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Jack Wesley Rowley

Oct. 24, 1933 - Sept. 4, 2022

Jack Wesley Rowley, 88, of Morganton, North Carolina (formerly of Milford Center, Ohio and Pinellas Park, Florida) passed away peacefully Sunday, September 4, 2022. Born October 24, 1933, to the late Harry Hoyt Rowley and Charlotte (Rogers) Rowley, Jack married Barbara Jo Shipp on September 30, 1962, and lived a life of extraordinary adventure and service to his Lord, his Country, and his Family.

Jack graduated from West High School, Columbus, Ohio, in 1950 and joined the United States Naval Reserve. In 1952, he enlisted in the United States Navy and while on active duty was stationed at Midway Island and in Hawaii, where he deployed with the USS Oriskany. Jack completed active duty in 1956 and joined the United States Marine Corps Reserve, however, returned to the United States Naval Reserve in 1958. During his Reserve duty, Jack deployed with the USS Enterprise, USS Carl Vinson, and USS Forrestal, among other duty stations. Jack loved every minute of each day in the Military. He retired in 1993 as a Master Chief (E9) with 43 years of honorable service.

In 1958, Jack joined the Columbus, Ohio Division of Fire. In the following 33 years, he earned an Associate Degree in Fire Science Technology from Columbus Technical Institute. Jack held many positions with the fire department - Firefighter, Lieutenant, Captain, Battalion Chief - and was promoted to Assistant Chief in 1973. Jack served

Captain, Battalion Chief and was promoted to Assistant Chief in 1978. Jack served as Chief of the Bureau of Administration and Chief of Operations commanding 33 Fire Stations - 379 Firefighters, Officers and EMTs. During his career, Jack served as a Contract Instructor and Course Developer for the State of Ohio, and in 1983, he became an Adjunct Course Developer and Lead Instructor at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, teaching resident and field courses on a national basis. Jack retired from the Columbus Fire Department in 1991 and was heard on many occasions professing gratitude that he was privileged to have "the best job in the world!"

Throughout his life and in his retirement, Jack enjoyed volunteering. In 1982, he became a Founding Board Member of A Special Wish Foundation, Inc., the first wish-granting organization in Ohio. During his many years on the Board, he served as Chairman and as Treasurer. A Special Wish, since its founding, has granted thousands of wishes to children with life-threatening illnesses, and Jack and his wife, Barbara, enjoyed raising funds and presenting granted wishes to recipients. Jack was a member of the Friend's Disaster Service organized by the Friend's Church and, with them, travelled to sites of natural disasters around the world assisting with recovery. As a FEMA volunteer for several years, Jack worked as a Community Relations Officer responding to declared national disasters throughout the United States assessing damage and helping to prioritize and direct resources. Jack also participated as a Veteran Guardian with Honor Flight of Central Florida where he escorted Veterans as they flew to Washington D.C. to visit War Memorials.

Jack enjoyed golf, travel and adventure. Scoring two holes-in-one during his life, Jack spent much of his retirement while in Ohio playing and working at Darby Creek Golf Course in Milford Center. He was the ultimate Darby Creek Ambassador, doing whatever was needed by assisting in the Clubhouse with daily play and special events as well as helping to manage play on the course. He organized several tournaments to raise money for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. Jack travelled the world in the Military, with groups, individually, and with his family. The countries, historic sites, and biblical ruins he visited are too numerous to list. Adventure was ever-present with Jack. For two days he was lost at sea in a 14-foot boat off Midway Island until he was found and rescued by the Navy. He flew a small personal plane into Rickenbacker AFB in blackout fog conditions with no instruments

and landed perfectly. He flew to Turkey for a vacation with his daughter armed with just a rental car reservation and a map. At age 75, Jack went skydiving.

Most important to Jack was the time he spent in service to Christ. He was a good and faithful servant, a true scholar of the Bible, and attended several churches, including Westgate Friends Church (Columbus), Marysville Friends Church,

Marysville Grace Church, First Baptist Church of St. Petersburg (Florida), and services at Grace Ridge Retirement Community (Morganton, North Carolina). Jack led numerous Bible Studies during his life, including at the Pinellas County Jail in Florida and at Grace Ridge. He was a supportive mentor and good friend to so many.

Jack is survived by his family for whom he would and did move mountains – his beloved and devoted wife of 60 years, Barbara Jo (Shipp) Rowley; daughter Lori Lynn (David ("Butch")) Gibson; son John Andrew Rowley; grandsons David John-Wesley (Lindsey) Gibson and Alexander Rowley (Candace) Gibson; great-granddaughters Emma Elizabeth Gibson and Addie Elizabeth Gibson; and several nieces and nephews.

Jack, you stand relieved. We have the watch. Shipmate going ashore. Fair winds and following seas.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, September 24, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. in the Grace Ridge Retirement Community Chapel, 500 Lenoir Road, Morganton, North Carolina, followed by burial at Sunset Cemetery in Galloway, Ohio at a later date.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to A Special Wish Foundation or the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.