



# Ralph Lewis Quackenbush

DEC 12, 1932 - NOV 23, 2024



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# Ralph Lewis Quackenbush

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**R**alph Lewis Quackenbush was born in Englewood, New Jersey (Bergen County), and was the eldest son of Alice Scriven Quackenbush and Melvin M. “Mum” Quackenbush. Ralph had two brothers, Everett Quackenbush, and Jan Quackenbush, who predeceased Ralph. Ralph’s father’s career was in the Textile industry and his mother was a stay-at-home mother. Ralph was raised in a house that was built during the post-revolutionary war era that included vegetable and flower gardens, orchards, and plenty of property on which a boy could roam. Ralph recalled that he often helped tend the gardens and orchards with his mother and that, like many post-WW2 families, they had a “Victory Garden” and grew many of their food staples for their home during his childhood.

Ralph attended High School at Tenafly High School, and had the good fortune to make and keep several life-long friends from his High School and local community. After High School, Ralph attended The Philadelphia Textile Institute and earned a Textile Engineer degree. After college, Ralph was drafted into the Army and served as a member of Army Intelligence in the 4th Infantry Division in Germany. He was extremely proud of his service to his country and toward the end of his life was interviewed by the VA as part of a project commemorating Veterans and their service.

Ralph met the love of his life, Carol Dickson Quackenbush in 1958, on a blind date arranged by mutual friends. The date included attending a play in which Ralph was an actor, and a cast party. It was an instant attraction, often referred to as love at first sight, and this love would last for over 65 years. Ralph deeply loved his wife, Carol, and they were devoted to each other to a level that is seldom witnessed.

Ralph and his wife moved to Cornelius, North Carolina in 1960, to work in a textile mill owned by the Hird brothers. The mill closed in 1961 and Ralph and a colleague decided that they wanted to try their hand at small business ownership. He and his friend opened the first Tastee Freeze in Cornelius in 1961. Ralph would go on to open The Hub in 1962, a soda shop, grill and sundries



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business, in downtown Davidson. He would operate The Hub for many years, catering to the needs of Davidson College students, faculty, and townsfolk. For many years The Hub was a fixture on Main Street. Ralph was especially proud that he was the first business in the town of Davidson to offer his services to all townspeople, regardless of race, creed, religion or color. Ralph closed The Hub in 1976 and transitioned his entrepreneurial skills to furniture restoration from the years 1976 until he retired in 1996. He also taught furniture restoration at Central Piedmont in the evenings for many years. He was well known for the quality of his work and his honesty and fairness as a businessman.

Anyone who knew Ralph knew that he would want to find other meaningful ways to contribute to Davidson and the world after retirement from his business, and he went on to serve on the Board of The Davidson Housing Coalition for 20 years and also served for 20 years as the Parking Enforcement officer for the Davidson Police Department. He was honored by the town of Davidson for his distinguished service with the Burney award in 2010. Ralph also served his church, the Davidson College Presbyterian Church, as a Deacon and Head Usher for many years.

Ralph and Carol moved to The Pines at Davidson in 2019 and fully enjoyed the community and their life there until his death. They played bingo (often winning!) and Ralph especially loved playing Trivia with his friends at the Pines. He was well-known in the halls and took great pride in knowing so many employees and residents' names (he had a fantastic memory!) He leaves behind many good friends, fond memories, and heartfelt gratitude for those there who cared for him.

Ralph is survived by his devoted and loving wife, Carol, and by his children Lynn Quackenbush and her husband, Dallas Adams of Houston, TX, and David Quackenbush and his wife, Nancy Hamilton of Saint Simons Island, GA. He was deeply loved and respected by his family for his grit, his determination and his joy in self-taught pursuits: community acting, playing recorder, crumhorn and organ, wood-working and furniture restoration, and pretty much any darn thing he wanted to learn.

The service will be held on January 18, 2025, at 2pm at the Davidson College Presbyterian Church, located at 100 N Main St, Davidson, NC 28036. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to one of Ralph's favorite organizations: DCPC (Davidson College Presbyterian Church), The Davidson Police Department, The Davidson Branch of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library or The Davidson Housing Coalition.



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James Funeral Home, of Huntersville, is serving the family and obituary lovingly written by the family.



## Tribute Wall

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RS

**Rita Stokes** posted:

So sorry to hear about Mr. Quackenbush. Remembering him from the olden days in Cornelius, Huntersville when I worked with Ms. Carol, and later in life while working in Davidson. Such an expert furniture craftsman - he repaired several pieces for our family when we thought they were hopeless. Sending my thoughts and prayers for his family.

December 1 at 2:46 AM

BE

**Ben** posted:

My mom, Connie Welsh, loved Ralph and Ralph loved mom! Although he was a fixture at The Hub, with piping hot coffee whenever she needed it (which was always!), he did hang up his apron long enough to act for her from time to time. (I think he played a towns person in Wilder's Our Town. Surprise!) One of my fondest memories of Ralph was in the early morning, before my mother got her driver's license, when we would get up to catch the Greyhound Bus to go shopping in Charlotte. We would get to The Hub between 5 and 6 in the morning. Ralph was there (He was always there), waiting for the newspapers to be delivered. My brother and I would get chocolate milk and powdered donuts (and a comic book or two) and mom would get a large coffee, black. They would share town gossip for awhile. Then, the bus would roar down Main Street and screech to a stop, whisking us on an 'exciting' adventure to downtown Charlotte (which basically meant Belks and little else at that time).

November 30 at 10:25 AM

WL

**Wayne Lowery** posted:

Ralph was a man of many talents. He quickly became a friend when I worked with him at the Davidson Housing Coalition. I admired him for his work ethic and his dedication to his family, friends, and the town of Davidson. I enjoyed his sense of humor and our many conversations about almost everything. The world needs more like Ralph -- he was one of the good guys. Wayne Lowery

November 28 at 5:06 AM

SK

**Susan Kennedy** posted:

My first summer job when I was in college was at the Cornelius Tastee Freeze. Ralph was always supportive and a great person to work with. He will be definitely missed by many people. Susan Kennedy

November 27 at 7:10 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Ralph by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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