



Bernard Maurice Kauffman

OCT 12, 1923 - MAY 23, 2011



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Kauffman, Bernard Maurice "Bernie", was born Oct. 12, 1923 and died May 23, 2011. He was 87 and passed away after a long courageous fight with cancer. In death, he was as brave and fearless as he had been during his service in the United States Marines Corp during WWII. Bernie was born in Philadelphia and in 1932 moved to St. Petersburg, the town he dearly loved for nearly 80 years. He graduated from St. Petersburg High School with the class of 1941. He studied Pre-Med at St. Petersburg Junior College. However this was interrupted by WWII as Bernie soon joined the US Navy as a Pharmacist Mate (known today as a Hospital Corpsman). Bernie believed his country couldn't win the war without him. He was soon assigned to the 4th Marine Division, where he was further assigned to Marine Infantry units engaged in some of the most violent combat of the Second World War. The 4th Marine Division was famous among the six Marine divisions for its exploits during its four principal assault landings against Japanese forces in the Pacific, including Tinian, the Marshall Islands and Saipan, and culminating with the epic Battle of Iwo Jima. Throughout, Bernie fought alongside and cared for his precious Marines, adding each day to the legacy of the Navy Hospital Corpsman in combat. Indeed, on the occasions where Navy Corpsman have fought alongside Marines, their numbers of wounded and killed in action have earned them one of the highest per capita casualty rates of any specialty in the history of the US Armed Forces. In this, Bernie was no different. After surviving three landings unscathed, Bernie would be wounded on Iwo Jima. Typical of Bernie, he would treat his own wound and refuse other medical care in order to remain with his Marines in the desperate fighting on Iwo Jima. He would receive the Purple Heart Medal for his wound. At his passing, Bernie was one of the last surviving members of the Marine Division from World War II, who made all four assault landings. Bernie was the quintessential member of Greatest Generation. Struggling through the Great Depression, he would volunteer to



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serve in one of the most elite units to see combat duty in World War II. He would emerge from these twin experiences to be a successful businessman, and a devoted husband and father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. Bernie was very humble about his own role in these great events, but others, and his record, attested to his personal courage, his towering and unwavering spiritual strength and his selfless devotion to duty, the United States Marine Corp and his Country. Bernie epitomized the expression: "Once a Marine, always a Marine". It didn't take much for customers, friends or strangers to find themselves involved in an interesting conversation with Bernie about his Marine Corp experiences and the men he fought and died with. These Marines remained brothers until the very end. Until the very end, he had weekly conversations with Denis Marcoux, a fellow Marine he fought with, side by side, in the Pacific. After the war, Bernie returned St. Petersburg, married and had two children, Barb and Bruce. He joined his father at Kauffman's Jewelers and continued to own and operate the jewelry store with his daughter Barb Morlack until his passing. In the last two years, Bernie was recognized twice at luncheons held in his honor by Marine Lt. General John Allen, deputy commander of CENTCOM. General Allen and his wife Kathy consider Bernie a "national treasure". Bernie was also given a Distinguished Visitor's tour of USSOCOM (Special Operation) by Marine Major General Mark Clark. Just recently, Bernie was included in a Distinguished Visitors Tour of CENTCOM and recognized by CENTCOM, Chief of Staff, Major General Michael Jones. Among other honors, he received a letter of recognition and appreciation from then Marine Corp Commandant, General James Conway. Bernie was well known for his many long friendships. For over 60 years, Bernie could be seen having lunch most days with his close friends, Jerry Gilbert and Arnold Argintar. Bernie was loved by his many loyal patrons and respected by his peers and competitors. Most customers became friends and would often come to his place of business to visit with their special friend, who was known for his "this is a cute one" jokes. Bernie would quite often say "No charge, this time" for small jobs. In turn, his customers would pay him with chocolate treats, which he dearly loved. If you knew Bernie, you knew why he was known as an honest and fair man to all and loved by so many. Bernie was indeed a world traveler. He and his wife, Bernice, traveled much of



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the world, including the UK, most of Scandinavia, Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, Far East, Alaska, the Panama Canal and a great deal of the United States- the country he loved and risked his life for. Bernie loved his great-grandchildren and cherished the times in spent with his 3 great-grandsons, Cruz, River, and Kevlar. Bernie loved sports, especially college football. He also had a passion for baseball, partly because his father was instrumental in bringing professional baseball to St. Petersburg in the 40's. Bernie Kauffman: a man of small physical stature, but an enormous heart; a small ego, but a huge capacity to love. Bernie Kauffman: Patriot - honest - Loving - friend - Family man - humorous - Always a Marine. Bernie was predeceased by his father, Louis, mother, Fannie and sister, Sylvia. Bernie is survived by wife of 34 years, Bernice (Stross); daughter, Barb Morlack; sons, Bruce Kauffman and John Stross, son-in-law Jeff Morlack, grandchildren, Jenna Cibran, Jason Stross; granddaughter-in-law, Christy Berks Stross; grandson-in-law, Michael Cibran; great-grandchildren, Cruz and River Cibran and Kevlar Stross. Service will be held at Temple Beth El on Friday, May 27th at 1pm, 400 Pasadena Ave. S., and interment will follow at Memorial Park Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to either Suncoast Hospice, CASA(Community Action Stops Abuse), or any charity of your choice. The family wants to acknowledge the wonderful, caring and compassionate work of the Suncoast Hospice and especially the Hospice "purple team" and also the wonderful, compassionate, loving care of Dr. Rafael Rocha, his family and staff.



Tribute Wall

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PM

Patty Hiepe Moreau posted:

To Barb and family, The Hiepe and Moreau families have lost a dear, dear friend. It was always a pleasure for us to visit Mr. Kauffman at his shop. He always took the time to help us and share his jokes! I am sure he is in heaven with my Dad, Ed, sharing the latest jokes and news. His service was a wonderful tribute to his life. Thinking of you with love, Randy, Ron, Carolyn, and Patty.

May 30 at 8:50 AM

PS

Paul Stellrecht posted:

Dear Barb & family, Please accept my deepest sympathies for your loss. The obituary you created painted an incredible picture of an incredible man. I will miss stopping by to get watch battery and hearing some of his cute stories. He was truly one of a kind and will be missed. Semper Fi.

May 27 at 9:41 AM

MK

Mike And Darla Kiernan posted:

Barb and Bernice-Please accept our condolences on Bernie's passing. He was a treasured person in our lives and he won't ever be forgotten. The world is a much lesser place without him and he will be missed-greatly.

May 27 at 5:13 AM

EM

Eileen Murphy posted:

My Prayers are with you and your Family

May 27 at 4:09 AM

EH

Eric & Vicky Howe posted:

Our deepest condolences to the Kauffman family. I met Mr. Kauffman with my grandfather who used to visit his store downtown St. Pete every Saturday almost 40 years ago. Over my life time I would visit his shop for my jewelry needs and no matter how small my purchase was he always took the time to help me. He was really a remarkable man and truly was one of a kind. He will be missed but I'm sure he's going to be very busy catching up with his friends and family in heaven. I'm going to guess my grandmother will be one of the first ones to thank him for coming to see her for so many years every week will she was in a nursing home. God bless and it was a real pleasure to have gotten to know this great man.

May 27 at 4:06 AM



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BB

Brian Bibbee posted:

I am so sorry for the loss of such a great man. I have so many memories of him from my childhood. Whether driving us kids to a ballgame or taking us out for a piece of pie at his favorite spot, he was always ready with his great sense of humor and quick wit. Above all Mr. Kauffman was always interested in what was going on in your life. So long Mr. Kauffman and Blessings to you and your family.

May 27 at 3:01 AM

BM

Barb Morlack posted:

Dad-I love you & miss you more than words can say. Know that our lives will never be the same without you. We can be at peace knowing you no longer are suffering.

May 26 at 4:41 PM

KM

Kathy Hiepe Martin posted:

Barb, Bruce, and Families, You sure hit the nail on the head with that beautiful obituary. He has left a mark on this earth that will be hard to match. I will remember all his kindness to our family and his gentil way with Robin when I came into the store when she was little. I am sure Ed is happy to have this true friend up there with him. Love to you all.

May 26 at 12:43 PM

MM

Marianne Mahaffey posted:

Mark and I send our condolences. What a beautiful tribute to him. He always had a smile on his face. I was glad I know him. Marianne and Mark Mahaffey

May 26 at 8:25 AM

GJ

Gerry Jones posted:

Dear Barb and Family, You have said it all in the paper. your Dad was one of a kind. And will be so missed. His little jokes, his kindness, especially to my grandsons that loved to come to the store. I really do not know what to say, except I and my entire family send you Love and our deepest sympathy in the lost of your Dad. ONE GREAT MAN who will be so missed.

May 26 at 8:19 AM



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Jason Stross posted:

Gramps, you will be missed greatly. You were the sweetest and caring man i have ever known. We love you.

May 26 at 7:25 AM



Jim Thompson posted:

Barb,my condolences to your family,quite a guy for sure,you must have oodles of wonderful memories to cherish!Know,well,John Stross,he of Leverock fame,let him know of my thoughts please!

May 26 at 4:53 AM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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