



Mr. Robert D. Hays

January 28, 1926 - January 25, 2021

Robert D Hays died peacefully in his sleep at approximately 9:30am January 25, 2021, just 3 days shy of his 95 Birthday. He was born January 28, 1926 and raised in the sleepy little town of Ligonier Pennsylvania.

After returning from WWII, he married his High school sweet heart, Nancy Nicely in 1948. His life took an abrupt turn when he landed a Job with the RCA / Army Ballistic Missile Agency (ABMA), later to become Nasa. He was thrust into the space-age when he moved to Merritt Island in 1956 and began working on the Nasa early Snark, Matador, Bomark, and later Jupiter, Apollo and finally Shuttle, programs. He retired from NASA in 1981 at the age of 55 and became a consultant/Senior Electrical Engineer for Westinghouse on the Peace Keeper Rail Garrison Program. Retirement finally landed in 1995. He spent his retirement years traveling the world and tinkering with real estate. During his employment with Nasa, he was instrumental in the launch operations telemetry data acquisition between the Space vehicle and the firing room computer consoles. Essentially self-taught in electronics, dissecting radios, etc, as a kid, he was able to pass the ABMA entry intelligence test to become a Nasa technician, then engineer and finally senior engineer /consultant for Westinghouse.

How exciting his life was. In the forefront of the countries race to the moon while raising seven boys, the oldest being born in 1950 and the youngest in 1971. In his spare time, he was a baseball coach to his boys, which says a lot when there is seven of them. He was also a habitual “tinkerer”, a closet electronic gadget builder and inventor with an extraordinary imagination. From building a jet ski years before its time, several unique electronic games, one that almost made it to market. He used the house wiring to control the pool pump from his bedroom upstairs to save him the walk, this was in 1963! His imagination was not limited making toys for us boys to destroy, his artistic imagination was revealed in the giant gorgeous river stump he pulled out of the river, cleaned up and mounted on our large two story high sunken living room wall.

He was truly incredible man that was also my hero and mentor. He will be greatly missed,

however his spirit is well seeded in the character and passion of his children. There is no doubt that God has embraced him with open arms.

Robert is survived by his seven sons Robert, Richard, David, Todd, Larry, Hal and Paris, his six grandchildren Jesse, Chris, Shauna, Mariah, Holden, and Seaira and his four great-grandchildren, Christian, Sebastian, Jake, and Oliver. A private service to be held at home.

His loving son(s)

Eleven days before my Dad died he had a very, almost twilight zone, premonition. He called me in his bedroom and said Hey Todd, you know that picture in the living room of your mother and I ? Yes, I said. You know I am healthy and strong in that picture, I have my arm and my leg back. Yea I said, thinking where in the heck is this going. If you are unaware, Dad had a stroke back on July 8th 2009. He pretty much never recovered from his left side (leg and arm) paralysis.

You know Moms in the picture too! Dad said. Where are we in that picture? he inquired. I am not sure Dad, but it is dated 1962 so it's most likely in Cocoa Florida somewhere. Dad said, on Monday I am going to go into that picture and get Mom. We will both be happy, healthy, and young again, he said smiling at me. That would be fantastic! I said to him thinking, Dads cracking up. Although Dad had talked of his desire to see mom again he had never said anything like what he had just said. I was not sure what to make of it. He then slide back into sleep. This was at about 10am.

As we typically do every Tuesday and Thursday, I got Dad up around noon, put him in my car and we went for a car ride to port Canaveral. We parked at the doc of the bay and while enjoying our traditional picnic with the car top down, we watch the cruise ships along with the tide roll away. I had forgotten about the bizarre picture conversation we previously had.

Hey Todd, Dad said, remember that picture? Holy cow he's back on it, I'm thinking. Yea Dad I replied. When I go into the picture on Monday (he remembered the previous conversation and focused on Monday), I am going to break Mom out of Jail. Jail! I responded. Mom's not in Jail Dad. He said, yes she is, with some certainty in his demeanor. I started to argue that he was mistaken but then decided to shut up. He explained that I did not know what he knew but did not elaborate. I don't recall the distraction but the conversation derailed to a different subject. I did think it very odd that he remembered and brought up the conversation again.

That evening Dad called me into his bedroom again and said. Hey Todd go get my check book, ok, I said, thinking it odd. I brought it to him and he said, write your phone number on the back and put it right here beside my bed, pointing to the desired location. Here you go, I said positioning it as requested. Dad said, now when I get in the picture on Monday (of my, here we go again, he's back talking about the picture), I will get mom and I will call you to tell you where we are so you can come pick us up. OK I said with a little hesitation and apprehension in my voice. I am now kind of freaked out. This is third time, all hours apart, that he has mentioned this.

Now this was Thursday, typically I would not see Dad until the next Tuesday, a day after Monday, the day Dad was going into the picture. However Friday was Bobs Birthday and I had arrange to spend the Friday with Dad so Bob could spend the day enjoying his birthday. Dad I will see you tomorrow, ok he said, as I left the house.

Friday came and went as usual. I took Dad to the port for our picnic lunch, nothing more was said regarding the picture. As I was leaving Friday evening, Dad said, when am I going to see you again? Tuesday I said, looking at him. He kind of hesitated and then said ok with trepidation in his voice. Although nothing was said I had the feeling that Dad was thinking, remember Monday I am going to see Mom.

I told Bob as I was leaving about the premonition Dad had described. I think Dad is going to die Monday I told Bob. The whole thing was giving me goose bumps. I told my wife Roxanne about this when I got home. We should go see Dad Sunday I told Roxanne.

Sunday Bob called me and said he thought he needed help bathing Dad. Typically Bob had been doing this by himself, we did it together on the days I was over there, but for the most part, Bob did it on his own. For some reason Bob had the intuition to call me, which I always urged him to do. Wouldn't you know it, while getting Dad out of the shower we had a fall. I felt responsible because I thought he was in a safe position, I left him with Bob just for a few seconds to go grab a towel for his head. That is when he and Bob fell back into the bathroom. Bob hit the floor while Dad fell on Bob. They just missed the toilet seat. Dad had a minor cut and Bob miraculously was ok,

The incident shook everyone up a little bit, however everyone was alright. With the commotion of the fall, nothing was said regarding the picture, I saw Dad to bed and left. Monday came and went without a call from Bob. I was relieved, Dad had not passed on Monday as I feared.

Tuesday I showed up at Dads as usual. Hospice, who visits with Dad every Tuesday, was already there. Bob was alarmed because Dad had not eaten at all on Monday and very little Sunday. Hospice checked his vitals and was further alarmed that his oxygen reading was at 85, which apparently is low. He is shutting down, she said.

Dad was still quite alert and with it. The hospice worker calmly took Dad's hand and asked him if he would like to go to the hospice facility where he would be more comfortable. They could put a catheter in him so he would not have to struggle with getting up every other hour to pee, which was common for him at the house. This seemed to be appealing to him. The hospice worker who has been evaluating Dad for about a year now, and Dad had become quite fond of, explained to Dad that he was going to hospice to "see Jesus". She did not mix words. Dad said he was ready to go.

I am thinking, Dad doesn't look like he is shutting down. I ask the hospice worker, when he gets to the facility, will they feed him if he's hungry or are they just going to pump him full of morphine until he is unconscious and can't ask for food or water, essentially humanly killing him. No she assured me, they only give him morphine if he is in pain or exhibiting erratic breathing. She also said they will feed him anything he wants.

I personally thought that once they got him there he would be flirting with nurses and eating Salisbury steak. Heck he will be back home in a few days, he is not "shutting down". They picked him up at his house on Tuesday Jan 19, at about 3:30 pm, said it would take a couple hours to check him in. I went down to see him at 5:30. He was, as I thought, flirting with the nurses, they were doting over his beautiful full head of hair. He seemed fine. I did ask him if he wanted something to eat or drink, he declined, which I thought was odd. Bob had told me yesterday that Dad had not eaten the last couple days.

I did not see Dad the following day. He had plenty of company with the rest of the brothers going down to see him. On Thursday I went to see Dad about 9:30am. Dad was sleeping. I ask the nurse if he was sedated. She said she was the first shift nurse and that she had not given him anything. She checked the records and said he was given a small dose of morphine to help his breathing at 2am the previous night. Again I was concerned that they were sedating him so I stayed all day Tuesday to see if they would give him anything. I was very concerned that Dad would be experiencing the sensation of thirst and hunger.

After about a half hour Dad stirred awake. I went over to him grabbed his hand, looked into his squinted eyes and said Hey Dad it's me Todd, can you hear me? Dad opened his eyes a little wider, gave me nice smile, and squeezed my hand, then slide back into sleep. Darn I thought, I wanted to quiz him regarding being hungry or thirsty. After about another

hour Dad stirred awake again. I again grabbed his hand, hey Dad it's me Todd, can you hear me? Again he gave me a smile but no squeeze of hand. Are you hungry Dad? , I said as I was given him the shoveling into my mouth sign. Dad just looked at me with no expression. Are you Hungry Dad? Are you hungry? Again no indication from him although he appeared to be looking at me. Then I grabbed a glass of water and put it right up between his face and mine. Dad are you thirsty, I asked as I nodded my head up and down to indicate a yes. Are you thirsty dad continuing to nod my head? Still no obvious response. Are you thirsty Dad, this time nodding back and forth indicating no, still no response. Are you thirsty, nodding up and down again? This time my dad nodded up and down indicating a yes response.

I put the straw to his mouth and said now take small sips. My Dad took a sip and began to choke and turn red. I freaked! Oh my, I think he is drowning. I raced to the nurse's station, which was literally right outside his door, alerting them to his condition. By the time that we got back to him, less than 30 seconds, he had recovered. He had fallen back to sleep however there was gargling in his breath. The nurse came back in with a small dose in a syringe that she squirted under his tongue. I quizzed her as to what it was, she said it was not morphine, it was something to dry him up. Won't that choke him like the sip of water I just gave him? She said no, that this is absorbed under the tongue. I had my doubts however after about 10 minutes the gargling subsided.

The nurse informed me that part of "shutting down" is you can't swallow. It was at this moment that I realized that the hospice nurse last Tuesday was correct. Dad was indeed shutting down and there would be no Salisbury steak.

Dad never did recover enough to give another smile nor squeeze of my hand. His eyes did partially open but I do not think he was aware of my presents.

Dad died Monday morning at 9:30.

He is in the picture with Mom.

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Robert D. Hays*

January 30, 2023 at 03:36 AM

JH

“ *Check out the Family Tree under "+ More" and update as you know
Thanks
Todd*

Joel Hays - February 04, 2021 at 10:29 AM

PH

“ *We love you Dad! We had so much fun in 2000 on the boat with Dad! It was
Always fun at the Hays house. Dad, Mom, Larry, Dave, Todd, Hal & Pam pictured
here hanging out.*



Pam Hays - January 30, 2021 at 10:19 PM

JH

“ *16 files added to the album Memories Album*



Joel Hays - January 29, 2021 at 05:27 PM

JH

“ 10 files added to the album Dads Family Photos



Joel Hays - January 29, 2021 at 05:19 PM