



Mr. Richard "Dick" Smith Sr.

February 27, 1926 - October 30, 2014

Richard H. "Dick" Smith Sr., 88, passed away in Pittsfield October 30, 2014 after a long illness. Dick was born on February 27, 1926 in Pittsfield, MA where he lived his entire life. He was the son of Raymond B. Smith and Lillian Needham Smith and one of three boys. He was predeceased by his parents, his older brother Ray and his younger brother Donald.

Dick was married for 65 years to his beloved wife Claire McEachron Smith and was the father of ten children; Richard H. Smith Jr. of Whispering Pines, NC, Janet S. Elsila of Ponte Vedra, FL, David B. Smith of Pittsfield, Patricia S. Pickard of Dallas, TX, Jonathan W. Smith of Pittsfield, Robert P. Smith of Pittsfield, Julie Cohn of St. Mary's, GA, Timothy Smith of Dallas, TX, Sally Lee Smith who died in 1961 at the age of six months and Jenny Smith who died in 1975 at the age of 11.

In addition to his wife and eight children, Dick is survived by his daughters-in-law Tina Smith of Pittsfield and Paula Fierros Smith of Dallas, TX , his son-in-law Commander Charles Cohn, USN of St. Mary's GA and his 15 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.

He was a graduate of Pittsfield High School. He received his baccalaureate degree from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and his master's degree from American International College in Springfield.

Dick began his working career in the early 1940s as a teenager in his father's business, Smith Brothers Coal and Oil on the old West Street in Pittsfield.

In 1944, at the age of 17, Dick joined the US Navy and served with distinction in the Pacific theater during WWII as a plane captain on the USS Bennington CV-20. Dick was on the Bennington during a number of the major battles in the last year of the war, including the battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa. As a member of the Bennington's first crew, Dick was a plank owner, something of which he was very proud.

Dick returned home in 1946 and went back to high school (which he had left to join the Navy), and there he met the love of his life, Claire McEachron. They were married on April 9, 1949. Shortly after, Claire and Dick moved to Gale Avenue in West Pittsfield where they raised their family and lived for the next 65 years.

In 1950 Dick joined the Pittsfield Police Department and served for a number of years as a patrolman. Later he formed a construction company, Top-O-Hill Excavating. In the mid 1960's Dick returned to law enforcement as a member of the Berkshire County Sheriff's Department where he was instrumental in developing the work-release program to help inmates return to productive lives upon release. He was present in Boston when Governor Sargeant signed the work-release bill into law and Dick instituted the first work-release program in Massachusetts. He served in the Sheriff's Department until his retirement in the mid 1980s.

Dick was a great proponent of education, for his children and for himself. After earning his masters degree and after having acquired more than 20 years experience in the field, he was asked to return to academia as an instructor. During the years that followed, Dick taught Criminal Justice courses at

Berkshire Community College, Southern Vermont College and the University of Massachusetts.

In his retirement Dick loved spending time with his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and taking mystery rides with Claire. He took great pride in the family home on Gale Avenue and spent countless hours on his favorite Gravely mower, transforming the rough fields into lawn every spring. He had a great passion for old trucks, particularly Macks, and enjoyed working with his son Bob on truck restorations and visiting truck shows. As the years went by Dick developed an interest in connecting with friends he had made during his time in the Navy and attended many of the USS Bennington reunions. He became recognized as an expert on the early days of the ship. His memory of those days never ceased to amaze and delight his friends and shipmates.

Dick loved the Berkshires and no matter where he went his heart was never far from Pittsfield.

Dick was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He served his community throughout his life and was a friend to all who had the privilege to know him.

FUNERAL NOTICE

Funeral services for Richard H. "Dick" Smith Sr. who died October 30, 2014 will be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2014 at 4:00PM in the United Methodist Church of Lenox, 6 Holmes Rd., Lenox, MA with Rev. Michael Tuck, officiating. Burial will be at a later date in Pittsfield Cemetery. There are no calling hours. Following the service, the family will receive friends and relatives in the church fellowship hall. In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to St. Jude's Children's Hospital care of the Dwyer Funeral Home, 776 North St., Pittsfield, MA 01201. DONATIONS CANNOT BE MADE ONLINE, but may be made through the Dwyer Funeral Home.

Tribute Wall

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“ *To The Family of Richard Smith,*

On behalf of the members of the USS BENNINGTON P.A.C.T., please accept our condolences on the loss of your loved one.



Our thoughts & prayers go out to the entire family at this most difficult time. We also would like to say "thank you" for Richard's service to God & Country.

In August of 2015 at our ships bell monument in Bennington, VT, Richard shall be remembered at our Annual Memorial Wreath Laying Ceremony and as his name is read from a listing of those who have gone before us, the actual ships bell shall toll in his memory.

*With My Deepest Sympathy,
Joseph L. Pires
"former" USS Bennington Historian
Calabash, NC*

Joseph Pires - November 03, 2014 at 01:15 PM