



J Waymon Rose

March 29, 1922 - October 29, 2020

NAVAL AVIATOR, JACK RUBY JUROR, FORMER LUCAS TEXAS MAYOR, DEAD AT 98 J. Waymon Rose died Thursday due to complications following a brief bout with pneumonia. Waymon was preceded in death by his parents, John T. and Stella Reed Rose of Chattanooga, Tennessee, his daughter Donna Rose Reeves of Rockwall, Texas and his wife Virginia Ann Rose of Farmersville, Texas.

Waymon was born March 29, 1922 and was educated in the public schools in Chattanooga. He enlisted as an aviation cadet under the Navy V-5 program in early 1942 and was sent to University of North Carolina for Civilian Flight Training, a two month flying course designed for early elimination of those prospective cadets whose aptitude for flying was seen to be below set standards. Following this course and awarding of a student pilot license, he was sent to Naval Pre-Flight School at University of Georgia, an intensive athletic and academic program of three months, after which he was transferred to NAS Olathe, Kansas for primary training in open cockpit naval aircraft. He went on for Basic and Advanced training at Corpus Christi, Tx receiving his coveted wings of gold and commission as Ensign September 15, 1943. He spent 16 months as an instructor in advanced fighter tactics at Corpus Christi and NAS Kingsville where, as he said, he "became the best dog-fighter and marksman in the Navy", the result of 1500 hours of over-water, air-to-air gunnery, firing at a towed sleeve. Finally, he joined the fleet for combat duty in Squadron VBF-98, a newly formed operational concept to develop tactics for the invasion of the Japanese homeland. When he mustered out at Christmas, 1945, he had the enviable record of hundreds of flight hours in all three of the Navy's first-line fighters of WW2: Grumman's F4F Wildcat and the F6F Hellcat and the Vought F4U Corsair.

His formal education was completed in December 1948 at University of Tennessee at Chattanooga with a degree in Business Administration, after which he accepted a position as sales representative to travel the Southwest, for Cavalier Corporation, a local furniture manufacturer. On September 25, 1949, he married his college sweetheart, Ann Huffaker, in the University Chapel, and whisked her off to start their new lives in Dallas, Texas. In 1957, after securing several other lines of furniture, he became a tenant of the Dallas Home Furnishings Mart, the forerunner of Trammell Crow's Dallas Market Center, and

remained a tenant of the Trade Mart and World Trade Center until his retirement in 1996, after which his sons maintain the showroom lease to the present day. His career as a furniture manufacturer's representative spanned 6 decades—from the 1940s to the 1990s. He was a three-time nominee as Furniture salesman of the year by the Texas Retail Furniture Association.

In 1975, he was one of the founders of Winston Furniture Company, which became a towering casual furniture innovator with styling and construction and was instrumental in changing not only the look and durability of outdoor and casual furniture but its marketing techniques as well. His design and merchandising expertise was exceptional, contributing to the meteoric rise and success of Winston. He saw the company become a national leader and to become a member of the New York Stock Exchange in 1987.

Throughout college and the following 14 years, Waymon maintained his membership in the Naval Reserve and retired in 1965 after serving as commander of his jet fighter squadron. He was proud that he began flying a Piper Cub, speed 65 knots, and ended his career in the era of Mach 2 fighters. During his flying years, he had a forced landing in a rice field, a ditching at sea, and once piloting the Goodyear blimp "America". In his carrier experience, he never had a "wave-off", a mandatory command by the carrier's landing signal officer, to "go around again". This command is usually given in response to a poorly executed approach, a fouled flight deck, or other hazards present. He considered himself fortunate to be included in the "Greatest Generation" and was especially proud to have served his country as an officer and fighter pilot for over 23 years. As thrilling and notable his achievements were, he always said his most notable was winning Ann as his wife and soulmate.

In 1964, he was selected as the 10th juror for the Jack Ruby murder trial, held in Dallas during January and February. He said this was the most unexpected event of his life, as he was number 128 of a field of 900 prospective jurors and that he felt that 12 people certainly would be selected before he was to be interrogated. To ensure his being rejected, in answer to questions posed by both the State and Melvin Belli, Ruby's attorney, Waymon made statements concerning his knowledge of involuntary actions and catastrophic memory loss, information gained from navy leadership courses based, in part, on POW experiences in Korea, which only played into the plans of both sides. This earned him a spot on the jury, much to his consternation, but caused him to become Belli's "lead juror" a term applied by attorneys to a juror who was considered to be understanding of certain nuances of a trial. Waymon enjoyed Belli's mentioning this in his book, "Dallas Justice," along with his referral that Waymon had "a tall, dark and handsome, Latin look." The Dallas newspapers carried several articles during the trial telling of Waymon's wit and story-telling to his sequestered jury mates. Until very recently, he was a regular speaker and participant at the Sixth Floor Museum, relating little known stories of the insiders of the trial.

In 1975, Waymon moved to Lucas where he resided for 20 years, during which time he spent 10 years on City Council and as Mayor. A year after leaving office, a group in the city urged him to allow himself to become a write-in candidate for Council. Reluctantly, he agreed, as he had had enough small town politics plus it was already Monday before election on Saturday. He was elected and served 2 more years. He often wondered how he could have been so "lucky". In 1996, he retired to a lakeside home on Lavon Lake near Farmersville. Waymon was particularly proud of his membership at First United Methodist Church of Farmersville and the many friends there which he considered his extended family. He always enjoyed a joke, loved relating some of his experiences and needed no introductions.

He and his wife Ann enjoyed being motorhome owners for over 30 years, visiting every state in the union and every province in Canada, most, more than once. They didn't miss many air shows and were regular attendees to seminars at Naval Museum of Aviation at Pensacola, Florida and Nimitz Museum of Pacific War Studies at Fredericksburg, Texas. He is survived by sons Jim Rose and wife Dayle of Allen, and David Rose and wife Lynn of Dallas, son-in-law Randy Reeves of Dallas, grandson Preston Rose of Seattle, granddaughters Annabel Reeves of Dallas and Janie Reeves of Dallas. A memorial service is pending.

Comments



“ I met "Mr. Waymon" many times as a youngster and from being Pals with David beginning in Jr. High School. I always enjoyed visiting with him and hearing his stories ! He always treated the 'younger generation" with respect and was mindful of our young independence. He and Ann were two great people I thoroughly enjoyed and admired ! A real honor to have known them both !
Mike Welch

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