dad happy and proud of those many no-hitters and shutouts as I went to become the #1 draft pick for our Donelson/Nashville Babe Ruth League, one of the best in TN back in late 60's/early 70's

I would go on to learn Dad had been an excellent baseball player a star center fielder who could chase down anything in the outfield and a fierce lead off hitter who was the fastest on every team he played on and a sure threat to steal second and third base...

Love you Dad and thanks for our great baseball times!

Jeff Gwaltney - June 27, 2020 at 10:35 PM

---



“ 118 files added to the tribute wall



Jeff Gwaltney - June 27, 2020 at 10:19 PM

---



“ From about 8 years old to 14, my Jack taught me baseball and turned me into a star Lilly's League pitcher...it would have never happened without Dads sacrifice to leave work no later than 5 every day sometimes earlier, where we would work on pitches with him catching me until Mom called us in for dinner, then we'd go back out after eating until it was too dark to see. I can remember him being very proud of the many no-hitters I threw and I will never forget his love of baseball - he was a fast and very good center fielder, who could chase down anything in the outfield and was a threat as lead off to steal 2nd base every time he was on first; which was very often

Jeff Gwaltney - June 27, 2020 at 04:59 PM

---



Jeff Gwaltney  
Brentwood TN  
April 11, 2019

“Heaven On Earth”

What Augusta National and Dad Mean To Me

Serenity...Peace...Joy...Bliss...

These are feelings we associate with our most wonderful moments in life. Places and times where we remember as other-worldly experiences, where we almost hovered above ourselves, as though we were in heaven. As angels watching while that moment in time, that surreal place, that eternal feeling enveloped us in a way we hoped would be inside of soul for all eternity.

This only begins to touch the surface of the feeling that wells up inside of me every first week of April, when once again, I make that annual personal journey and connection to my “Heaven On Earth” - Augusta National and The Masters...

Like so many millions of fans, I grew up watching The Masters with my Dad. Together we not only saw the majesty and beauty of this indescribable place, we cheered the victories, and suffered the heartbreaks of so many. The names we all know...Palmer, Nicklaus, Player, Watson, which transcended time to be followed by Woods, Michelson and the next generation.

But Augusta National became my “Heaven On Earth” in 1991. My Dad was going through cancer treatment, yet consistently playing at his local club. Out of the blue came an invitation from a work colleague: “Can you and your Dad meet me and my Dad in early November at Augusta?” “Sure, but isn’t the course closed since The Masters isn’t til April?” “No, it’s open to Members...my Dad is a Member and we want you and your Dad to be our guests for a weekend of golf at Augusta.” “Do What?!?”

And so we did...even staying at Augusta on property in the famous Cabins, touring inside Butler Cabin, the Crow’s Nest, the Champions Locker Room, dining in the Club with the Members, and...playing Augusta National....The memories are beyond words and will remain with me the rest of my life.

It’s true, the experience of actually playing there, swinging a club, making shots (good or bad), holing a put on those hallowed greens...It cannot be aptly described in human words...It is surreal, it is other-worldly, and it is a spiritual experience. As long as I have memory, I will never forget my Dad on Amen Corner, paring #12, and #13 (from Member Tees of course). I can feel the breeze, hear the wind as it whispers thru those majestic pine trees. I am moved to tears every year with humbleness, and deep gratitude to have experienced “Heaven On Earth” with my best friend and hero, my Dad.

We would go on thru the years to continue experiencing The Masters also as Patrons, seeing Fred Couples win by way of divine intervention on #12, and Bernard

Langer win his second Masters. And decades later, I would go on to attend other Masters, and always, always, always...walk the course with reverence...staying long after the competitive rounds were finished, remembering gratefully and emotionally, tears rolling down my face, unashamedly weeping and wanting one more time to relive those memories... until maintenance began their manicured choreography, sprinklers on...to prepare for that next day.

My Dad Has Alzheimer's now, and his memory has faded and his recollections of our magical weekend together at Augusta National has dimmed. So I remember with him now, for both of us, and replay those memories of his shots during that weekend, and our time together in Butler Cabin. Every first weekend of April, The Masters remains special to us, a place where we reconnect and reflect, where we share and remember what "Heaven On Earth" felt like. It is bittersweet now, yet the gratitude and reverence seems to not only remain, but grow.

I am a person of faith who believes in Heaven, though I don't know what it will look like or be like. I can only hope and pray that it will be exactly like Augusta National, and reliving those magical, joyful, most meaningful moments spent there with Dad. I think how it will feel to someday be reunited in Heaven our memories and bodies fully restored, and hope we will meet at Augusta National and take that glorious walk down Magnolia Lane together, then walk the course to Amen Corner where we spend eternity in our "Heaven On Earth."

So perhaps there is a "Heaven On Earth." And each year, thru grateful humbled tears of remembrance, respect and joy, I relive that glorious walk with my Dad. If you ever want to see and experience what "Heaven On Earth" looks and feels like, make the journey to this holy destination.

Take someone you truly care about. Walk each hole and take in every view. Feel the holy ground under your feet. See the majesty of nature. Look above the towering pine trees toward the blue skies. Open yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually to Augusta National. Be joyful, respectful, grateful and reverent. Soak it all in...pass it on and pay it forward...Who knows? You just may find yourself richly rewarded, and experiencing what it is truly like to be walk in "Heaven On Earth."