



Clayton Ogden Pruitt, Jr.

February 7, 1940 - October 19, 2023

Clayton “Clay” Ogden Pruitt, Jr passed away in Lake Forest from complications of COVID pneumonia on October 19, 2023. Over the past 23 years, Clay split his time between homes in Lake Forest, Illinois and Oro Valley, Arizona with his “best buddy” and wife, Lynn at his side. He was 83.

Clay was born in Plainfield, New Jersey, and raised in Maywood, NJ (Bergen County), not far from New York City, where he would go to watch his favorite baseball team, the Brooklyn Dodgers, at Ebbets Field. He never recovered from the Dodgers’ move to Los Angeles. Living near NYC, only a short train ride away, resulted in him embracing cities and the energy and culture that they offered, especially the theaters and sports teams. Clay always loved the hustle and bustle of a big city and dreamed of working on Wall Street.

Clay was a mature young man, enjoying an especially busy social life with many friends, and counted down the days until he could attend high school at Northfield Mount Hermon (NMH), an all-boys boarding school in western Massachusetts, where his older brother John attended. These were four of the most impactful years of his life, where he was actively involved in campus activities academically, athletically, and socially. He made lifelong friends and discovered his natural leadership skills, as president of the senior class and commencement speaker. Clay then took the advice of the NMH headmaster to attend Duke University, where he was a devoted member of the fraternity

Sigma Alpha Epsilon and met his first wife, Holly (Hicks), during his sophomore year. He served as both president of his fraternity and student body president his senior year. Clay cherished his years each at Duke, where he graduated in 1962, and NMH and spoke fondly of them often.

Clay and Holly married in 1962 in Indianapolis, and Clay accepted a coveted job at US Steel in Pittsburgh after college graduation. Three sons soon followed, Clayton III (1963), Jack (1965) and Tom (1969), while he transitioned into an investment management career in Indianapolis, working for Shearson Hammill & Co., before moving to Indiana National Bank, where he became responsible for managing the personal trust department, while earning his Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation.

Clay was especially proud of having an award named for him during his years as a Trust Officer at Indiana National Bank in Indianapolis in the mid-1980's. The "Pruitt Clumsy Hands Award" was created to honor the colleague that most exemplified Clay's propensity for accidents in his office. Nothing pleased him more than being teased and hearing others laugh. The Pruitt Award was retired in 1987 after only four years, with Clay being the only winner. This love of teasing was a constant theme in all parts of his life.

While raising his three sons, Clay was actively involved in their activities, including their Boy Scouts of America troop and, together with his wife Holly, were leaders of a high school youth ministry program. Also in Indianapolis, Clay thrived as everyone's favorite youth baseball, basketball, and football coach on fields and courts all over the city. Those were amazing years for the entire family, where winning was never the most important thing, and making lifelong friends and being a good teammate were what mattered. From his sons' perspective, one of his proudest coaching moments was when an Indianapolis television station ran a story on the local news, chronicling his unique, positive coaching qualities. As was always the case with his many

accomplishments, you never heard him talk about this. Clay and Holly thrived as a couple and proud parents in Indianapolis, teaching their boys about loyalty and love of family.

In 1988, seeking new and larger career challenges, he accepted a senior leadership position at Harris Trust and Savings Bank, moving with Holly to Wheaton, Illinois. His wife of 38 years died in early 2000 of complications from Multiple Sclerosis, from which she had bravely battled for 20 years. Clay's patience and thoughtfulness in caring for Holly during all these years was a source of great pride for his sons.

After Holly passed away, Clay was blessed to meet a new soulmate and best friend, Lynn, with whom he would spend the rest of his life. In 2000, Clay married Lynn, enjoying 23 wonderful years with her as his "best buddy" and constant partner. Clay and Lynn lived an active lifestyle, splitting time between Lake Forest, IL, and Tucson, AZ, with Clay's light-hearted teasing and laughter echoing through beautiful homes in both locations. They were inseparable, spending countless hours together in their magnificent gardens, biking and hiking the challenging trails of the Catalina Mountain range in Tucson, with Clay reading books to Lynn every evening. Clay was an active hiker and tennis player in his retirement. A devoted grandfather, he took immense pride and interest in his grandchildren's academic and extracurricular pursuits, enthusiastically attending countless sporting events, theater programs, and dance and piano recitals.

Clay officially retired from Harris in 2002 to help start an investment management department at a private trust company based in Chicago. He would spend over 50 years providing investment advice and counsel to individual clients and multigenerational families. Not only was he dedicated to meeting the needs of his clients, but he was selfless throughout his career in

mentoring dozens of younger investment professionals. He loved advising this younger generation and took pride in fostering these relationships – many of which continued well past his retirement.

Clay will be remembered for his infectious smile and hearty laugh that could fill a room. He had an incredible sense of humor and often made fun of himself to help others feel comfortable in his company—a true gentleman. He will be missed.

Clay was preceded in death by his parents, Clayton O Pruitt, Sr. and Margaret Hayes Pruitt, stepmother Helen Ryder Pruitt, son Clayton Ogden III and first wife Darlington Rowe “Holly” Hicks Pruitt. He is survived by wife Lynn and their children, Jack and Lara Pruitt, Tom and Katie Pruitt, Ryan and Laurie Keck, and grandchildren Holly Lynn, Kenneth Clayton, Molly Darlington, Jane Catherine and Dorothy “Dorie” Margaret, and siblings John (Jack) Cooley, James (Sheila) Pruitt and Margaret “Peggy” Bryant.

A memorial service will be held at First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest at 700 N. Sheridan Road, Lake Forest on November 7, 2023 at 1:00 pm with reception to follow. The service will also be live-streamed at <https://firstchurchl.f.online.church>. There will also be a service in Oro Valley in January/February at a time and place to be determined.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in memory of Clayton Pruitt to the NMH Fund, to support scholarships at Northfield Mount Hermon, through the secure online server <https://together.nmhschool.org/register/supportNMH> [nmhschool.org/nmhfund](https://together.nmhschool.org/nmhfund), by phone at 866-NMH-GIVE (664-4483), or mail to: Office of Advancement, NMH, 1 Lamplighter Way, Mount Hermon, MA 01354.

For more information contact: Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake

Forest at (847) 234-9649 or www.RTfunerals.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

NOV 7. 1:00 PM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest
700 North Sheridan Road
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Tribute Wall



“ *Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Home created a Memorial Service Live Stream in memory of Clayton Ogden Pruitt, Jr.*



Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake Forest - October 27, 2023 at 02:56 PM

PK

“ *President Ronald Reagan`s biography was titled WHEN CHARACTER MATTERED. With Clay Character was not about when, it was ever present as if it was part of his DNA. It guided his relationships with family and friends as well with his business colleagues and clients. We have lost a truly great person!*

Roger & Peggy Kumler Noblesville, Indiana

P Roger Kumler - October 30, 2023 at 11:23 AM

MK

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Marge & Keith - October 26, 2023 at 01:29 PM