



Harry Clare Neal

June 6, 1931 - October 4, 2022

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Harry Neal, a true Optimist who lived his life serving others passed away on October 4, 2022.

Harry was born in Joplin, MO to parents, Kenneth and Sibyl Neal. The family lived in Miami, Oklahoma, Galena, Kansas and Gainesville, Texas, where Harry attended high school. Mr. Neal went on to graduate from the University of Texas on the self-directed Plan 2 program. He also did post graduate work at Worcester University in Massachusetts, and at the Thunderbird School of International Business in Arizona.

After a tour in the United States Navy, Mr. Neal moved to New York City where he worked for the United Presbyterian Church Board of Missions and later to Atlanta, GA and worked for Atlanta Gas Light for several years. He eventually settled in Sarasota, FL in 1965.

Harry became a founding member of the Breakfast Optimist Club and the Optimist Club of Siesta Key (now known as the Suncoast Optimist Club) both in Sarasota, FL. Harry was on the original board that founded Sarasota Bicycle Motocross, helped with the Carefree Learner marine biology floating classroom and the Boy's and Girl's Clubs of Sarasota through his Optimist clubs.

Optimist Clubs, and their mission to help children in their communities became the driving force in Harry's life. He was known for his great smile and passion for helping people, especially youth. For Harry, to be an Optimist was not just being a member of a club, but it was a way of life. He did this by helping both individuals and at times adopting entire families as though they were his own. One of his key joys was the annual oratorical contest where he ran the local, regional and state competitions. Always a kind coach to give advice to contestants, many whom had never given a public speech prior.

He loved to travel. While in high School he founded the Texas Travel Club through which he discovered Sarasota, his eventual home. He eventually travelled the world. Many of those trips were with his longtime friend, Gean Kelso.

Harry was an avid sports fan continuously supporting the Texas Longhorns. He was an original Atlanta Falcons season ticket holder and kept them for many years even after he had moved to Sarasota. In 2015, he fulfilled a dream of attending the Kentucky Derby and was blessed to see American Pharaoh thunder down the track and win the first leg of its eventual triple crown.

Harry Neal will always be remembered for helping others with his optimism. He is survived by the number of people who he supported and helped throughout his life. Most importantly by Donna and Craig Blethen, Karen and Donald Ramon, and their respective families.

A celebration of life will be held at the Hyatt Regency, 1000 Blvd of the Arts, Sarasota, FL 34236 on October 10, 2022 at 6:00 pm. Light refreshments will follow. The family requests no flowers but please consider a donation to the Optimist International Foundation to support Harry's favorite charity. <https://www.oifoundation.org/us-canada-donate.html>

Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Maloney Funeral Home - October 05, 2022 at 01:35 PM