

# Carl Douglas Lowe

November 3, 1937 - February 22, 2018

Carl Douglas Lowe, 80, of Roanoke passed away at his home on Thursday, February 22 following a brief illness. His wife of nearly 57 years, June, was by his side.

The son of the late Herman and Empress Lowe, Carl was born November 3, 1937 in Danville, VA. Family and friends recall him as someone who genuinely loved people and who could talk with anyone of any age about most any topic, putting them at ease and making them feel special.

A man of devout faith who was blessed with many friends, he also possessed a keen curiosity about and an aptitude for a broad range of subjects and hobbies, most of which would remain with him for his entire life. This included science and research; history; art; all manner of gadgets (which he loved not only to collect, but to take apart and put back together); and trains, particularly steam locomotives.

Another was music. As a child, Carl loved classical music and opera. By age 14, after studying choral direction with the husband of a fellow church-member, he began directing music for his church. From ages 16-18, he sang bass with his high school glee club and was part of a quartet that performed in the Danville area. The group members were too young to legally work for a paycheck, so they were often paid in meals.

When he met his future father- and brothers-in-law, who played "old-time" music, Carl's own interests expanded to include their favorite genres, which were traditional mountain music, bluegrass, country and gospel.

At first, he thought it wouldn't be that difficult to play country music and that anyone could do it. When, after marriage he got a banjo and began learning to play, he admitted it was not so easy. He went on to play in a family band called the Blue Ridge Mountain Strings. Later, he took up the mountain dulcimer and the autoharp, which became his signature instrument.

Carl was the proud owner of not one but two prized Orthey autoharps,



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considered top-of-the-line. In typical "Carl" style, he didn't just call up and order one, he and June made the trip up to the Orthey Instruments factory in Newport, PA, where they met founder George Orthey and had a two-hour discussion.

A member of his church choir, he also played and sang locally with Gary and Jackie Ferguson.

Even in his final days, Carl was still listening to all kinds of music and enjoying guitar and banjo tunes played by visitors to his home, singing along in his distinctive bass.

After graduating from high school, he joined the navy, where he took and passed the admission tests for Annapolis Naval Academy. When his entrance physical's chest x-ray showed what was thought to be TB, he underwent further testing that showed not TB but another serious lung condition, which ultimately forced an early end to his aspiring career as a naval officer after just 87 days. But after two years, he unexpectedly was reclassified from 4F to 1A, so he reenlisted, opting to pursue training for submarine duty instead; after 89 days, however, he was given his second medical discharge.

Shortly after that, on March 11, 1961, he married June Beatrice Henderson and worked briefly for Dan River Mills before going to Brigham Young University, where he earned his degree in biosciences and library science.

Soon, he and June were off to Research Triangle Park in Raleigh- Durham, where Carl did medical research for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, part of the National Institutes of Health. His work focused on incidence of gallstones in persons of Mexican American heritage and also on DES--Diethylstilbestrol--a synthetic hormone once prescribed to prevent miscarriage in pregnant women but later linked to cancer in both mothers and their children.

Twenty-two years later, Carl retired for medical reasons, after which he and June came to live in Roanoke in the Back-Creek area. Although health issues continued to plague him in the intervening years, Carl remained positive and took an active part in church life, in music and in the community. He and June traveled often to see family members, to hear music or to take a ride on some vintage train. Two of Carl's favorite memories were riding the old logging

train at Cass, WV, and visiting the B&O Museum in Baltimore, where Carl's knowledge of trains and train history prompted their tour guide to say, "You know trains, sir."

In addition to his parents, Carl was predeceased by his paternal grandparents, Clate and Lucy Lester Lowe; and maternal grandparents, Robert and Pearl Gold Adams Samuels, all of the Danville area.

He is survived by his wife, June Henderson Lowe, of the home; sisters Brenda (Jimmy) Watlington and Judith Thurman, both of Danville; several nieces and nephews; a large extended family; and his beloved "Miss Kitty."

Baptized at age 12, he was a dedicated member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The family will receive friends from 5-8 p.m. on Sunday, February 25 at Oakey's South Chapel, 4257 Brambleton Ave.

Funeral services will be conducted on Monday, February 26 at 11 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Cotton Hill Building, with Bishop Paul Rucker officiating. Interment will follow in the Ferguson Family Cemetery on Ivy Mountain Drive.