



Don Curlee

January 6, 1929 - July 17, 2024

Born January 6, 1929, in Tulare, CA, to Charles Clayton Curlee and Lavinier Victoria Curlee. He attended schools in Tulare and San Bernardino, graduating from Tulare Union High School in 1946. He then attended Visalia College and Fresno State University, where he graduated with a degree in journalism in 1951. He was sports editor and editor of the campus newspaper at Visalia College, and sports editor of the campus newspaper at Fresno State during his time there.

His first job, at age 15 when he lived in San Bernardino, was delivering ice - working on the weekends so he would have “wheels” for going out. He was on the baseball team at Fresno State University from March through October from 1945-1951 and was the co-captain of the team when they won the 1951 State Championship. With that team, he is in the Fresno State Hall of Fame.

After graduation, he married Marilyn J. Moore of Fresno, and accepted a job in the atomic energy program in Paducah, Kentucky. His uncle Jack was the construction manager and he and Marilyn lived there for three years, giving birth to their eldest daughter. He returned to Fresno in 1954 to join public relations counselor Ed Boles as account executive. He was named executive director of the Northern California Chapter, American Institute of Architects in San Francisco in 1959, and later became editor of Western Fruit Grower magazine. During this time he had relocated with his wife and four children to

South San Francisco where they remained until 1974. He was named executive assistant at the Council of California Growers and later managed a trade association of table grape growers in Delano.

He returned to the Valley, and began farming in Clovis, CA (pomegranates) as well as starting his own company, Don Curlee-Public Relations in 1976. He was an accredited member of the American Institute of Public Relations. He created the "Ag at Large" column which appeared for 20 plus years in the Visalia Times-Delta and (for at least part of that time in the Tulare Advance Register), also the Hanford Sentinel and the Porterville Recorder, the Marysville paper, and the Capital Press (Salem, Oregon), the Madera Tribune and others from time to time. He sold his first free-lance article to a trade magazine while in college, and contributed articles to trade and golf business magazines for more than 40 years.

He was an avid golfer throughout his life, and at 89, "shot his age" while at his favorite course - Airways in Fresno. He also ignited his love of racing in his later years as he acquired a midget race car, which he refurbished, tuned up and raced in the "Old-Timers" races, locally. He accepted Christ at a Billy Graham Crusade when he was 20 and was active in church his whole life, instilling the love of Christ in his family.

He is survived by his four children: Becky Lynn Lapin, Karen Terese Curlee, Jeffrey Alan Curlee and Pamela Jean Rakis, as well as six grandchildren and twelve great grandchildren.

Interment is at The Chapel of the Light. Floral tributes are acceptable. Other memorials can be directed to Peoples Church in Fresno where he attended for nearly 50 years, or the Fresno Rescue Mission, or The Salvation Army.

Previous Events

Funeral Service

JUL **25**. 2:00 PM (PT)

Chapel of the Light
1620 W. Belmont Avenue
Fresno, CA 93728
michael@chapelofthelight.com
<http://www.chapelofthelight.com>

Tribute Wall

DG

“ I met Don in San Francisco in 1969 when he was editorial director for three agricultural magazines, and editor of *Western Fruit Grower*. Each magazine had a managing editor. Ron Long had *Western Farm Equipment*, and I had *Vegetable Crop Management*. Ron's recent death resulted in my searching on line for Don. We had connected here and there over the past half century, and I knew he was in Clovis.

He was a great boss -- energetic, enthused about his job, and a good writer. He taught me that it was preferable to leave an article you were working on in mid-sentence, because you knew exactly where to begin the next day. He was honest, hard-working, kind, and an excellent golfer. He would sit down at his desk every day, stomp his feet, and say, Oh yeah! He loved his work.

Less than a year after I joined our company, our publisher bought it and moved to Salinas. Don was determined to keep his family in South San Francisco. I had met a friend in Salinas, and we decided to split a house. There was a place for Dan to stay with us, so he commuted from his home and spent two days a week in our offices.

Don convinced me to play golf with him, starting about 5:30 am in pre-dawn light. Even the birds were still asleep. Don would step up, swing effortlessly, and launch a beautiful baby draw, into the darkness. Of course, he knew where the ball would be. I teed off and it was usually very difficult in full sunlight to find my ball. But we had a great time

I've made my livelihood writing for 55 years, and I owe a lot of thanks to Don. My heart goes out to all who knew and loved him.

*Dan Gustafson
Sonoma, CA*

Daniel Gustafson - October 30, 2024 at 03:56 PM

DS

“ Oh Don! “ We began our many conversations over the years that way, having fun by emulating “The Jack Benny “ radio and TV program. I was so very surprised and saddened to learn of his passing. We once worked closely together at the Council of California Growers but kept in touch chatting and reminiscing by phone over many years.

He was a gentle man, a savvy writer and newsman..

He was a meaningful friend and I shall miss him greatly.

Sincerely,

Dan Solomon

Dan Solomon - August 01, 2024 at 11:33 AM

FN

“ To Don's family: My mother, Flossie Neate, was very sad to hear of your father's, grandfather's, great grandfather's passing. She has such fond memories of their childhood and they have shared a friendship ever since. I informed Bob Clark, another of their lifelong friends, who still lives in Tulare. Unfortunately, Flossie won't be able to attend the service today, but we would like to express our deepest condolences. Through mom, I also the pleasure of meeting Don and a little of the family.

We will be sending a gift to the Fresno Rescue Mission in Don's name.

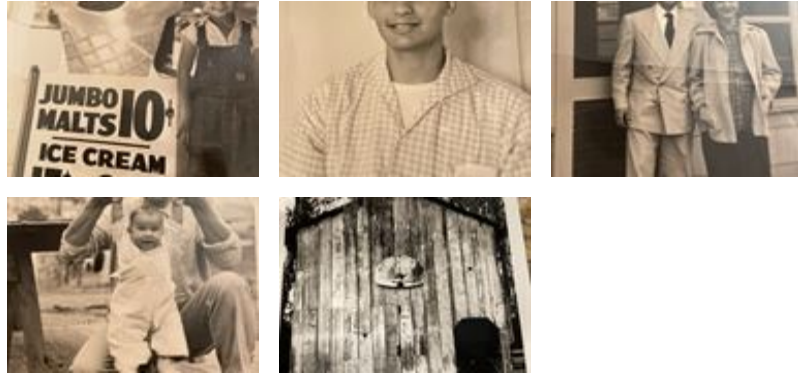
Sincerely,

Mike Walker for Flossie Neate

Flossie Neate - July 25, 2024 at 01:11 PM



“ 95 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Chapel Of The Light Funeral Home and Mausoleum - July 24, 2024 at 07:59 PM

AL

So beautiful. He lived such a rich and wonderful life and grew and nourished a loving, wonderful family. My love and condolences to you all.... xoxo And

Andrea Louise - July 25, 2024 at 01:10 AM

RR

“ *I want to pass along my condolences to the Curlee Family. I came to Fresno back in the late 70's working as farm editor at KMJ Radio. That's how I got to know Don covering ag in the central valley. He would send news releases and follow up with a phone call. He was fun to be around and never shy to share an opinion. God Bless Don and your family. Rich Rodriguez, Fox26 News*

Rich Rodriguez - July 24, 2024 at 04:52 PM