



Robert Bradley Burke

April 4, 1942 - April 9, 2021

Robert Bradley Burke, 79, of Crystal Springs, Mississippi, passed away on April 9, 2021 due to lung cancer that metastasized to his liver and bones. No visitation will be held. Mr. Burke's graveside service will be at Gatesville Baptist Church on Sunday, April 11, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. All friends and family are welcome to attend. Stringer Family Funeral Services in Crystal Springs is handling arrangements.

"Bradley" was born on April 4, 1942, in Shellman, Georgia. He was the baby of his family, much like his maternal Grandfather F.M. Trippe, whom he favored in appearance and aptitudes. When his extended family came together at the farm on Sunday afternoons, little Bradley was tasked with rolling cigarettes for his grandfather, who, presciently enough, eventually died of lung cancer when a tumor behind his heart "exploded." Bradley enjoyed exploring the Trippe farm, especially the blacksmith shop. When a bout of rheumatic fever kept him confined to bed for six months, his paternal grandmother Lessie Maud McCrary Burke cared for him, and her "sweetness and kindness" left an enduring mark on her grandson's heart. After high school, Bradley served his country in the Navy. He visited Japan, Antarctica, and New Zealand during his tour on the USS Maury. He then returned home to marry the former Kitty Bass. Together, they raised daughters Veronica and Julie. Bradley was a gunsmith and firearms enthusiast. He was a National Rifle Association Benefactor and taught his daughters safe and responsible

handling of guns. He taught them to cast bullets from molten lead, took them dirt road riding in the back of his truck, and took them arrowhead hunting using specially-designed walking sticks he made just for them. In addition to amassing thousands of arrowheads, he was able to reconstruct several Native American pottery vessels and bowls. He actually discovered and documented a Native American burial site in Southwest Georgia. He documented long-forgotten family cemeteries and grave sites for the Randolph County Historical Society as published in their 1977 book. Bradley was a working wonder with skills across electrical, plumbing, welding, and hydraulic work. He was a talented carpenter and craftsman, creating handsome furniture from antique heart pine. He loved pulling a good practical joke and equally loved a good cup of coffee. He enjoyed the music of Emmylou Harris, Alison Krauss, Bob Seger, Don Williams, and Gordon Lightfoot. He was a voracious reader with a collection that varied from Native American and World War II history to the mysteries of Sue Grafton to Smithsonian Magazine. He watched Masterpiece Theatre, Doctor Who, and All in the Family; his daughters often claimed he was the prototype for Archie Bunker. He was a temperamental, irritable son-of-a-gun with a heart of gold.

Bradley was maintenance director for Patterson Hospital in the early 1970's, then worked in industrial maintenance for Settles Precision Engineering Company. When Settles contracted with Delta Airlines, Bradley travelled across the United States with a team of friends, constructing enormous wing stands at major airports. He looked after Girl Scout Camp Okitayakani near Shellman for several years, winning the 1997 Woodmen of the World Randolph County Conservationist of the Year award for his stewardship. He later moved to Mississippi to resume industrial maintenance work. Bradley worked hard all his life, finally retiring at age 67 to his property outside Crystal Springs. During his time there, he took that land from bare, hardscrabble terrain to a homeplace with live oaks, longleaf pines, and cedars. His home overlooks a pond, and he stated more than once that

he was happier in his time there than anywhere else in his life. In retirement, he enjoyed feeding the multitude of hummingbirds and songbirds that visited him each year as well as his resident raccoons and possums. He enjoyed the companionship of his dogs Lee, Ollie, and Lessie, and his handsome cat BC.

Bradley was preceded in death by his parents, William Thomas (W.T.) Burke and Jessie Trippe Burke, as well as his siblings, Thomas Wayne Burke and Gail Trippe Burke. He leaves his loving daughters, Veronica Burke Humphrey (Michael) of Leaf, Georgia and Julie Burke McKendree (Bill) of Dawson, Georgia. He is fondly remembered by his nieces: Cathie Burke of Nairobi, Kenya, and in Maryland, Sandi Burke Miller and Laura Burke Krick.

The family would like to thank Daddy's church, Gatesville Baptist, for looking after him in times of need. After years of eschewing church, he felt God's love there. We thank friends Mark Kyle, Willie Gibbs, and Richie Richardson for helping Daddy with medical appointments and practical assistance when we could not. All three are the kind of stand-up men who make the world a better place. Friends Karen Spiers and Sue Greer were angels on earth to Daddy and our family during his extended illness. Additionally, Dr. James Ervin and his excellent staff at the Family Medical Clinic of Crystal Springs are greatly appreciated for the high quality of care as well as the kindness they provided to Bradley over the years. We are sincerely thankful for Baptist Hospice Nurse Summer Smith and Hospice Aide Linda Moore for their expert assistance in keeping Daddy comfortable. Any memorial gifts can be made to Gatesville Baptist Church, 3162 Gatesville Road, Crystal Springs, MS 39059 or to Copiah Animal Shelter, PO Box 366, Crystal Springs, MS 39059.

Tribute Wall



“ *Robert Bradley Burke*

January 28, 2023 at 04:45 PM



“ *Bradley was a man of many abilities and interests. Those of us who knew him were fortunate.*

Leila and Ralph

Ennis R. Bass - April 10, 2021 at 02:44 PM



“ *Bradly and I were friends growing up here in Shellman and although he was two years older and two classes ahead in school, we were good friends. My favorite memory of him is when I was getting a hair cut and I saw him ride up on his bicycle and ride around and around in circles in front of the barbershop until I walked out. My mind's eye still sees the picture of he and his bike as clearly as if it just happened. Martha and I send our sincere condolences to his family and friends.*

Sincerely, Jimmy Curry

Jimmy Curry - April 10, 2021 at 11:34 AM



“ *What a wonderful tribute to Bradley! I knew him when we were both in our twenties in Columbus, GA. So sorry for your loss. My prayers are with you.*

Mardelle Orr Rockwell - April 10, 2021 at 10:33 AM