



Lester "Dutch" Thomas Kelley

February 14, 1927 - March 30, 2022

Lester "Dutch" Thomas Kelley, age 95 of Rehoboth Beach, DE, passed away peacefully at home on Wednesday, March 30, 2022. He was born on February 14, 1927, in Harmony, MD, son of the late Francis E. "Frank" and Jenny (Marshall) Kelley.

Mr. Kelley was a proud veteran, having honorably served in the US Navy. During his service to country, he built a career working in plant maintenance for the Department of the Navy. He retired as a USN Senior Chief after 20 dedicated years. Following his military service, Mr. Kelley was employed by Sears and Roebuck for an additional 20 years.

Mr. Kelley volunteered for nearly 20 years for the New Life Thrift store in Rehoboth Beach, in management and clerical roles. He also volunteered his expertise at New Bold Square Condominiums in property management. He had many and varied interests and hobbies, Mr. Kelley was skilled at bowl turning and woodworking of all sorts. He enjoyed playing bridge and carving at Rehoboth and Lewes senior centers. Mr. Kelley loved spending time with those he held most dear. He was a wonderful and nurturing husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather. Loved by many, he will be deeply and genuinely missed by all who knew him.

In addition to his parents, Mr. Kelley was predeceased by his first wife, Ina Mae Kelley; his second wife, Marie Louise Kelley; his brother, Olin "Hot Dog" Kelley; and his sisters, Anna Mae Kelley Rothermel and Doris Wetzal. He is survived by his son, Gary Lynn Kelley (Sally); his grandson, William Thomas Kelley (Paige); his great granddaughter, Harper Lynn Kelley; his niece, Jennie Holmes; his stepsons: Robin Roy (Cathy) and Nikki Roy (Natalie); and numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren.

A graveside service, with military honors, will be held on Saturday, April 16, 2022, at 1:00 PM, at Rosewood Memorial Park, 631 N. Witchduck Road, Virginia Beach, VA.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Epworth United Methodist Church, 19285 Holland

Glade Rd, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971 on Saturday, June 4, 2022 at 11:00AM with a reception immediately following the service.

All who cannot attend in person are invited to view the Celebration of Life via LiveStream, by visiting the church's website at <https://epworth.faith/>.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in Mr. Kelley's name to the Cape Henlopen Senior Center, 11 Christian St., Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971, 302-227-2055 (www.capehenlopeseniorcenter.org).

Please sign the virtual guestbook located on the tribute page.

Cemetery Details

Rosewood Memorial Park

631 North Witchduck Road
Virginia Beach, VA

Previous Events

Graveside Service

APR 16. 1:00 PM (ET)

Rosewood Memorial Park
631 North Witchduck Road
Virginia Beach, VA

Celebration of Life Service

JUN 4. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

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

Celebration of Life Reception

JUN 4. 12:00 PM (ET)

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

Tribute Wall

EG

“ We loved Dutch. He will always be with us.

He had the greatest of hearts and went out of his way to help anyone who he thought was in need. In this he was persistent and could deliver aid surprisingly fast. Inaction was never acceptable.

It was a gift to have worked with him at the Thrift Shop. He attracted and developed many volunteers who were a delight to be with.

To his family. We share your sorrow. Thanks for letting us have him for a short while.

Emma and Gene King

Emma and Gene - April 18 at 07:56 PM

FB

“ I was fortunate to meet "Dutch" Kelley when I bought my condo in Newbold Square in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware in 2003. During the first many years of my spending time there, I became a friend of Dutch. In fact I volunteered to work on the common grounds with him! I remember riding in his pickup truck to get a load of mulch which we spread on the condo's grounds.

Not long ago I had the pleasure of seeing his fine wooden craftsmanship.

I will always remember seeing Dutch ride around on his power wheelchair with the American flag attached to the back of it.

Every time I am at Newbold Square I stop to admire the stone marker acknowledging his many years of service to that condominium property and reflect on how he contributed so much to it!

*May he rest in peace!
Frank Bingman*

Frank Bingman - April 14 at 07:10 PM

MM

“ So many memories of Dutch over the years and all of his creative ideas to help the community that he loved. May he rest in peace and know he leaves many behind who him great thanks.

Mary Makowski

mary king makowski - April 12 at 07:46 PM

WY

“ Grandpa Dutch made everyone around him happy. A couple weeks before he passed, he managed to stand up on his own and walk, which made my whole family's eye boggle. He just looked at us with his candid gaze and said, "Every day gets better!"

Wyatt - April 12 at 05:58 PM

TJ

“ Working at New Life Thrift Store was easy and fun because of Dutch. With his easy going personality, he made it a joy to be there. Even after he retired from NLTS, he was mentioned fondly and frequently. Will remember him always.

Fondly,
Terry Jacques

Terry Jacques - April 11 at 09:32 AM

CS

“ I had the pleasure of working with Dutch at the New Life Thrift store for many years. He was such a nice man. May he rest in peace. Christine Shumate

Christine Shumate - April 10 at 05:42 PM

SN

Sorry am so late with my memories of Dutch. I also was fortunate enough to work with Dutch at New Life and enjoy his company. So many of us, volunteers and customers, were sorry when he "retired" yet glad when he would come in to see how things were going. Still customers still come and ask if we hear from him. He will be missed. Sheila Naughton

sheila naughton - April 16 at 08:40 AM

DP

Dutch will be missed by many. He did so much for the Rehoboth Beach & Lewes community. He was truly a great man.

Doug & Carol Popham - April 16 at 08:40 AM

BH

Dutch made a lasting impression on me from the first time I met him at the thrift store that gave many recently retired people a new life in helping others. He will always remain in my heart.

Bill Heronemus - April 16 at 07:42 PM

JH

How. Ou

How could he not be my favorite Uncle? After all, he was my .Mom's favorite brother. I bjeve he was the first to teach me what it meant to tease. He always had N accepting way about him. Accepting every individual for who they were, while encouraging better of them without them knowing. I recall the many books freely given to children attending the Thrift Store, not to keep them busy while their parents shopped, but to expand their horizons through reading. I was so glad he returned to the area, although not the Eastern Shore of Maryland, it was good having him close enough to enjoy family holiday dinners. He will be remembered as a "gentleman and someone who could turn nothing into something of worth. Rest in peace with Mom. Love you xoxox

Jennie Holmes - May 02 at 11:33 PM