



Jay Pratt

July 29, 1918 - November 7, 2011

Jay Charles Pratt “kicked the bucket” November 7th, 2011 at 93.

Known for his Yankee accent and attitude, storytelling, and sense of humor, he may best be remembered for the creation of Pratt Gardens in Sharptown, as well as his square cookies and letter writing. He was full of life and lived a unique one. Jay was also known for his use of nicknames, “grey-haired Grammy’s” wisdoms, his walking stick, and his many talents including knitting mittens, baking, photography, and “grandfathering.” He was a Yankee curmudgeon and a true Renaissance man living the American Dream.

A “taken” boy, born in 1918, he was raised by John and Lina Tufts of Farmington, Maine, after his father, Jay Pratt, was killed by lightning and he and his five siblings were placed in an orphanage by their mother, Mary (Burke) Pratt. Graduating top male student, football player and discus thrower from Farmington High School in 1936, and Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME in 1940, he was a graduate assistant at the University of Boston, when he was recruited by DuPont to work in the Carney’s Point Works, Plant I Ballistics Lab for the War Effort in 1941. He returned to Maine, briefly, to work at the Ideal Toothpick Factory, returning back to South Jersey to raise a family as a Chemical Supervisor at the Chambers Works for 39 years before retiring to cultivate his “Back 40”.

With a shovel and plenty of moxie, in his spare time, Jay grew his garden and developed his 18 acres in “Sharptown Heights” into a miniature Longwood Gardens paradise, opening Pratt Gardens to share his love of nature with

others. Creating his own varieties of azaleas and rhododendrons, he named them after family, which he cultivated like his garden. A member of the Pine Barren Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society, he received their Bronze Award and Best of Class at the Philadelphia Rhododendron Show for one of his original azaleas: Mary Pratt. Birds and Blooms have featured his gardens in several articles, as has Today's Sunbeam.

Once active in the Presbyterian churches, he helped to build the Union Presbyterian sanctuary and Sunday school, was a member of the 7:59ers' Club and established many lifelong friendships. It also was the start of grand Easter Egg Hunts at "MaryKnoll". At Salem Presbyterian, he served as an Elder, Deacon, Sunday school teacher, a bass in the choir, and made his famous cookies and doughnuts for Coffee Hour. After leaving the church with enough "Brownie Points", he was named Elder Emeritus.

Jay was an Eagle Scout and Scout Leader for the Troop in Carney's Point in the 50's. He also led numerous groups of young hikers on the Appalachian Trail, a hobby from his youth in Maine, where he climbed Mount Katadin.

Always sharing his knowledge and love of nature, he also taught a Home School Botany class about the birds and bees using his own beehives. A tour of the property with Jay on his golf-cart left anyone with Latin names of plants, a story or two, and a greater appreciation of life.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 53 years, Mary Laurel Twiggs Whittaker, parents Jay and Mary, his adopted parents, John and Lina (nee Day) Tufts, brother Phillip, sisters Theresa, Eva, and Sister Mary Christine (Evelyn). He is survived by his four children; Rev. John P. Pratt (Anne) of Forest Grove, OR, Kathryn M. McKeon (Timothy) of Eugene, OR, JayeLaurel Pratt Davis (James) of "Sharptown Heights", NJ, and Peter Charles Tufts Pratt of "Sharptown Heights", NJ. He has six grandchildren: Jayson Matthew Pratt Davis (Sabrina) of Pittsburgh, PA, Jesse Lee Davis II (Jen) of Newark, DE, Laurie Lozier (Brent) of Salem, OR, John P. Pratt Jr. (Annabelle) of Hillsboro, OR, Tachan Matteo (Michael) of Sutherland OR, Lisa Lewis (Michael) of Salem, OR, a dozen great-grandchildren and his only remaining sister,

Norma Pratt of Ogden, UT. He is also survived by many friends who are privileged and honored to know this curmudgeonly muse and character.

The family would like people to know that he is still spreading the joy and wisdom he enjoyed sharing with everyone by “teaching” at Rutgers University Medical Department where he has donated himself for the furthering of education. In lieu of flowers the family asks that you go out and plant a flower, bush, or tree in memory of Jay C. Pratt in your yard to beautify your life and neighborhood and to spread his memory, or make a donation to Compassionate Care Hospice (www.cchnet.net) or a Hospice of your choice. The Family would like to thank John Ashcraft and Ashcraft Funeral Home for their compassion and professional assistance.

A gathering of Celebration will be held at Pratt Gardens on Saturday, November 12, 2011 between 12:00 and 4:00. All are welcome to come, share a story, plant a flower and to remember his exceptional life. Everyone is still welcome to visit Pratt Gardens anytime and keep his memory alive. Please come and enjoy his legacy. www.ashcraftfuneralhomes.com

Tribute Wall

BJ

“ *We have the fondest memories of our time with Jay and your family (Peter). We are looking foward to seeing you on Saturday.* ”

Barbara and Julien - November 10, 2011 at 10:58 PM