

Donald Frye Johnston



Donald F. Johnston was born in Atlanta, Georgia on May 8, 1924 and moved to Tampa, Florida when he was three-years-old. He attended Memorial Jr. High and Hillsborough High Schools. He moved up two grades and was awarded a percussion scholarship. At the age of 16, Don entered University of Florida, where he majored in electrical engineering.

After two years at University of Florida, Don enlisted in the army and was sent to the Armed Services Training Program at Texas A & M to join the soldiers who would help rebuild Europe following World War II. Plans changed and the Army sent his group to join the 103rd Division who joined the Seventh Army in the Rhone Valley. Don was a corporal and radio operator when his division took part in the Vosges campaign in the fall of 1944. During the Battle of the Bulge, they defended the southern flank of the Third Army. He was involved in Operation Nordwind in Schillersdorf, France and was promoted to Sergeant. Don celebrated VE day in Paris, and was anticipating deployment to the Pacific theatre when the Japanese surrendered. He finished his tour of duty back at Camp Bowie, Texas, as a sniper-school instructor.

When Don was discharged from the Army, he returned home to Florida, and opened Johnston Printing Company, which eventually became Johnston Lithograph & Engraving Company, Inc. He was a printer until the company officially closed in 1991.

When Don returned to the states in 1945, he visited his sister, Nellanne, a student at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. While there, he was introduced to her friend, Justine Cleary, a piano major. They fell in love and eventually married on July 23, 1949. Don and Justine were married for 67 years.

Donald was very active in the Tampa Community throughout his life. He attended St. Andrews Episcopal Church, where he sang in the choir (and directed the choir when the necessity arose) for 60 years. He performed in productions of the Tampa Junior League Follies, and other events in the Tampa area. Don was president of the original professional organization Printing Industries of Florida. He was very active as a member of the Kiwanis Club of Tampa and became president. He also served as Lieutenant Governor of the Florida District of Kiwanis. Don (and his father) were active members of the Egypt Shriners and the Scottish Rite.

Don & Justine moved to Cary, North Carolina in 2000. They were active at All Saints Anglican Church in Raleigh, and were most recently members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Cary. Don joined the Cary Kiwanis Chapter and later established a service organization for Senior Citizens in his area.

Don spent hours in his woodworking shop, creating rocking horses, book shelves, a cradle, a doll-house, and numerous other craft-pieces for friends and family. In 2018 he moved to the Jordan Oaks Retirement Community in Cary.

In November of 2021, Don returned to Florida, where he spent his final weeks.

Donald Johnston is survived by his four children, Katherine Gay Johnston Thom (John Thom); Jennifer Sarah Johnston Cooper (Joseph Cooper, Clark & Julie); Donald Christopher Johnston (Jennifer Risner Johnston, Connor); Justine Elizabeth "Betts" Johnston Willman (James E Willman, Jr., Paige & Troy); he is also survived by two Great Grandchildren, Nora Colman and Chapel Cooper, as well as many nieces, nephews and Grand-nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, kindly make donations to one of the following:

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