



Namon Florence

May 20, 1916 - October 27, 2012

Namon "Buddy" Florence, 96.

Mr. Florence was born in Walker County, Alabama, on May 20, 1916, and passed away on October 27, 2012. Mr. Florence was a Guntersville citizen for 34 years, and had a life of service to his nation, his state and his fellow man.

Mr. Florence began his professional career as a welder in several "New Deal" recovery agencies. He built a tireless work ethic passed to his children and grandchildren. On his first morning as a welder, he was to work on a piping project. He arrived early, but discovered that the more senior welders arrived even earlier, knowing the last welder to arrive had to weld "under the pipe," with sparks falling on him all day. Buddy said, "I knew that was the last day I would ever weld under a pipe." The next day, when the other welders arrived, they found him sitting atop the pipe with his coffee. Buddy would never again weld "under the pipe."

By the late 1930's, Buddy was working on the Fontana Dam project as a master welder responsible for the education of apprentice welders. He left his position after December 7, 1941, volunteering to serve in the U.S. Navy. Owing to his teaching experience, he was offered admission to Officer Candidate School and a stateside training posting. He declined in favor of immediate deployment as a mechanic's mate on a World War I-era Clemson-class destroyer, the U.S.S. John D. Ford (DD-228), where he served through the end of the war. Afterward, he taught welding at the state vocational school in Decatur, until he was recruited to work for NASA. He worked at NASA for more than twenty years until his retirement in 1982. Buddy was quiet about his accomplishments at NASA, and his grandchildren were surprised to learn of his work on the U.S. Space Station Skylab only through a movie about Skylab, when their grandfather unexpectedly appeared on the screen. Buddy also coached American League baseball for many years.

A member of the Guntersville Church of Christ for more than thirty years, Buddy practiced a Christianity of works, not words, helping those in need throughout his life. His children and grandchildren laughed about Buddy leaving on errands in his late eighties to, in his words, "help the elderly" - people often twenty years younger than he was. Buddy was also a self-taught master clocksmith, and in his retirement, he enjoyed restoring clocks that held sentimental value to "elderly people," performing days or weeks of work and charging \$5 to \$10 for the repair.

Buddy joins his late wife, Opal Cox Florence, and leaves his children, Mr. John N. Florence and his wife, Glenda, of Madison, Alabama, and Mrs. Rita Dishman and her husband, Leland, of Guntersville. He also leaves his four grandchildren, Jonathan and Melissa Florence, Amy Wilcox, and Mike Dishman, and three great-grandchildren, Emily and Hoke Wilcox, and Ashley Florence. Visitation will be on Tuesday, October 30, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Carr's Funeral Home, with a military funeral service the following day at 10 a.m.

Tribute Wall

RK

“ *A treasured and much loved friend has gone. Our heartfelt sympathy to all those he loved.* ”

Rick and Katrina Mason - December 17, 2012 at 08:36 AM

SH

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with you all. May God Bless each of you.* ”

Shani Whitmore - December 17, 2012 at 08:36 AM