



Rudy Rudolph Richardson

August 2, 1938 - December 18, 2018

Rudy Rudolph Richardson, age 80, of Bithlo FL a long-time resident of the area and a multifaceted tradesman known by many, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his devoted wife Lucille Richardson and close family on 18 December 2018. Mr. Richardson, known as Rudy (or 'Speedy' as he was nicknamed during his 4 years in the Navy) was born on his parent's tenant farm in Conway, South Carolina August 2, 1938 and was an uncommon-common man.

He was greatly impacted by the demands of the hard-scrabble life on the farm yet through the hardships, hard work and adversity he acquired an indefatigable energy, drive and focus, as well as his father's physical prowess and wry sayings and slogans that carried him through his entire life and career.

At 17 he joined the Navy and spent nearly 4 years proudly serving aboard the Navy aircraft carrier CVA Hancock with the 7th Fleet patrolling the South Pacific serving with a diversity of other sailors as they consistently won battle training awards for their captain and ship during his assignment from 1957-1960.

Rudy quickly acquired a gruff and cocky exterior, a big sensitive heart, very limited fear of risks and a piercing and unstoppable wise guy humor from the Navy and throughout his adult life.

Suffering a near fatal motorcycle accident at age 27 and the potential loss of his legs, he spent a determined year defying disability, once again walked and returned to working fulltime to the dismay yet delight of his doctors and family. Few knew the extent of the occasional yet torturous physical pain he endured during his life as he quietly persevered.

His career included long and short haul trucking, HVAC work, electrician, commercial and residential framing, road and ground grading, owning his own construction company, concrete truck driver, gunsmith apprentice and all-around handyman. Rudy lived predominately in Florida having spent time in Michigan, Ohio, Oregon, Texas and Georgia before settling down and building, with the help of his brothers J.W. (Jake) and Carl,

homes for themselves and their parents in Bithlo. He quickly learned to despise cold weather after his first and only winter spent north of the Mason-Dixon line. Remarkably, he enjoyed the heat of Florida and Georgia having been one of the few men who could handle the intensity of being a fireman on a navy aircraft carrier responsible for keeping the boilers producing the high pressure steam that was the bloodstream of the ship; average temperature was over 130 degrees.

Rudy had a love of fishing, target shooting and billiards during his long life. He was a crack shot as a child and while his life zigged and zagged, he could always hit the bullseye with any gun he could aim and fire. An Olympic shooting competitor used Rudy to sight his weapons. He was never getting paid from this expert, yet Rudy was always proud to do a good turn for those he liked and certainly lent, or occasionally imposed, his vast expertise when he could. Self-taught with cb radio design, he had communications with others up to and over 1000 miles from his home base. Not one to leave enough alone, he built a stereo and amplified speaker system that could be heard a mile from his home- not heavily populated at the time, his Bithlo neighbors had to walk a near mile to complain. In billiards he won a number of local events both official and not-so-official. No matter what injury or ailment he had, never would he hesitate to play for hours in the 'Billiard Emporium' he built on his property. Rudy built a number of private pool rooms around Florida. In his 60s he ventured into a short-lived but enjoyable business of making his own brand of billiard cue tips called Cherokee Tips as an homage to his Cherokee ancestry and to a game he loved throughout his life.

He enjoyed pulling the requisite all-nighter to go dipnet shrimping in a secluded area he and his brother Carl found along the dark moonlit banks of the Halifax River and during the day he often enjoyed fishing the nearby lakes and waterways along the St John's River near his home. Rudy had put his hand to potent potables creating some unique recipes and formulas much to the enjoyment of those familiar with his wares. His grapes made a fine jam too.

Of course, there's the week Rudy decided to stop playing his weekly lottery numbers, only to learn he would have won 17 million dollars, yet chuckled it off noting that his life was rich as it was without money. Rudy's biggest fortune of all was the rekindling of his romance to Lucille (nee Lamb) Richardson and marrying her on 1 January 2000 almost 40 years after they first met.

With Lucille's help and research they reconnected with his 4 children (Charles, Dennis, Robert and Dawn) and many grandchildren. He, with Lucille by his side, was able to spend his last 19 years in the house he built for his parents in Bithlo, connecting with her

children and grandchildren, his children and endlessly helping family, friends and neighbors no matter how ridiculous the project. A most interesting character, Rudy's absence will leave a vacancy for his family, friends and all those who knew him; he departed this life having made peace.

He is survived by his wife Lucille, sister Betty Smith, his sons Charles, Dennis, Robert and daughter Dawn and many grandchildren, his extended family of 2 step daughters Lisa and Suzie and their children.

The entire family wants to thank the Blue Team from Hospice for their kind help. The family will be holding a private service and in lieu of flowers they ask for those who would like to make a donation they may do so to a charity of one's choice. It is strongly encouraged that you share memories, pictures and anecdotes about Rudy on this website.

Arrangements are entrusted to DeGusipe Funeral Home and Crematory, 407-695-CARE(2273)