



Leon Rankin Howell

February 26, 1947 - November 20, 2024

Leon Rankin Howell, 77, of Nokesville, Virginia, passed away peacefully in the early hours of November 20, 2024, after a courageous six-year battle with Alzheimer's dementia, primarily the rare variant known as Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA).

Born on February 26, 1947, in Charles Town, West Virginia, Leon was the third child of Rosie May Rankin and Robert Matthew Howell. He spent his childhood exploring the outdoors, often wandering the streets until dark, playing ball with his sister Katie and friends. It was during these early years that he met his lifelong love, Marie Phipps.

Leon was drafted into the U.S. Army in June 1966 and married Marie on June 3, just before leaving for boot camp. He served with distinction in the 2nd Infantry Division, stationed at the Korean DMZ, and later at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he was a Military Police Officer. He was honorably discharged in 1970.

In 1971, Leon began a remarkable 47-year career with NOVEC, where he forged lifelong friendships and cherished memories, including a memorable cross-country adventure with his work buddies.

Leon was a true outdoorsman who found joy in hunting, fishing, hiking, and the serenity of nature. A car enthusiast and motorbike racer, he owned several

classic muscle cars, including a Nova Super Sport, Plymouth Roadrunner, Corvettes, and a '57 Chevy. Leon had a knack for taking in wild animals, transforming his backyard into a haven for squirrels, raccoons, and even a pet skunk named Pogo. His family fondly recalls him building a home for squirrels outside the kitchen window and raising peacocks, pigeons, ducks, and geese.

Family was at the heart of Leon's life. He loved weekend camping trips, nature walks, swimming, and motorboating at Fairview Beach on the Potomac River. Late-night card games at Katie's house and family BBQs and weenie roasts were traditions he cherished. As a proud "Pawpaw," Leon adored his grandchildren, delighting in giving them tractor and wagon rides or cruising with them in one of his classic cars.

Leon is preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Rosie, and his brothers, Richard and Rufus. He is survived by his beloved wife of 58 years, Marie; his siblings, Junior, Katie, and David; his children, Angie (Keith), Anthony (Jeannie), Robert (Jennifer), and Tim; his grandchildren, Nicholas, Ethan (Star), Christen, Joe, Wyatt, Nate, Gabe, Lauren, and A.J.; and his great-grandchildren, Luna, Terra, and Timmy.

Leon's legacy of love, adventure, and devotion to family will live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Alzheimer's Association or the National Aphasia Association in Leon's memory.

Cemetery Details

Quantico National Cemetery

18424 Joplin Road
Triangle, VA 22172

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV **26**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home
9609 Center St.
Manassas, VA 20110
(703) 257-6028
pfh@piercefh.com
<https://www.piercefh.com>

Funeral Service

NOV **27**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home
9609 Center St.
Manassas, VA 20110
(703) 257-6028
pfh@piercefh.com
<https://www.piercefh.com>

Burial

NOV 27. 11:30 AM (ET)

Quantico National Cemetery
18424 Joplin Road
Triangle, VA 22172

Tribute Wall



“ *Pierce Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Leon Rankin Howell*



Pierce Funeral Home - November 25, 2024 at 02:26 PM

CS

“ *Chrissy Myers, siblings and spouses purchased the Large Basket Garden for the family of Leon Rankin Howell.*



Chrissy Myers, siblings and spouses - November 25, 2024 at 04:44 PM

AM

“ *Ana Montjoy lit a candle in memory of Leon Rankin Howell*



Ana Montjoy - November 25, 2024 at 12:16 PM

RP

“ When I got a wood stove, I was splitting wood by hand with a maul. Leon pulled in my driveway one day with a log splitting machine. He asked if I would like to borrow it. “HELL YES” I said. I thought he meant for the day, or the weekend. He left it with me all winter that year. He came by often to talk about cars at my home shop. Already miss him. A great neighbor and friend.

Roy Palumbo - November 24, 2024 at 10:05 AM

RP

“ Roy Palumbo purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Leon Rankin Howell.



Roy Palumbo - November 24, 2024 at 09:59 AM

JA

“ Jeanne & Al purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Leon Rankin Howell.



Jeanne & Al - November 23, 2024 at 04:21 PM

LL

“ Love, Cheryl and Linda purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Leon Rankin Howell.



Love, Cheryl and Linda - November 23, 2024 at 02:38 PM

LL

“ Love, Cheryl and Linda planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leon Rankin Howell.

Love, Cheryl and Linda - November 23, 2024 at 02:38 PM

RF

“ Robert Howell and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leon Rankin Howell.

Robert Howell and family - November 23, 2024 at 08:08 AM

RF

“ Robert Howell and family purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Leon Rankin Howell.



Robert Howell and family - November 23, 2024 at 08:08 AM



“ Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for the family of Leon Rankin Howell.



November 22, 2024 at 05:12 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Leon Rankin Howell.

November 22, 2024 at 02:56 PM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Leon Rankin Howell.*



November 22, 2024 at 02:56 PM



“ *Your loving sister, Katie planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Leon Rankin Howell.*

Your loving sister, Katie - November 22, 2024 at 02:34 PM



“ *Your loving sister, Katie purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Leon Rankin Howell.*



Your loving sister, Katie - November 22, 2024 at 02:34 PM