

Henry Kenneth Bowers

Biography

Ken, as he preferred to be known was born on March 11, 1922 in Baltimore, Maryland. His family lived on Baltimore Street, west of Charles. He remembered as a child the parades on holidays passing in front of his home. His family ran the Charles E. Bowers Moving & Storage Company in the city. The business was started by his grandfather after the Civil War. His great grandfather had been a teamster in Baltimore after migrating from Hessa Germany. The family still occasionally used a draft animal to pull a mired truck from the mud even when Ken worked in the family business as a teenager in the 1930s'.



In the early 1930's the family moved to Cooks lane in Franklinton. They moved into a large Victorian home with a three quarter wrap around porch with bench swings. One of his household chores became the early morning cleaning of the cinders from the many fireplaces used to heat the home. The home was demolished in the 1950s to make way for the Social Security Administration and an I70 interchange.

He attended Polytechnic High School and his class graduated one month early in April 1942 to accommodate selective service. Poly was then located on North Avenue, and after a pep-rally the students walk over the Howard street bridge. He and other boys walked up and over the steel arches above the road deck.

He chose to volunteer for the Navy, and served as a ship's electrician (EM c/2). He trained in amphibious warfare and was assigned to a LCT (Landing Craft Tank), a small boat designed to carry six tanks and support crew to the beach while under fire.

He landed with the 6th wave at Utah beach on D-Day, June 6th, 1944. The ship was hit by a shell that day, which embedded a piece of shrapnel in his spine. He continued to fight: landing tanks and material, and evacuating the wounded until forty-five days later, when a hospital in London could examine his back. He was training for the invasion of the main Japanese islands when the bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima relieved him of the duty. He continued to serve in the Naval Reserve and was called back to active duty during the Korean War. Much later he served as an officer in the Maryland State Defense Force, and as a member of the Board of Selective Services.

After the Second World War, he returned to Baltimore and lived at the central YMCA across from the Basilica. He attended Baltimore Commerce College while working, and later completed his BS degree in accounting from Loyola College. Ken earned a

certification as a property manager (CPM), and worked as real estate appraiser. He worked for several banks including Maryland National Bank and the Bank of Baltimore. He also worked for the State Roads managing extra land until it could be disposed.

Ken was a life-long member of the United Methodist Church, and during the 1950's started attending the *Sunday Evening Club*. This group of young adults socialized at Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church. Here he met his future wife, Annarose Sleeth, an attorney in real property law who hailed from University Park, Maryland.

They married in 1957 and a few years later moved into Stoneleigh in Baltimore County. There they raised three sons: Doran Henry, Clarke Daniel and Keith Wallace. They also spent one and a half years raising an at-risk youth from Baltimore City in their home.

During his stay at the YMCA, he developed a life-long interest in assisting boys develop into young men. He served for at least six years on the YMCA committee of youth and as a Y-Indian guide tribe leader. He took the young boys to Black Rock Campground many times and showed them how to dig garnets, a semiprecious stone from the rocks. He also ran Sunday school at Mount Vernon Place UMC, and led retreats to Manidokan camp.

Later, he and his sons joined Boy Scout Troop 35 at the Church of the Redeemer on Charles Street, and he served on the board as quartermaster. He became famous for labeling each piece of troop equipment, many such emblazoned items today reside in the basement of the church. Later he became an Assistant Scout Master, Institutional Representative and a District Commissioner of the Parkway district of northern Baltimore. He earned Wood Badge, the highest form of adult leader training. Two of his sons earned the rank of Eagle Scout.

In the 1950's he joined the Mason's Washington Lodge #3. He later served as a leader of the DeMoley, the youth branch of Masonry. Ken was an active member of the Scottish Rite and Boumi Temple for fifty years.

When he retired, he combined his life-long interests in American history and family into genealogy. He traveled in a small trailer with Annarose around the eastern United States researching their families. They brought their grandchildren to many extended family reunions in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Based on his research, he joined several hereditary organizations. These included the Society of the War of 1812 in the State of Maryland, the Sons of the American Revolution, and The Descendents of Veterans of the Mexican War.

Ken died on August 26, 2007 at 6:20am.