



## William Donald Nelson

February 13, 1929 - March 3, 2019

William Donald Nelson age 90 of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, is in the care of Martin Oak Ridge Funeral Home. Don passed away Sunday March 03, 2019. He served in the Army for over 3 years and was an Electrical Engineer/manager with General Electric in Syracuse New York for 33 years and then moved to Oak Ridge, Tennessee in 1980 to continue a career at Y-12. Don enjoyed golfing, and was a pilot, a marathon runner and a world traveler. Don is survived by his loving wife: Joy of 67 years, sons: Ken (Vickie), Tom (Suzie), Steven (Bev), daughter: Linda Lieberman (Ken), sister: Jenny Neff, 7 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren, several nieces, nephews and numerous friends. Don was preceded in death by his parents: William and Emelda Nelson, brothers: Lucien and Harry, sisters: Christina White, Jean Grueb and Lenora Festa. A memorial service will be held 1:00 pm March 09, 2019 at Grace Lutheran Church. Expressions of love in lieu of flowers may be made as donations to Grace Lutheran Church 131 Gettysburg Ave. Oak Ridge, TN 37830. Online messages may be left for the family at [www.martinfuneralhomeoakridge.com](http://www.martinfuneralhomeoakridge.com). Services and Cremation arrangements entrusted to Martin Oak Ridge Funeral Home 865-483-4341

# Comments

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“ Joy, Sandy came across this sad news. I am sorry to hear of Don's passing. I often think of our bridge get togethers and the good times we had. Vivian Strider

Vivian Strider - March 22 at 06:42 PM

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“ Dear Joy, and Nelson family,  
John and I have many fond memories of Don, always with a smile on his face. John remembers being Don's "son" at a Design Center golf tournament. We still have the nice sheets y'all gave us for our wedding 32 years ago. Don was such a nice guy, and we will miss running into him and Joy at Books-a-Million. Our love and condolences to Joy and Don's extensive family.  
John Galambos and Sylvia Milanez

Sylvia Milanez - March 19 at 11:05 PM

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“ Charlie Festa Part 1

I hope this message finds you well under the circumstances. My name is Charlie Festa, and I wanted to write to you to express my condolences. I'd also like to share with you my feelings about who I called Uncle Donald. I'd like to share with you why he was important in my life. It's crazy to think that there are people in this world that you don't really know, but have been impacted so deeply by someone you call dad, grandpa, uncle.

The first time I met Donald I was around 6 years of age. He was visiting his Sister or my Grandma Lenora Festa who lived about 5 houses down the street from my family in Crown Point, Indiana. I remember the excitement that my grandma had as she was seeing her brother that summer, I remember her telling me that I must come down and meet him. She spoke so highly of him and after meeting him I knew why.

I remember the summer day when Uncle Donald and Aunt Joy pulled up into my grandma's driveway with the coolest Airstream trailer I had ever seen. Donald spoke about their journey across the fifty states they were taking. I was so struck by who these people were. I had never met someone like Donald. They showed me the trailer and told me their stories and I..Still to this day think about that first interaction. They were staying with my Grandma for the week. The next morning I walked down to my grandmas to see them again. Donald was out for a run so I waited for him to get back. When he returned we went for a walk. At this point in the summer, our neighborhood streets were being repaved with fresh asphalt. We stood there and watched the construction workers as they milled the old road and started laying asphalt. Donald asked me if I have ever been on a steamroller. Which I replied, No. He waved the worker down driving the steamroller and asked if I could jump on for a

ride. Next thing I know Donald has picked me up and put me in the seat and off we went. Here I am a 6-year-old on a piece of active construction equipment and loving every second of it while Donald stood on the sidewalk watching my excitement. That was truly a great day and I will always remember it.

We continued our walk and every morning after I'd be at my Grandmas waiting to hang out with Donald. One of the days of their stay, my grandma invited over the entire Festa family to her house to celebrate Donald and Joy being in town. I had no idea that he was going to show us a slideshow of their travels. Once again I was blown away at these humans. How did I not know about them? How do I lead a life such as Donalds? Everything he has done I want to do. Those were the questions I was asking myself.

See "Charlie Festa part 2

Steven Nelson - March 07 at 08:16 PM

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## “ Charlie Festa Part 2

When they left I remember being sad and wondering if I'd ever see them again. Good news, Donald and Joy visited my Grandma again a few years later and once again they did not disappoint. This time I learned more about Donald and Joy, I learned about their family and his work and stories about growing up. He also shared more beautiful photos from a trip to the Arctic. Once again I was in complete wonderment of this human being.

A few years later my Mom (Collette), Dad (William aka Michael) and Grandma Lenora took a road trip to Oak Ridge to stay with Donald and Joy for a few days. It was awesome. I saw everything in Oak Ridge and learned more about the person.

As I sit here and type this out I realize something. How much he meant to me. Someone that you know little about. My name is Charlie Festa, I am 37 years of age. I was the grandson of Lenora and Joseph Anthony Festa, Son to Collette and William Michael Festa and Brother to John Festa. I grew up in Crown Point, Indiana where his sister Lenora rests in peace. I live in Chicago, IL married to Lauren and have a new son Florentino Festa.

I have now traveled to several continents and many countries. The first time I left the US I went to Berlin and I thought about Donald. Actually, I remembered a story about him or maybe Joy being in the hospital in Germany.

Donald was someone that I aspired to be. I had met someone that was like no other person I had ever met. I think of him often and tell stories about how he traveled everywhere and took amazing photographs. Long story short. Donald meant a lot to me.

My condolences to all of you and I hope this brings a smile to your face knowing that

your grandpa, father, uncle, impacted someone's life that you don't really know.

Love,  
Charlie Festa

**Steven Nelson** - March 07 at 08:12 PM

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“ My uncle Donald taught me to tell time, multiply by 9's, and many many knock knock jokes. He will be missed by many, my condolences to aunt Joy and family. Joe & Carole Festa

**Joseph Festa** - March 06 at 05:46 PM

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Jennifer Festa** - March 06 at 08:07 AM

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“ One of my earliest childhood memories is Uncle Donald, Aunt Joy and my cousins visiting us in Gary, Indiana. Mother was always happy to see her brother and I can recall a lot of laughter in the house when Don was visiting. My condolences to Aunt Joy, Ken, Tom, Steven, and Linda and to Donald's extended family and many friends. May the love of family and friends surround you during this difficult time.

**Jennifer Festa** - March 05 at 03:52 PM