



Gordon ""Sonny"" Bowman

May 30, 2016

Gordon Derwood ""Sonny"" Bowman II, 81, died peacefully at his home in Mt. Jackson, VA on Saturday, May 28th, surrounded by family and friends. A successful businessman, philanthropist and one of the Shenandoah Valley's most notable citizens, Mr. Bowman was born on July 27th, 1934 in Mt. Jackson, the only son of Gordon D. Bowman and Martha Elton Cadwallader Bowman. Raised in an apple growing family, he became President of Bowman Apple Products in December 1975, and served in that capacity until August 2009 when he became Chairman of the Board and ultimately retired in December 2011. Mr. Bowman was a proud and loyal graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Throughout his life, he was active in fundraising efforts for his alma mater, receiving the distinguished service citation from the school's Agriculture Alumni Association. During his college years, he played football for the Hokies, and was a member of Phi Beta Phi, the Phi Sigma Biological Society, the Horticulture Club, UT Prosim, the VT Athletic Association, the VT German Club, and the Corp of Cadets. Upon graduation from Virginia Tech with a degree in Horticulture in 1956, he went into active service in the US Army from 1956-58 and served in the Reserves until 1964. Following an overseas deployment to France, he attended the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and graduated with an MBA in 1961, before joining his parents in operating the family business. A lifelong orchardist, fruit processor and stalwart champion of the Virginia apple industry, Mr. Bowman served as a founding member of the Apple Processors

Association, past Board member of the Processed Apple Institute and a member of the Virginia State Horticulture Society, Virginia Apple Growers Association, and the Dwarf Fruit Tree Association. He also served under President George W. Bush in 2006 as a member of the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Advisory Committee. Mr. Bowman was a past Chairman of the Board at Massanutten Military Academy, interim President and member of the Board of Trustees, most recently serving as Trustee Emeritus. He also served as a Director for the Shenandoah County Library Foundation and was a past member of the Shenandoah County School Board. As a native of Shenandoah County, he focused his philanthropic efforts locally. He was a benefactor to numerous local organizations, including the Shenandoah County Free Clinic, Shenandoah Memorial Hospital, the Boy Scouts, the 4-H and the Bowman-Shannon Cultural Arts Center. His firm conviction that quality higher education is critical to the future of young people residing in rural Virginia compelled him to create the Bowman Educational Scholarship Treasure (BEST), and to support the Virginia Tech Riva study abroad program in Switzerland. Mr. Bowman is survived by his daughter, Lauren and her husband James G. Williams IV of Mt. Jackson, VA; son, Gordon D. "Todd" Bowman III and wife Charlotte, of Fort Mill SC; four treasured grandchildren, Tristan and Baylen Williams of Mt. Jackson, VA and Grayson and Genevieve Bowman of Fort Mill, SC; sister Peggy B. Zirkle of College Park, MD; and niece Pamela D. Zirkle of Annapolis, MD. He is predeceased by both parents and his sister, Patricia A. Jordan of Alamogordo, NM. The family will receive friends from 5:00 to 9:00pm on Friday, June 3rd at the Dellinger Funeral Home in Mt. Jackson, VA. A memorial service will be held at Dellinger at 2:00pm on Saturday, June 4th, followed by a private graveside service at the Mt. Jackson Cemetery. A celebration of Mr. Bowman's life will commence immediately following the service at The Yellow Barn in Shenandoah Caverns, VA. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Blue Ridge Hospice, 333 West Cork St. #405, Winchester, VA 22601; the Shenandoah County Animal Shelter, 268 Landfill Rd., Edinburg, VA 22824; or the Mt. Jackson Fire and

Rescue Squad, 6044 Main Street, Mt. Jackson, VA 22842.

Tribute Wall

CR

“ I was Executive Director of the German Club Alumni Foundation from 1978-84, and Sonny was one of the founding Directors I served and served with. It was an incredible experience as a young graduate of VT and member of the German Club to be exposed to Sonny and so many such admirable and stellar men - leaders, successful in business and in life, philanthropic in their communities and to our alma mater, and whom one would want to emulate. I was blessed and honored through the many opportunities we had to spend time together. My heartfelt best wishes to his family and the many friends who have been touched by his life well lived.

Crenshaw Reed - June 08, 2016 at 12:00 AM

KT

“ Sonny was a good man and dear friend and I am sorry for the family's loss. You all will be in my prayers.

Katrina Toombs - June 05, 2016 at 12:00 AM

TD

“ My heartfelt condolences to Sonny's family on his passing. I was at VPI class of 1957 and remember Sonny as a fellow team member of the VPI football team, undefeated in 1954, and as a member of the German Club. Having been from Youngstown Ohio and traveling North on US 11 and then I 81 I remember seeing the Bowman Apple signs and would always remember Sonny and his red cheeks. God Bless he and his family. An Irish Blessing at a Friends Death May the blessings of light be upon you, Light without and light within. And in all your comings and goings, May you ever have a kindly greeting From them you meet on the road. Semper Fidelis, Thomas Dalzell, Colonel USMC (Ret)

Thomas Dalzell - June 05, 2016 at 12:00 AM

GJ

“ I am class of 1954 at V.P.I. (Virginia Tech), and was president of the German Club in my senior year. Sonny was a couple of classes later and was "taken in" as soon as he was eligible. The German club was and is a leadership, fraternal and service organization and attracted top students. Sonny soon made his mark in the German Club and as a leader on the campus. He carried his leadership qualities forward after graduation and has made his mark as a businessman, citizen, educator alumni, and citizen. I am proud to have been a friend, and want his family to know that this is a man who made a difference to many in his lifetime. God bless Sonny.

Gene Justice - June 02, 2016 at 12:00 AM

LT

“ Mr. Bowman was a dear friend and wonderful boss to my father, Nat Blewitt. My dad respected him greatly. I so appreciated when Mr. Bowman came to visit my family when my dad passed away. I am so sorry for your great loss. Please know what a blessing he was to my dad. Sincerely, Lisa Tusing

Lisa Blewitt Tusing - May 31, 2016 at 12:00 AM

BM

“ Have known Sonny for many years , serving with him on the Board of Trustee's of Massanutten Military Academy . His loyalty to the Academy , words cannot express how much his devotion was appreciated . He was an Icon , a true business man , which I very much appreciated his counsel . I shall miss him . My deepest sympathy to the family , Bob Miller

Bob Miller - May 30, 2016 at 12:00 AM