



Mr. Rufus Knox Pitts

February 26, 1946 - May 17, 2024

Knox Pitts III, of Nashville, formerly of Shelbyville, Tennessee, Bethesda, Maryland

and Boca Raton, Florida, died 05/17/2024 in Nashville in his sleep. He was born in

Shelbyville on February 26, 1946. the son of Rufus Knox Pitts Jr and Mildred Streeter

Steele Pitts of Shelbyville who predeceased him. He was predeceased by his lifetime

partner, Walter L. Higgins, who was born the same day and knew Knox his entire life.

Knox was a graduate of Shelbyville Central High, Vanderbilt BA History 1968, and

Columbia University Law School JD 1974. He was a member of the District of Columbia

Bar. Knox's father was active in many campaigns and was Chairman of the Bedford County

Democratic Party for 20 years. In Washington, Knox worked for the Democratic National

Committee as Associate Director for the 1973-74 Campaign Committee. Knox also served

in 1975 as Assistant to the Campaign Director, Scheduler and New York Coordinator for

the Carter Presidential Campaign. In 1976 he served as Political Director for Jim Sasser's winning campaign for the US Senate and worked in his Washington office in 1977. He was active in many other campaigns, especially Jim Cooper's successful run for Congress in 1982. Knox attended every Democratic National Convention from 1956 to 2016.

In 1978, Knox returned to Shelbyville to run the family business, Knox Pitts Hardware.

His father and mother had founded the business in 1946. Knox was joined by his brother,

John, and they ran the store until closing in 1998. Walter joined the store after graduating from college in 1972. Like his parents and Walter, Knox was active in many

civic affairs. He was Chairman of the Board of Bedford County Heritage Association, and

on the Boards of the Argie Cooper Library, The Highland Rim Regional Library and the

Shelbyville-Bedford County Chamber of Commerce.

Knox and Walter moved to Bethesda, Maryland in 2000 and sold designer plumbing

and decorative hardware and retired in 2009 moving to Boca Raton, Florida.

Knox is survived by his brother John Steele Pitts (and his partner Joy Hunter) of

Nashville. Nephews Jack Steele Pitts and wife Sydney Rhea Lilly Pitts of Oxford Mississippi

and Ted Spencer Pitts of Memphis Tennessee and Great nephews Quinten Steele Pitts

and Braxton Lynn Butler.

Graveside services will be 11 AM June 17, 2024, at Willow Mount Cemetery. A

reception will follow at the Coble Caperton Home, 404 N. Jefferson Street, Shelbyville (For all those without special needs parking, parking is available at the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches).

Knox would be honored with memorial gifts First Presbyterian Church, Shelbyville, Tennessee or to a political cause of which Knox would approve.

Previous Events

Graveside Service

JUN 17. 11:00 AM (CT)

Willow Mount Cemetery
321 Dover Street
Shelbyville, TN 37160

Tribute Wall

HP

“ I met Knox in NYC through a mutual friend who attended Vanderbilt with Knox. At the time we met, Knox was in law school at Columbia. I moved back to Texas and began working in campaigns for Democratic candidates and Knox met Jimmy Carter and began working for his presidential campaign. For more than 50 years Knox and I discussed politics and he was always more informed, more articulate, and more original thinking than the network TV political pundits and cable news personalities. Knox read 10 daily newspapers, and when they traveled, Knox would read the papers out loud as Walter drove.

Knox and Walter were great story tellers, always quotable and never boring. I will miss both of them as I watch every minute of the Chicago Democratic National Convention. I'll also make a batch of the Christmas party mix using Knox's mother's recipe and will remember the good times, the laughter and attending the Tennessee Walking Horse Show in Shelbyville. Harriet Peppel Austin, Texas.

Harriet Peppel - May 21, 2024 at 11:01 PM

KT

“ Kip and Delia Thompson purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Mr. Rufus Knox Pitts.



Kip and Delia Thompson - May 20, 2024 at 07:30 AM

KT

“ Kip and Delia Thompson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Rufus Knox Pitts.

Kip and Delia Thompson - May 20, 2024 at 07:30 AM

DS

“ Dru Smith lit a candle in memory of Mr. Rufus Knox Pitts



Dru Smith - May 18, 2024 at 12:51 AM

DS

We shared an office for a time while working for US Sen. Jim Sasser. He was a wonderful companion and friend always. Blessings to you brother John.

Dru Smith - May 18, 2024 at 01:03 AM

PD

Knox and Walter were close friends of my husband, John and myself. They were Dekes from Vandy and they partied almost every Sat night at the Deke house...we had a grand ole time! I lost contact with them until 1976 and lo and behold, the next time I came in contact with them was when they were working hard for my brother, Jim Sasser! The Sasser family thinks the world of Knox and Walter!! Great intelligent guys with hearts of gold. I just found out today about Walter through the obit for Knox. Knox, you showed us light where there was darkness, you and Walter gave us hope ...we would have never won that election without you two! We, the Sasser's thank you from the bottom of our ♥♥ Hearts. Phyllis Sasser Donnally Love to you, John! Knox loved you so much!

PHYLLIS SASSER DONNALLY - May 21, 2024 at 04:20 PM