

CHARLES EDWARD PLANK



Charles Edward Plank died peacefully on January 9, 2024, in Tavares, Florida at age 96. He was born on May 12, 1927, in North Irwin, Pennsylvania, and had lifelong pride and fondness for life on Penn Avenue.

While he enjoyed many a shenanigan with his pals on "The Hill," he also grew up working through the depression in the family businesses. As a child, experiencing the hardship the

depression brought to those around him, those memories left a profound and lasting impression on him, shaping his adult life. While not the best academic student, he boasted of bribing teachers with gas stamps for a passing grade. He was an excellent student of life experiences, hard work, and opportunity. As a young man, he would give guys, teetering at closing time from the downtown bars in Irwin, a ride home in a wheel barrel for a nickel. He was industrious.

Ed served in the Seabees in the South Pacific during the World War and made lifelong friendships. Returning home he was keen to settle down. Other than his wife Harriet Mae Lee (Plank), deceased, whom he was married to for 62 years, Ed had another love, sports. In his youth, he loved to play basketball for Irwin High School. Ultimately this love of sports turned into a flourishing night job as a high school and college basketball and football referee. He officiated some of the biggest high school sports rivalries of the WPIAL and the PIAA. He loved the action and mentoring of young officials, but he also relished the notoriety that Western Pennsylvania sports brought him. He couldn't listen to local sports radio without calling in to clarify an offensive charge or technical foul he had called in a close game. He didn't back down. Refereeing gave him his greatest boasting claim to fame, being a paid actor in the box office dud "The Fish That Saved Pittsburgh." He carried a \$9 Screen Actors Guild paystub in his wallet as proof. It's probably still in his wallet now. He excelled in the limelight. Ed's primary job was that of a proud garbageman, the business he and his brother Billy took over from their dad. Up at 4 am each day, a quick nap after lunch, and then off to officiate a game. Day after day, year after year. He lived to work. Somehow he found enough time at home to have six children.

Ed and Harriet were proud of the fact that each child was educated and successful. They are Cindy Nagle (Joe), Renee King (Jim), Ed Plank (Bridget), Dr. Susan Plank, John Plank (Richard) and Steven Plank (Julie). Ed was blessed with nine grandchildren Bryce, Jimmy, Brendan, Jessica, Amy, Maddie, Tyler, Cooper, and Justin; and three great-grandchildren Jimmy, Aiden, and Kayla. He was a family man. Travel was another passion for both Ed and Harriet. Packing the travel trailer and rounding up the six kids into the station wagon they would crisscross the states. Ultimately as retirement came along they enjoyed wintering at their home in St. Augustine, Florida again making friends everywhere they went. He was an adventurer. It's impossible to encapsulate his life in a few paragraphs. Whether pitching pennies with strangers in a restaurant line, being a gentleman farmer throwing a good old-fashioned barn dance, or weekly golf and poker games with his buddies at the Masonic Lodge, Eddie will forever be remembered for his larger-than-life character, his love for his family, good times with friends and his unwavering work ethic and financial success. He leaves behind a legacy of resilience, determination, and a zest for life that will continue to inspire all those who had the privilege of knowing him. He lived life to the fullest.

Friends and family will be received from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, at the **WILLIAM SNYDER FUNERAL HOME, INC.**, 521 Main Street, Irwin, 724-863-1200. A Funeral Service will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday in the funeral home. Interment and military honors will be held at Union Cemetery, Irwin, following the funeral service. For online condolences please visit www.snyderfuneralservices.com.

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