

Memories of Jackie Holt

(Memories relived by his friends)

When I lived in Wheeling, WV, Jack and Judy were living in the Pittsburgh, Pa area. Jack would make it a point to come my way on business and he would stop and take me to lunch. He liked to go to Coleman's Fish for their famous sandwich. Every time we'd always laugh about some of the stupid stuff we did growing up. Fortunately, we never got caught. Jack would say that we never got caught, because we used the "BAL" formula. (Blind-Ass-Luck) As usual, he was correct. We weren't doing illegal stuff (ish), but it was stuff we shouldn't have been doing. What stuff did we do?? shhhhhhhhhh I'll never tell. He didn't have to go out of his way to visit me, but yet there he was. He was a really good man. I love him and miss him.

He was one of a kind. I spent more time (meaningful) with him than any friend I've ever had. When I lived in Wheeling, and he was in Pittsburgh, he'd make it a point to come down and take me out to lunch when he was anywhere near, on business. We pulled some shenanigans in our time. Clean fun but onery. The boy could light up a room just by walking into it. We went to visit Tommy Miller in his last days to cheer him up. Instead, he cheered us up. We drove away with smiles on our faces. As I say, Jackie was the top of the pyramid.

Here's a flashback for you. We were seniors, (wait, we're still seniors) and it was just before the return to school lunch bell. We were standing on the 4th avenue side of the building. Jackie had just been to Myrtle Beach and came back with some cherry bombs. He was messing around with a cherry bomb in his right hand and teasing with a lighter in the other hand. The bell rang and the crowd started into the school. Jackie got bumped, looked down and said "oh shit!". He had accidentally lit the cherry bomb. It was burning halfway down the fuse. He threw it straight up into the air and it exploded right in front of the third-floor window. Lois Hutchison was standing there watching the students. We entered the building and walked up the steps. We heard "Jackie Holt, I need to speak to you!" Yes ma'am. "Jackie, did you see who threw that firecracker?" No ma'am. "Well, if you do, please let me know who it was." Yes ma'am. That's our boy. ;o)

Jackie was always a reliable friend who had a smile for all of us. It seems he got along with everyone in what could be a very "click-y" high school atmosphere. When we moved back to the US in 2014, Jackie called me on my birthday (Jan 3) every year, until he didn't one year. We shared January birthdays, (his was the 6th) along with Donna Pivont on the 10th and Lin Ford on the 28th. We always talked for about an hour just catching up with family stuff and old memories. I really appreciated those calls and anyone who has a birthday around Christmas will understand why. Jack displayed all the West Virginia values I grew up with and admired in others. (Though it took me longer than some to be that kind of person.) Jackie's measure of integrity cannot be taken for granted anymore; I'm afraid its importance has diminished significantly amongst us humans. Nevertheless, I'm glad we have these memories to hold up as examples of what kind of individual we strive to be and want our children and grandchildren to be. I loved Jack too and miss his optimism and goodness.

When I was first married, Jackie made me a toothpick Christmas tree for decoration! It was prob 18 inches or more tall, and they were made from a bazillion little Styrofoam balls with a bazillion toothpicks partially stuck in each one. And they were stacked to make a tree shape. Then it was heavily sprayed with a flocking spray to mimic snow. Then, tiny Christmas bulbs were hung all over. Can you imagine how long that took him? 😬

So back in the HS days there were some young lads that were getting just a little wild. Some of those lads decided it was a good idea to have a 🍺 couple of beers, and from that came the decision to “borrow” some of the football team jerseys. Bad idea, especially when a little brother of one of the culprits wore one of the jerseys to school. Needless to say the gig was up and there could have been some dire results but ever the negotiator, even as a HS student, not even a senior, Jackie saved the culprits by making a deal with school authorities, including the coach, “I can get all of the jerseys back but only if it is agreed that no investigation will occur and no names revealed (although the identities of the culprits wasn’t a big secret). They agreed, Jackie gathered the jerseys from various individuals and returned them the next day. Some of these “culprits” even ended up as fairly good players on the team and even wore some of the jerseys that had been temporarily “borrowed”. Ever the negotiator, leader, and friend even at that age. Rest in peace my very good friend.

So many stories and a few after the HS days.

Several years ago, I ran in the Charleston Distance Run. 15 miles. My wife did the 3.2 mile walk. We got there shortly before the run and there was Jackie and Judy. He started running after I met him. In Hinton one year, his running was awful, and I had to wait on him, but he finished. Then he started running in many long distant runs. Disney etc. Anyway, I was in great shape, and we decided to run together. Well about Mile 12, I had to crap, and he waited on me. Then, he proceeded to leave me behind by several minutes even though he offered to wait on me. Basically, he beat me easily and I finally finished several minutes behind him. Funny story is that when the results were published, they had my time listed ahead of him. Don’t know how that happened, but was funny. Judy won the women’s 5k that day.

I’m not sure when it started, but Jackie and I became best buddies in high school. He sat behind me in class and often drew the most creative pencil art cartoons that he’d then give to me. Once, when I was a majorette getting ready at home for a game, I ran out of “leg makeup” that we used. One call to Jackie, and he was off to the Big 4 to buy it and deliver it to me all the way to Pipestem! He gave me many rides in that little bug of his, when I had no other way.

He was the driving factor in getting my husband a job, when we were in great need. He was always there to lend a hand when I needed him. He never failed to call me on my birthday. A few years ago, as he started to have issues, he was a couple days late..

(prompted by our mutual buddy). The next year, there was no call. Such a beautiful spirit taken by a cruel fate. ❤️ I can only imagine his wide-eyed wonder and ever-present smile as he is free at last...walking and running in the sunshine now & planning his next project. I and many, love you Jackie...cya soon my great friend...

Our relationship spanned Central and HHS – He grew up on Summers St. I grew up on 6th Ave. Played basketball in Central Playground, just happened to be there at the same time. Roamed the woods (Hobo Jungle) below Summers between 5th and 7th Ave. Played in the old sawdust Mountains at the Window Factory on Front Street. In those days he and Harry Keaton were always together almost joined at the hip. Always smiling and in a great mood – one of the most friendly, caring guys I've ever known.

He was a good guy and well liked and will be greatly missed! Hard to believe how many of us are passing. ❤️ 🙏

Only becoming acquainted with Jack, through Hinton Area Foundation, he left me with the impression he was a man with knowledge, and a trusting professional. Hinton Area Foundation lost a valued board member, and the family lost a beloved member of their family. God be with you during your time of sadness!

It was a while ago, 1959, back when free-range kids had fun and the gang in Jane Humpreys' fourth grade was a fun bunch. This was my second year at Central Elementary and by now I had two distinct groups of school friends. The Bellepoint Bums as we called ourselves and now also the Town Boys. The Town Boys included Jackie Holt, Harry Keaton, Eddie Garten, Jerry Cole, Roger Redden, Tom Harvey and other

Central fourth graders. That was the year that Jackie fell through the floor of the abandoned 3 story building across the street from his house. He and the other Town Boys must have been having fun doing forbidden exploring until that floor gave way. Jackie ended up with a broken back but was lucky to be alive and not paralyzed. When he finally was able to return to school, he was a great hit with all the kids because no one had ever seen anyone in a plaster body cast from hips to arm pits. The cast must have been miserable because he was allowed to keep a bottle of talcum powder and a long coat-hanger scratcher on his desk. The coat-hanger did a lot of poking of classmates and some maestro type directing when the teacher was not looking. But the best was when Jackie would pour in a big dose of talcum and then flap his arms like a big bird. He would disappear into the dust cloud and all the kids would go nuts. Even better than his poking all the girls in the butt with his trombone slide in junior high band class.

Those were great days, and he was a very good person and friend.

The following pictures were taken at Jack's Celebration of Life at the McCreery Building in Hinton on April 6, 2024. After the Celebration, the Hinton Area Foundation honored Jack for all of giving back to Summers County through the MAD group, by planting a flaming dogwood tree in his honor in front of the Memorial Building.





IN MEMORY OF

JACK ASHLEY HOLT

WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

1/6/49 – 11/2/23



