



Carl Weir Townsend

October 23, 1923 - June 22, 2017

Carl Weir Townsend, Age 93, our beloved daddy and granddaddy, was called to his heavenly home by his Lord and Savior surrounded by his loving family on June 22, 2017 in Orlando. Carl Weir (his family called him by his first and middle name) was born in Weir, Mississippi on October 23, 1923, the son of Carl Martin and Cora Kelly Townsend. He had a sister, Emily Wanda Townsend Taylor, whom he loved very much. He attended Weir High School and Holmes Jr. College where he ran track and played football. Weir is a small Mississippi town founded by Carl Weir's great grandfather as Weir's Mill after the Civil War. In those days of his youth, Weir was like Mayberry or one in a William Faulker story- full of rich characters, myths, Indian lore, African American and Southern Gothic traditions from which Carl Weir found inspiration and expression in one of his most precious gifts- the art of storytelling. Carl Weir was a master storyteller. His stories, whether humorous or sad, were interwoven with profound truths and moral lessons.

Carl Weir was loved by the entire town. His best friend to hunt the woods along the Yockanookany Creek was J.T Woodard, an African American friend who Carl Weir loved and stayed in touch with even through the present, visiting him and his family at his home in Weir. He also fished Tilby Creek with "Big Tom", who Carl Weir said would load large cotton bales on his back. These were friendships that spoke to Carl Weir's character and love of people from all walks of life, especially because Carl Weir's father was other of one of the few businesses- the local gas station- his grandfather had been Weir's

first mayor, and his great grandfather was Colonel John Weir, CSA, who founded Weir after the Civil War. J. T. Woodard in recent years confirmed to Carl Weir's grandsons the truth of the legend that Carl Weir was such a good shot with a 22 rifle that he could knock two marbles out of the air when thrown up at the same time.

He served in the U.S. Army combat engineers during World War II. They were sent into ports and towns after intense bombings and the installation of tens of thousands of mines to find ways to get tanks and heavy war machinery through. His unit was awarded several medals, including for their work clearing the port of Livorno(Leghorn). He fought in North Africa with General Mark Clark's Fifth Army and drove Rommel out. Then he participated in the invasion of Italy(the so called "soft underbelly of Europe") and he was one of the first troops entering Rome on June 5, 1944, after slogging up the Italian peninsula through freezing torrential rains and hellish mountain fighting and even the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. While he avoided talking about the graphic traumas of a war in which he lost friends to mines and snipers, he recounted his many experiences for years to his friends and family, highlighted by his sympathy and appreciation of the local peoples who suffered the horrors of the war. He had a spirit which enabled him to look beyond the destruction and suffering and to appreciate the history, art and architecture. He wrote beautiful loving letters home to his family. Like many veterans who left their small farms and towns as boys, he experienced firsthand the indescribable brutality of the war, but returned home an "old man" as he often said, but a man full of hope and optimism. Without any of the type of support, care and counseling that our veterans deserve and receive to today, he still emerged a positive and spiritual man. Upon returning home, Carl Weir worked at the Pinto Island shipyard in Mobile, Alabama and then attended Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mississippi- up the road from Weir. He started one of his of his first businesses, Townsend's Trading Post, in Weir.

In 1950, while visiting friends in Mobile, Carl Weir met his beautiful and loving wife of 67 years, Mary Virginia Bartlett, a farm girl from Range, Alabama, who, like so many women during the war years, left farms and small towns for the big city of Mobile to work. Carl Weir and Mary were married on June 29, 1950. Virginia's five brothers and sisters, and her parents, were his closest friends. Carl and Virginia had three children born in Jackson-Carla Elaine, Clay Martin and Neil Russell.

Carl Weir moved to Orlando, Florida in 1952 and ran his tile contracting business, Townsend Tile Co., until the late 1970's when he and Virginia started their tile distribution business, The Tile Warehouse, later the Tile Market, on Michigan St. in South Orlando. The Tile Warehouse's architecture was inspired by Colonial era warehouses in the Caribbean and built from heart cypress timbers fished out of the St. John's River. He was active in the South Orlando community, from scouts to coaching at Conway Little League. His children attended Conway Elementary School, Howard and Conway Middle Schools and Boone High School. In 1980 Carl Weir was a founding partner in Townsend's Fish House and Tavern which opened in the large tile warehouse next door to the Tile Market and operated with the family management for over twenty years, hosting and supporting numerous charity and community events. The décor was famous for its artifacts and the family collection of old Florida historical items.

In the early 1980's, Carl Weir, after extensive surgery, was diagnosed with terminal colon cancer which had metastasized even to his liver and given six weeks to live by his doctors. Undeterred, he and Mary embarked upon a physical and spiritual war on the disease. Armed with his unparalleled love of God and life, and his always sunny view, he beat the disease and lived decades more. At his lowest moments, he always said he felt "like a million dollars"- an inspiration to all. Doctors marveled at his healing and had no

explanation, but he knew the explanation- miraculous healing, while an inscrutable mystery, is still very real and possible for those with faith.

In the late 1980's, Carl Weir was also a partner in Historic Townsend's Plantation in Apopka, the restoration of a 1903 Victorian mansion which was slated for demolition but which was moved to a 20 acre site and beautifully restored. The Victorian mansion and grounds contained herb and rose gardens, beautiful Townsend's won numerous award and became the town center for Apopka, hosting numerous concerts, events and a large living history civil war reenactment which continues to this day in Mt. Dora- The Battle of Townsend's Plantation- an event he always wanted to carry on for the education of young people. Carl Weir was a natural artist, avid reader and book collector, and deeply spiritual Christian. He was considered the shaman of his family and relatives, infused with a mystic's perception of the important aspects of the human existence. His Native American ancestry provided many of the threads in the complex tapestry of his spiritual life and, up until his passing, his curiosity and spiritual exploration continued. He saw the hand of God in the most elemental natural wonders- plants and herbs, soils, trees and animals. Some of his favorite objects were his gourds, with their ancient importance from being man's first vessel to their importance in scripture like Jonah, and to ancient Essene Gospel of Peace Book 1.

After retirement, Carl Weir's time stayed full with his wife, children and his grandchildren. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, his three children Carla Townsend Chotas(Lee), Clay Townsend(Susan English), and Neil Townsend(Marian), and five grandsons on whom he had a profound influence- Dr. Carl Chotas, Dr. William Chotas, Clay Townsend,(a medical student at UCF),Johnny Carl Weir Townsend and Tommy Townsend(student-athletes at UF). Carl Weir was surrounded by his family at his passing which was blessed and peaceful. He died in his own bed at the house in built on Bass Lake in 1968. In his final hours, he repeatedly said he had been so very

blessed and how much he loved his family. Two screech owls were seen outside his bedroom window the next evening, a significant and fitting event to Carl Weir's Cherokee kin. The family gathered mere feet below them and marveled and they looked back without any fear or flight. Throughout his 93 years of some tough and painful times, he never even complained and he did everything for his family. He will be sorely missed by all his family, extended family and friends. The family is deeply saddened beyond words. Our lives are forever and profoundly blessed by God for His gift of our precious daddy and granddaddy. All thanks and glory be to God in the name of Christ Jesus.

Services will be held on Saturday, July 1, 2017 at First Presbyterian Church of Orlando where he was a member, 106 E. Church St., 32801 at 11 am; with the burial immediately afterward at Greenwood Cemetery, where there will be a U.S. Army Honor Guard and Civil War Reenactor Honor Guard. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be to the Carl Weir Townsend Memorial at www.gofundme.com/carl-weir-townsend which will be donated to the Weir Historical Society and used for ongoing preservation and education for future generations at the Colonel John Weir House. Carl Weir's ancestral home is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a 501(c)(3) entity. Coloneljohnweirhouse.com.

Cemetery Details

Greenwood Cemetery

1603 Greenwood Street
Orlando, FL 32801

Previous Events

Service

JUL 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church of Orlando
106 E. Church St.
Orlando, FL 32801

Tribute Wall

KS

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Karl E. Southworth - December 20, 2017 at 07:40 PM

LP

“ *Mr. Townsend was a great man. He had a warm heart, a kind soul and was generous and fair to everyone he met and knew. My Father thought so much of him and of all of his family. Praying for you all and sending love. I am so sorry for your loss.*



Lora Parrish - July 17, 2017 at 12:44 AM

KP

“ *Mr. Townsend, a true southern gentleman.....*

I was honored to be his friend for over 35 years and have many memories of time spent with him. Mr. Townsend was a master storyteller. Through his recollection of life experiences, he was able to pass on lessons that helped instill good traits to apply in my walk through life.

He will surely be missed.

Ken Patton

Ken Patton - June 29, 2017 at 04:14 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Carl Weir Townsend.*



June 28, 2017 at 09:44 AM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Carl Weir Townsend.*



June 28, 2017 at 12:10 AM



“ *Serenity Wreath was purchased for the family of Carl Weir Townsend.*



June 27, 2017 at 11:11 AM



“ *We are so sorry to read of your loss of your beloved patriarch. What a wonderfully rich life he had surrounded by so many people who loved him! He always seemed so proud of you all. May God hold your family in His arms as you go through this hard time. With Deepest Sympathy & Love, Sharon & Jody Walker*

sharon walker - June 25, 2017 at 08:26 AM