



Jerald "Jerry" Lee Newberry

June 18, 1947 - June 24, 2018

FLORIST NOTE: PLEASE DELIVER ALL FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS BY 10AM MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 2018 TO EPWORTH METHODIST CHURCH, REHOBOTH BEACH, DE.

Jerald Lee "Jerry" Newberry

18th June 1947 – 24th June 2018

He Loved and Was Loved

Born at home on 18th June 1947 in Bland County, Virginia, where his family has lived since the 1700's. Jerald Lee "Jerry" Newberry was the fourth child of six to June Elizabeth (Mustard) and Maynard Allen Newberry. He died peacefully after suffering a series of strokes, and the discovery of advanced pancreatic cancer, in the early morning of 24th June 2018 at "The Moorings" in Lewes, Delaware.

Jerry grew up on the family dairy farm nestled in the Appalachian Mountains of southwestern Virginia. He would often say that he learned the importance of hard work, family, ingenuity, community and love of nature from the farm – also that he never wanted to be a farmer.

Religion was a major influence in his life. He was not the sort to talk much about religion, he was the sort who lived it daily. He was surrounded by Methodist ministers. His great-grandfather Rev. William Neal Baker was a circuit Methodist preacher and his uncle Rev. Gerald Mustard was a minister, professor and Dean of the Methodistkirken in Norge School of Divinity in Norway. His grandmother, Rev. Billie Baker Mustard, was the third woman Methodist minister in the United States.

Jerry attended Virginia Tech's Wytheville Community College and was awarded a scholarship to attend Emory and Henry College; for which he was always grateful, and

received a Bachelor's degree. He also earned a Master's degree in Educational Counselling from George Mason University. As an undergraduate he was a member of Theta Chi Epsilon fraternity and of the College Choir, with which he made a national tour. He had an extraordinary voice. He was shy about singing (one of the few things of which he was bashful) unless with a group or in church. There, many people would turn in astonishment as he launched into a hymn and his voice filled the sanctuary. He made his operatic debut at Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires in December. There on a tour, it was asked if anyone would like to sing to test the acoustics, there are no microphones or speakers. Jerry, after much prodding, belted out "Don't Cry for Me Argentina." His voice filled every inch of the famous opera house that holds 2,500 people. Tourists and workers and stage hands looked up and became suddenly quiet; when he finished they applauded. Jerry was singing Eva Peron's song in the Presidential Box, exactly where she had stood.

Jerry was passionate about education and loved kids, probably because he was a big kid himself (as anyone who has ever been the recipient of a Jerry practical joke will attest) and worked with schools, teachers, administrators and school children for over 40 years. He taught for one year at Rippon Landing Middle School in Prince William County, Virginia and then moved to Lake Braddock Middle School in Fairfax County, Virginia where he taught English and Social Studies. After completing his Master's degree he became a middle school guidance counselor at Lake Braddock. He also built a private children and family counseling practice.

He then joined the Fairfax County Public School administration, working in the Family Life Education Division. That division wrote curriculum later delivered by Health and Physical Education teachers. It included the "facts of life," and with considerable pushing from Jerry and a few colleagues branched to include LBGT information. That move sparked a virulent outcry from segments of the community opposed to any discussion of non-heterosexual matters. Over their objections, and to Jerry's great dismay, LBGT material did not become a part of the curriculum.

Jerry was recruited to be the Executive Director of the Health Information Network at National Education Association in 1998. There his passion for children and his determination to make schools safe and welcoming and supportive was fully utilized. Jerry developed and managed programs and secured private funding that met the needs of children in a positive and proactive manner. These included ensuring that underserved children received a nutritious breakfast before school started; establishing a program that ensured quality indoor air quality for schools, removing mold and asbestos and other harmful pollutants; developing a school safety program and resources that dealt with severe weather emergencies; preventing playground injuries and childhood accidents;

removal of junk food from school cafeterias; teaching tolerance, violence prevention as well as LGBT safety and harassment prevention. The greatest sorrow of his career was his inability to address gun violence in America's schools. Each slaughter of innocent children, teachers and staff affected him deeply, and he attended the funerals of many of the sacrificed innocents.

He attributed his understanding of unconditional love to his mother, June Mustard Newberry. She worked incredibly hard on the family farm with her husband, with little help, and raised six children. In her 40s she taught Jerry that dreams can come true; with not a little effort. She returned to school, got her GED and then LPN and RN degrees; fulfilling a lifelong desire to be a nurse. Like his mother, who was incredibly kind, accepting, gentle and generous; he could not hold a grudge. He forgave people who had attempted to sabotage his career; he forgave the fanatics (who were furious with his efforts to introduce tolerance and safety for LGBT students into the Fairfax County schools) who harassed and stalked him and finally spray painted his home with profanities; he forgave contractors who cheated him, and he forgave those close to him who endorsed politicians who were committed to taking away, and preventing him from exercising, his fundamental rights.

Jerry never saw a fixer-upper he couldn't transform. He gutted, remodeled and rebuilt homes in Alexandria, Washington, Rehoboth Beach and on Isle au Haut. He helped anyone in need with home repairs (he knew "a guy" for every possible task), walked first-time nervous home buyers through the process, guided and usually supervised projects of friends, and friends of friends doing renovations. With Mat, and without Mat, he looked at scores of homes across the US and in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, Canada and Latin America. No vacation was complete without a visit to the local real estate office and a few viewings. He was drawing up plans for a major revamp of Mat's and his home on the Rehoboth Bay.

There is a wall in his grandchildren's bunk room in Rehoboth Beach that holds some of his awards. There are over a dozen, together with photographs of Jerry with people he admired., including Al Gore and soon, he hoped, his neighbor Joe Biden with whom he'd have coffee at Browseabout Books.

Jerry was married to Lyn McNeill Jenks, the mother of their children. They later divorced and remained friends and proud parents. He was pre-deceased by his parents and grandparents Mary Katherine (Eaton) and John Alexander Newberry, and Billie Jane (Baker) and Estol Shell Mustard.

He is survived by his treasured children: daughter, Erin Elizabeth and her husband Joseph

Patrick Gerber of Portland, Oregon and their four children, Michael McNeill Gerber, Gwyenth June Gerber, Finley Elizabeth Gerber and Benton Gerber. His son Matthew McNeill Newberry and his wife Shannon Jones Newberry and their two children: Theodore “Theo” McNeill Newberry and Ainsley June Newberry of Redwood City, California. His life and business partner Matthew Hastings of Rehoboth Beach and Isle au Haut, Maine also survives.

He is survived by four brothers: Estol Allen and his wife Norma (Guthrie) Newberry of Bland; John Eaton Newberry of Roanoke, Virginia; Jimmy Baker and his wife Sylvia (Royce) Newberry of South Ryegate, Vermont; Larry Crockett Newberry and his lifelong friend and co-parent Christy Lynn Pugh of Bland and Radford, and sister Deborah Jane (Newberry) and her husband Malcolm Craig Boothe of Pulaski, Virginia.

Each niece and nephew and cousin was special to Jerry. He was deeply interested in their lives and excited about their endless possibilities. They are: Ryan Allen and Amy (Jackson) Newberry of Fort Chiswell, Virginia; Brian Samuel and Christine Asta Lloyd-Newberry of Colchester, Vermont; Edith Marie (Newberry) and John Michael Fogarty of West Newbury, Vermont; Bonnie June “BJ” (Boothe) and her husband Daniel Ratliff; and Lacie Ann (Boothe) and her husband Noland Ryan Jones, all of Pulaski. His youngest niece, Amanda Kathryn Newberry, was wed to Marcus Allen Clausen, both of Roanoke on the day before his death. He was terribly disappointed to be unable to attend in person; but delighted that his daughter Erin and her family made the trip from Oregon for the celebrations.

His great nieces and nephews were an entirely new and exciting opportunity for laughter and great fun. They are Haley Michelle Newberry and Hannah Grace Newberry; Ayden Reilly Lloyd Newberry; John Higgins Fogarty and Elizabeth Marie Fogarty; Valley Rhea Ratliff and Gabriella Anne Clausen. He is also survived by more than a dozen children of friends who loved and relied on Uncle Jerry.

In the last five weeks of his life on this earth he had the opportunity to be visited and contacted by so many of his friends and loved ones. He received over 120 get-well cards and averaged ten visitors a day. Their visits were the very best gift that they could possibly have given Jerry – just being there or sending him their love.

Jerry had an endless supply of love, warmth and generosity – which he freely bestowed on people he knew and didn’t know. He loved nothing more than making food and feeding people, lots of people – many met that day. He would drive miles out of his way to guide a total stranger to their destination, because he wasn’t sure they’d make it otherwise. He’d

buy homeless people meals, and take them to thrift shops for warm clothes, and help set up job interviews. He once offered a room to a total stranger from Belgium whom he had overheard had his hotel reservation cancelled. He was one of the few people who would bring food to the staff of his favorite restaurants because he was certain they were bored with the same fare day in and day out.

He was a true and trusted and dear friend to so many people, both with whom he interacted personally through his family and friendships and teaching and with literally thousands of others who never knew his name. So many benefited from his guidance and determination and creativity and sacrifice to make America's schools safer and America's schoolchildren happier, more accepting of themselves, and their families stronger. He was often interviewed by the media; but was particularly proud of his spirited conversation about school safety on the "Dr. Phil Show."

As one of his friends remarked, "everything was an adventure with Jerry – a trip to Home Depot (where he was on a first-name basis with most of the employees) became an event you would not soon forget." Jerry's entire life was an adventure in loving, caring, advocating, helping, underwriting, bailing out and just being there. As one of his numerous "petites" said, "he was the only person who understood me."

For the many people who will say without hesitation that Jerry Newberry saved their lives, or that he was the most important person or one of if not the most important person to them in their world, or for whom he made a little happier and more self-accepting, his death is a deep and sorrowful loss.

The likes of Jerry Newberry are rare – and those who had the honor and privilege to be loved by him, and to love him, understand how deeply fortunate they were. The best tribute to Jerry would be a little kinder to yourself and others, and to laugh and sing at any opportunity; especially when inappropriate.

A memorial service will be held on 13th August 2018 at one o'clock at Epworth Memorial United Methodist Church in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. It will be officiated by Rev. Ryan Justus Cogswell, whom Jerry has known since Ryan was a child. There will also be a service on Saturday, July 7th at noon at Central United Methodist Church in Bland, Virginia.

In lieu of flowers donations in Jerry's name can be made to Emory and Henry College at: <https://www.ehc.edu/giving/give-online/>, The Cape Henlopen Education Foundation at: <https://www.chef-cape.org/>, and Know One Teach One, a Vietnamese disadvantaged

youth training program he particularly admired, at: <http://www.koto.com.au/donate>

The family would like to thank the staff at “The Moorings,” Vitas Hospice, Washington Medical Center, National Rehabilitation Hospital, Thomas Jefferson Hospital Comprehensive Stroke Center and Beebe Hospital for their professionalism, kindness, support and caring.

Please sign the online guestbook located on this site.

Events

JUL **Memorial Service** 12:00PM

7

Central United Methodist Church
Bland, VA, US

AUG **Memorial Service** 01:00PM

13

Epworth United Methodist Church
19825 Holland Glade Road, Rehoboth Beach, DE, US

Comments



“ I'm shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of Jerry Newberry who I met during one of his many trips to Lowes on one of many trips during the renovation of his and Matt's Rehoboth properties.

After that meeting we were invited to that property where we witnessed his design and hard work to restore a rear cottage with attention to every detail. Thereafter he always stopped by my area even if he didn't need anything to say hello and exchange updates on his recent travels and reno projects which seemed never ending.

I'm only now learning of his health struggles which he kept silent as well as his many accomplishments and impact on family and friends throughout the US.

May he rest in peace and his impact on those lives he touched continue to shine a positive light for all.

Dale Miller - August 07, 2018 at 06:06 AM



“ Jerry was my colleague and dear friend for 20 years, and I will cherish every memory of times we shared. I was inspired by his knowledge, skill, caring, charm, and commitment--to NEA members, colleagues, students, family, and friends.

Jerry treated everyone with respect, and he lived his values. It mattered to him to take the time to reach out and listen to people in times of pain, as well as times of celebration. He nurtured just plain joy--and in doing that, he gained legions of devoted friends.

At so many times, in so many ways, Jerry was my North Star. I will be forever grateful to him. I keep in my heart his example to always seek to live fully and to live the values of delighted interest, of deep compassion, and of love.

Jerry, wherever you are, my friend, you are lighting up the stars.

--Kate Mattos

Kate Mattos - July 28, 2018 at 02:49 PM



“ I was very sorry to hear about Jerry's passing. I had the pleasure of working with Jerry when he was the head of the NEA Health Information Network. Nestle had a partnership with the NEA HIN and I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to meet and work with Jerry for many years. He was a true gentleman who always had a kind word, and he will be missed.

Sending his family my sincere condolences.

Eddie Burge

edie burge - July 16, 2018 at 01:55 PM



“ I was deeply saddened by Jerry's passing. I had not been aware that he had been so sick. Through my brother Robert' Ranson's longtime association and deep friendship, I got to know Jerry and we became friends. He was most generous and kind to me and even would play a practical joke on me during some of the numerous parties that I attended at my brother's house when Jerry and/or Mat attended. I will never forget both of their generosity that was extended to my wife, Cindy, and myself when we had the pleasure of staying at their beach house in Rehobeth for the celebration of my brother's and his partner, James, exchanging their wedding vows after 20 years of being a couple. Now it was legal and what a grand party it was. Out deepest sympathies and condolences to both his family and friends, especially Mat, who one can only imagine is in deep grief. Know that you are not alone and that others are and will be there to support you through all of this and rest in the knowledge that Jerry is now in peace and without any pain!

Love and Sympathies;

Helen (Ranson-Bob's sister) and Cindy

Helen Bostock - July 04, 2018 at 03:03 PM



“ Amy Zylstra (Mat's cousin) purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Jerald "Jerry" Lee Newberry.



Amy Zylstra (Mat's cousin) - July 03, 2018 at 02:21 PM



“ I met Jerry through our former hairdresser and ended up cleaning house between renters at one of his houses. After his surgery on the west coast and his recuperation here, we became buddies for burger night. He was so intuitive and caring. I'll always miss you, my friend. Rest in peace - job well done.

Ruth Ann Curley - July 03, 2018 at 11:47 AM



“ Larry, I am so sorry for the loss of Jerry. He will surely be in a blessed place, forever comforted. I still love you like a brother. I know that we grew up to be very different, but I'll always cherish the memories I have of our friendship. I read the beautifully written obituary, and I'm sad that I did not know Jerry better. In time, God will wipe away every tear.

Dan Newberry - July 02, 2018 at 05:03 PM



“ For the first 20 years of my life, Jerry was my baby brother from the time he arrived when I was three years old. I am just enough older than he that I can remember him in diapers. I can recall his indomitable spirit--my brothers and I called it his Opie Taylor stance. That determination led him to great heights in his professional life, his relationships with many, many people and his interpersonal interactions with people. He was my brother, my best friend, my therapist, my confessor, the person who called frequently "Just checking in." I am incredulous, devastated, inconsolable and in disbelief that I will never be able to see or talk to him again. May he Rest In Peace.

John Newberry - July 02, 2018 at 01:01 PM



“ Jerry was one of several church leaders at Dumbarton United Methodist Church in the late 1970s when I first found that church family. He and Lyn were “pillar people” for Jim and I as we started our life together. Jerry was a beacon of commitment, enthusiasm and civility... he will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family. Mittie and Jim Quinn

Mittie Quinn - July 01, 2018 at 08:24 AM



“ I'll join so many others with a Tribute to Jerry. Our friendship began at Emory & Henry. I was from Pulaski. He was from Bland! We were instant Friends! Did I say he had a great voice? We shared the E&H Concert Choir together. I remember well his mom, among the first Women Pastors in the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church on the Millirons' Circuit in Pulaski County. He was a groomsman at my first (!) Wedding and his Uncle Gerald Performer that Wedding. We have a special Bond. He will rest in God's peace. I Wish God's Grace and peace to Jerry's Family. We will not See one like him soon.

John White - June 30, 2018 at 07:11 PM



“ We are very, very sorry about Jerry's death. We have so many good memories. He helped us in stressful times. He was fun and interesting to be with, always welcoming us when we came from Norway to visit in the US.

Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone in his family.

Greetings from uncle and aunt in Norway, Anne and Gerald Mustard

Gerald Mustard - June 30, 2018 at 02:26 AM



“ Jerry and I graduated together from Emory & Henry College in the Class of 1969. We were fraternity brothers in Theta Chi Epsilon and also fellow baritones in the Concert Choir. Both of us were also deeply closeted gays but never stumbled upon our mutual identity in those days. It took both of us to arrive in our 30's before we came out. I remember that Jerry's closest friend at Emory was his roommate, Bob Mahan, who later married his college sweetheart, Julie Hyder. Several years later, Bob, Julie, and their two children were killed on their way to Homecoming by a drunk driver. Jerry told me years later that when he heard the news, it was one of the worst moments in his life. If you knew him well, you would know what a big heart he had for anyone going through a hard time.

Jerry was a tremendous person and still has many friends at Dumbarton UMC in Washington, DC who will be greatly saddened to hear of his death. Now Jerry is with his family members who have gone before him and with Bob and Julie and their kids. My prayers and love are with his Uncle Gerald Mustard and his cousin, Tony, whom I knew at Emory & Henry, the entire Newberry Family including his children and grandchildren, his partner, Mat, Jerry's Methodist friends across the years that he always connected with wherever he put down roots, and his friends in Rehoboth Beach.

Rest In Peace, Brother Jerry!

Love,

Rev. Dr. Frank Trotter (retired UMC pastor)
Baltimore, Maryland
pianofrank@gmail.com

Rev. Dr. Frank Trotter - June 29, 2018 at 08:05 PM



“ Jerry was one of the most wonderful people I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. As the former project designer at Lowe's in Rehoboth we spent a lot of time together as he masterfully designed the renovations on Olive Ave. I loved teasing him that I was going to take up residence in the rear guest house until the end of time!! Later, I

started to get quite ill and it really worried Jerry. He told me that if I didn't get to Hopkins he was going to take me to Washington himself because he was certain that I had a severe thyroid problem. Turns out that Jerry saved my life and I remain indebted to him through eternity.

To Mat, to his family and to all who loved him and were loved back tenfold...he was and is the very best.

Rest well my friend.

Cathy Young - June 29, 2018 at 06:33 PM



“ Jerry was my 'rock, my best friend. Every time something happened, good or bad, Jerry was the first person I called. He was a great listener and never judgmental. He didn't solve my problems, he guided me through the process so I could analyze and make a better decision. He encouraged me, celebrated and mourned with me. His sense of humor, his love of practical jokes and his insatiable curiosity were a small part of his gigantic personality. His generosity and his passion for fairness and tolerance made him the most amazing human being I have ever had the privilege of knowing. I love him. My heart hurts.

Bobbie Wilinski - June 29, 2018 at 03:39 PM



“ I'm so grateful to have known Jerry. I met him through my relationship with Bob Bachman; Jerry was the best man in our wedding. I was fortunate to have become friends with him and his former wife, Lyn Jenks, and to have been a small part of their children's lives. I learned so much from him as a therapist and advocate in my early years at Dumbarton United Methodist Church. Some of my fondest memories include our time together performing in Alice in Blunderland and Easter gatherings. I'm holding you all in my thoughts and prayers.

Tracye Polson - June 29, 2018 at 03:36 PM



“ Sympathy is extended to the entire family.

John Goins - June 29, 2018 at 02:05 PM



“ I extend my deepest condolences to Mat, Jerry's family, and his many friends. I am ever grateful for the quality time that Jerry and I spent together bringing his NEA-HIN programs to school nurses and other educators throughout Europe and Asia. He was my travel buddy for many years. I loved him with all my heart and his spirit will remain with me for the rest of my life. When I think of Jerry, I will always remember the way he looked in the 1999 photo that I took when we were on the Zugspitze, the

highest mountain peak in Germany.



Laura Bauernfeind - June 29, 2018 at 12:40 PM



“ My heartfelt love and sympathy go out to Jerry's partner, his family, and his close friends. I have loved Jerry like a brother all my life. We attended high school together, graduated together, and were fast friends as soon as we met. A few things I loved about Jerry: He was super intelligent and a wonderful communicator. He had faith. He was unfailingly kind and generous. He was one of the funniest people I ever met. Godspeed on this new journey, Jerry.

Mary Sue Scott - June 29, 2018 at 10:42 AM



“ I grew up next door to Jerry, road the school bus with him and after school days never saw him again. Amazing. Sorry for your loss.

Bobby Leighton Newberry - June 29, 2018 at 09:59 AM