



Merrian Harris Rea

March 20, 2025

On the early morning of March 20, 2025, at the age of 89, Merrian Harris Rea shut his eyes here on earth to opening them in heaven and seeing his Lord and Savior, Jesus.

His wife, Barbara J Rea, whom he married on June 22, 1956, is left to cherish nearly 69 years of the life they created together. A native of Edenton, NC, Merrian was the son of the late William Harris and Virginia Pearline Rea. Being the last of his siblings to be living, he was preceded in death by Virginia, Frank, Allen, Earl, Dikie, Carl, Lou Ella, and Jimmy. Sadly, he was also preceded in death by his first-born son, Stephen Merrian Rea (1959-2005) whom he spoke of often, especially in these last couple of years.

Left to carry on his memory are his children, Vicki (Albert) Yerby, Dean (Carol) Rea, Kenneth (Ruby) Rea, Karen (Billy) Culpepper, and Jerri Milsteen. His seven grandchildren, Annie (Ryan) Arooji, Kera Rea, Brittany (Calvin) Owen, Turner (Michelle) Culpepper, Grayson Culpepper, Dale Milsteen, and Erissa Milsteen. Five great grandchildren, Collin Carlson, Orin LeMaster, Lily LeMaster, Orson Owen, and Iris Owen, and Many nieces and nephews who knew him as "Uncle Tootie".

Merrian, known as "Howdy" on the job, was a master artist when it came to

lumber. What others saw as just a simple piece of wood; it became something beautiful when touched by his hands. He built many homes, churches, furniture and so much more, however, the most cherished are tables, shelves, bookcases, doll house, crib, and toys that he lovingly made for his children and grandchildren throughout the years. In retirement besides wood projects, he loved to tinker with repairing lawn mowers and other yard equipment for friends and family.

Most importantly, Merrian was a faithful servant to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He was among the many men that came together and prayed over the planning and building of Faith Baptist Church in the Western Branch area of Chesapeake. He was a faithful worker and servant to his church, Pastor, and his beloved church family. He gave of his body and soul when he along with his brother, Allen, built the church and its surrounding buildings for which he also loved helping to maintain throughout the years.

A Celebration of Life in honor of Merrian will be held at Crossroads Church 5809 Portsmouth Boulevard Portsmouth, VA 23701 on Saturday, May 3, 2025, at 12 noon

Our family wishes to express our heartfelt gratitude to Sentara Hospice for the outstanding care not just to Merrian, but also for the care you extended to our family during this most difficult time. Also, a special thanks to Loving Funeral Home for the compassion and kindness you showed to our family.

In lieu of flowers, please make online gifts in memory of Merrian, online to the Dementia Society of America <http://www.DementiaSociety.org/donate>

If you prefer mail in you can send to:

Dementia Society of America

PO Box 600

Doylestown, PA 18901

Previous Events


Memorial service

MAY 3. 12:00 PM (ET)

CrossRoads Church
5809 Portsmouth Boulevard
Portsmouth, VA 23701



Tribute Wall

KC

“ *Daddy, missed you this Christmas! I'm sure your first Christmas is heaven was beyond words.
Sometimes I forget you have passed and I think of something to ask or tell you...only to remember you are not here with us anymore.
It is so hard to believe you have been gone 9 months!
Happy New Year to you. I love you so much and miss you so often.
But God is so good in reminding me that He has you and that He has me too. I LOVE YOU DADDY* 

Karen Culpepper - January 04 at 08:49 PM

KC

“ *HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY...daddy I'm sure you had an awesome 1st Birthday in Heaven 
Have missed you 
I love you & miss you
Happy Birthday*

karen Culpepper - November 26, 2025 at 04:49 PM

KC

“ *Daddy, I miss you so much but I know you are no longer in pain and you are with our Savior...that makes me so happy. I miss going back in your room and just sitting on your bed and you in your recliner...what wonderful conversations we had over the years.
Sometimes it was something I was questioning or a Biblical question I had and knew you had the answer I was searching because where so knowledgeable because of your walk with Jesus.
I MISS & LOVE YOU DADDY*

Karen Culpepper - July 30, 2025 at 09:32 AM

DR

“ *Daddy I miss you very much . My heart has a another empty spot in it now . But I am happy that you are up in heaven with Jesus. And you get to see Stephen again. And your brothers and sister. You were a great father. A great provider for your family. I am proud of the father that God gave me. I love you very much !*

Dean Rea - April 24, 2025 at 12:58 AM

CW

“ *I am so sorry to hear of this. Mr Rea was a great man and neighbor. He was always so kind. My thoughts and prayers are with all the family.* 🙏🙏🙏

Chris Williford - April 17, 2025 at 07:49 PM

KC

“ *Daddy I miss you!! Although I am sad I am so happy that you are with Jesus. You were the best daddy and granddaddy to Turner & Grayson. Love and miss you so much* 🥹🥹

Karen Cculpepper - April 15, 2025 at 12:32 PM

DB

“ *Iv known the Rea family over 40 years. Mr Rea always made you feel welcomed at Faith Baptist Church. He did what ever he could for the church and Mrs Rea was always in the nursery taking care of our baby's. The kids loved her. If you met either of them you would love them too.*

Diana Bridgers - April 15, 2025 at 11:31 AM

RL

I knew Merrian Rea as Tootie.Rea. He was like a big Brother to me and he had been since before I was in my teens. He had been since he married my Sister Barbara Jean Rea. He was the second best Carpenter I had ever known. Second only to my Dad, Edward M. Long. I loved Tootie truly as my brother. He will be truly missed by many.

Richard M Long - April 16, 2025 at 02:37 PM