

ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND PILOTS

1852



Celebrating the Life
of
Walter Franklin Jacobs

March 12, 1929 - January 8, 2015

WALTER FRANKLIN JACOBS, 85, OF CAPE SAINT JOHN
DIED JANUARY 8, 2015 IN ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Born March 12, 1929, the son of Carl B. and Ruth McGinnis Jacobs, of Linthicum Heights, "Captain" Jacobs was a Chesapeake Bay Ship Pilot for 44 years. He graduated Glen Burnie High School in the class of 1946, attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute and served in the Marine Corps before beginning his six-year pilot apprenticeship in 1952.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Betty Merle Smith Jacobs and his brother George C. Jacobs. He is survived by his wife, Claudia McLaughlin, daughters Martha S. Jacobs, Jean E. Cronan and her husband James, granddaughters Sara E. Cronan and Angela C. Laxson, and numerous nephews and nieces.

A life-long citizen of Anne Arundel County, Jacobs was a fierce opponent of the return of slot machines to Maryland. He was active in Democratic politics and environmental groups, including the Severn River Association, the Magothy River Land Trust, South River Federation, and the Lower Western Shore Tributary Team.

He had been a long-time member of the Parole (Annapolis) Rotary Club until health issues forced him to resign.

Captain Jacobs was repeatedly recognized for his environmental activities: he was named a Pearl of the Chesapeake for his ground-breaking gift of a parcel of land (Kurrle Knoll) to the Magothy River Land Trust. In 2006 The Severn River Association presented the Captain the "Blue Heron Award" as "the embodiment of the benevolent volunteer" and in 2012 again expressed gratitude to him for his "dedication to SRA" as a "model participant" at meetings of the Association.

The Association of Maryland Pilots, in 2012, presented Captain Jake with the honorary title "Commodore of the Chesapeake" in recognition of his "noteworthy career as a maritime professional and a community volunteer," citing his distinguished service to a number of organizations devoted to the preservation of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers and streams.

Walter was a consummate gentleman, known for his generosity and good humor.
He will forever be singing whilst "Sailing Down the Chesapeake Bay."



Granddad

A necklace with a heavy anchor pendant symbolizes my granddad. He was a pilot on the Chesapeake Bay for ages and ages. You know those big ships you see on calendar pictures or in paintings? Maybe a textbook or a museum? He was in charge of those. He's always worn this one necklace, a sturdy silver chain with a shiny anchor hanging near his bony sternum. In addition to that, his usual attire includes a beige tweed cap that he takes off in elevators. And he's always singing. They sang a lot on the ships - I guess that's the best thing to do during storms and long sleepless nights. But the songs of the Chesapeake never left his mouth. Every time I've ever visited, he has serenaded me with my favorites: "Sailing Down the Chesapeake Bay," "Fishin' on the Chesapeake," and, on special adventures, "Buffalo Gals." If you've ever seen my eyes, then you've seen his, too. The family joke is that God popped out Granddad's eyeballs and gave the updated version of them to me, but I think Granddad has the brightest, bluest eyes in the whole world. Sometimes in books, the author will reference "a twinkle in her eye" or how "his eyes flashed at the recognition," but the only flash I've ever seen is Granddad's. It means he's really delighted by something, a random baby in a stroller or a new friend he made while waiting in line at the grocery store. And of course, the songs. "All aboard for Baltimore and if we're late, they'll all be sore! Now look here, Captain, let us on that boat; we can't swim and we can't float!" That's from my favorite song, "Sailing Down the Chesapeake Bay." I'm pretty sure it's his favorite too.

written by Sara Cronan (2011)

'Round the bend I see the steam -er com -in', dear,
Head -in' here, To this pier;
If you hur -ry we will make it, nev -er fear, On the old Do -min -ion Line.
Ain't she sail -ing pret -ty as she hugs the shore,
Steam -in' for Bal -ti -more;
Hear the pad -dles turn -in' Hear the wat -er churn -in'
She's the queen of Ches -a -peake Bay!

Come on Nan -cy, put your best dress on,
Come on Nan -cy 'fore the steam -boat's gone.
Ev -'ry -thing is love -ly on the Ches -a -peake Bay,
All a -board for Bal -ti -more and if we're late they'll all be sore,
Now look here Cap -tain, let us catch the boat,
We can't swim and lis -ten, we can't float!
Banjos strum -min' a good old tune,
Up on deck, is the place to spoon,
Cud -dle up close, be -neath the sil -v'ry moon,

THE DASH

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on her tombstone from the beginning to the end.

He noted that first came the date of her birth and spoke of the following
date with tears, but he said what mattered most of all
was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time that she spent alive on earth . . .
and now only those who loved her know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own; the cars . . . the house . . . the cash.
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard . . .
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real,
and always try to understand the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger, and show appreciation more
and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect, and more often wear a smile . . .
remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read with your life's actions to rehash . . .
Would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent your dash?

Linda Ellis

THE SHIP

I stand on the shore watching a ship prepare for her journey.
Sails spread to the morning breeze, she is an object of beauty
and strength.

As I watch, she becomes a white, gossamer, cloudlike speck on
the horizon.

Then someone at my side exclaims, "She's gone!"
Gone where? Gone from my sight, that is all.
At the very moment when someone cries, "She's gone!",
there are other eyes watching for her arrival and other voices
that take up the joyful shout, "Here she comes!"