



Richard M. Holben

March 22, 2021

Richard Milton Holben, age 99, passed away on March 22, 2021 with his wife of nearly 77 years and his daughter by his side.

Mr. Holben is survived by his wife Jeanette, their daughter Nanette M. Holben of Cheltenham, PA; grandson E. Holben (Ben) Jones and his wife Tanya Rosen-Jones; and great-grandsons Emerson and Asa Rosen-Jones, of Oberlin, OH.

Mr. Holben, known as Dick to friends and family, was born in Allentown on August 8, 1921. He was the son of the late Lawrence and Anna (Miller) Holben. His brother Donald and sister Althea Townsend pre-deceased him. They grew up not far from Central Park -- a one-time amusement park -- where Richard had his first job in the late 1930s as “ring boy” for the merry-go-round. One day he deliberately handed the ring to a pretty teenager named Jenny, who later became his wife.

Mr. Holben graduated from Allentown High School in 1939, and worked to save money for college. He began his higher education with a football scholarship to Muhlenberg College in 1941, and captained the football team in 1943 – the first Allentown boy to do so since 1922. He graduated from Muhlenberg in 1947 following a hiatus for military service in World War II, during which he served in both the European and Pacific Theaters.

At Muhlenberg, Mr. Holben participated in the V-12 Navy College Training Program, which was designed to widen the pool of prospective officers. Upon completion of that program in 1944, he was sent to the Harvard University

Navy Supply Corps School, after which he was dispatched to England on the Queen Mary as a newly commissioned ensign with the 108th Seabees (heterograph for CBs, the Navy Construction Battalions) shortly after the June 6 invasion of Normandy. Later, with the 143rd CBs, as a Lieutenant JG, he was sent to the Philippine Islands. Following the war, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1951, and honorably discharged in 1958.

Postwar, Mr. Holben worked in sales positions with Swift & Co., Aetna Life Insurance Co., and Westwood Auto Supply, Inc. In 1969, he began a 20-year career with East Penn Manufacturing Company (Deka) in Lyon Station, where he served as Sales Operations Manager during the company's early major growth stage, overseeing all aspects of customer service and sales operations as well as training new salespeople. In time, he became known as "Mr. Operations." He retired in 1989.

Following his retirement, the Holbens enjoyed traveling abroad to Italy, France, and England. They also spent winters at Isla del Sol near St. Pete's Beach in Florida, and summer vacations on Long Beach Island, where members of their family, down to the fourth generation, still gather.

Services are private, at the convenience of the family. Arrangements by the J.S. Burkholder Funeral Home, Allentown. Condolences may be offered at: www.jsburkholder.com

Gifts in memory of Richard Holben may be sent to Muhlenberg College, 2400 Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18104.

Tribute Wall



“ *A wonderful man! Always ready to share a story. And was always interested in what I was up to! And a regular at those poolside celebrations. Thinking of you all. And praying for comfort in your beautiful memories of Dick. Jenny Weiss*

Jenny Weiss - March 31, 2021 at 12:39 PM