



William Paul Cole Jr.

December 21, 1931 - June 28, 2020

William Paul Cole, Jr. completed his earthly journey on June 28, 2020 with the same quiet dignity that distinguished his life. A dignity underscored by his passion for living and experiencing all that life had to offer, with roots strongly embedded in the city he loved.

Paul was born in New York City, NY on December 21, 1931, to William Paul Cole, Sr. and Harriet Foote Cole.

However, Bluefield was home, where he grew up, often working alongside his grandfather W. J. Cole at the West Virginian Hotel, forming his passions and many interests until he graduated from Beaver High School in 1949 and left to attend Davidson College. He returned home to marry Carol Ann McHugh on July 31, 1954. He served two years active duty with the U. S Army, continuing in the Reserves to earn the rank of captain. He then completed his education, earning an MBA from the Harvard School of Business in Boston, MA. He took his first job with Hyatt hotels before going to work for IBM in New York as a systems engineer. He worked for IBM and lived in New York until 1965 when his father passed away unexpectedly. Taking a one year "leave of absence" from IBM, Paul returned to Bluefield and took over the operation of his father's International Harvester dealership, Cole Motor Company. In 1975 he formed Truck City Parts and in 1982 purchased Evans Chevrolet which then became Cole Chevrolet Cadillac.

Through his years in business Paul served Bluefield and West Virginia in many roles. He was Bluefield's longest serving mayor, 1981 to 1993, Chairman of American Truck Dealers Association 1978 to 1980, President of the West Virginia Auto Dealers Association, the first West Virginian to be inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame, President of the Bluefield Chamber of Commerce and President of the Bluefield Rotary Club where he was recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow. He received an honorary Doctorate from Northwood University, Midland MI for his leadership in establishing a Truck Marketing curriculum. On November 21, 2003 he was proudly inducted into the Bluefield High School Hall of Fame.

Paul, a member of Mensa and a licensed pilot since 1974, found time for many personal passions. A lifelong pursuit of fitness was expressed through jogging, golf and tennis, leaving just enough time for becoming a bridge life master as well as being an avid antique collector. He was an interesting man, interested in everything and always willing to share what he had experienced and learned.

Paul leaves Bluefield a legacy of integrity in business, respect for family values, and the three sons he and Carol shared and raised to carry on the business development and community service to which Paul dedicated his life.

Paul was preceded in death by his parents, his wife of 61 years, Carol McHugh Cole, infant daughter Leighann Letitia Cole and brother James Frederick Cole.

He is survived by sons William Paul Cole, III and wife Brownie, Charles McHugh Cole and wife Terri and Thomas Jacob Cole and wife Michelle, all of Bluefield, 13 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and sister-in-law Mary

Frances McHugh. Special thanks and appreciation to Paul's dedicated companion and caregiver of 6 years, Dashi Sho-Johnson and to his other caregivers including Patsy, Edmund, Brenda, Mike and Carol-Anne who so graciously assisted Paul through his final time on earth.

In lieu of flowers Paul would be honored if you would make adonation to the W. Paul Cole, Jr. School of Business at Bluefield State College, 219 Rock St, Bluefield WV 24701 or Bluefield College, Advancement Office, 3000 College Ave., Bluefield, VA 24605.

Amid Covid-19 concerns, an outdoor graveside service will be held at 11 AM on Thursday, July 2nd at Roselawn Cemetery with his grandsons serving as pallbearers. A funeral procession will organize at Mercer Funeral Home and leave at 10:40 AM.

Cemetery Details

Roselawn Memorial Gardens Cemetery

Princeton, WV

Previous Events

Graveside Service

JUL 2. 11:00 AM (ET)

Roselawn Memorial Gardens Cemetery
Princeton, WV

Tribute Wall



“ *William Paul Cole Jr.*

October 05, 2023 at 06:08 PM



“ *Bill, Charlie, Tommy, and families,
I am very sorry to hear about Paul's passing. He was a pillar in the community, and will be missed. I have not lived in Bluefield for the last 35 years, but I sure remember him well from growing up in Bluefield, and in the old neighborhood. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.*

*Greg Spry and Laura Chandler
Roanoke, VA*

Greg Spry - July 03, 2020 at 02:42 PM



“ *Carol Herald-Tabor lit a candle in memory of
William Paul Cole Jr.*



Carol Herald-Tabor - July 02, 2020 at 07:55 PM



“ *West Virginia and the surrounding areas have lost a "Legend."
Paul's many lasting accomplishments and contributions toward improving the communities that he touched will continue and live on through his sons and their families. My prayers and deepest sympathy go out to Bill, Charlie, and Tom and their families.*
Charlotte Sacre Worsham

Charlotte Sacre Worsham - July 02, 2020 at 12:05 AM

HF

“ On behalf of the Khatib Bridge Center bridge players, our deepest condolences to the family.



Harry Falk - July 01, 2020 at 09:05 AM

MC

“ My condolences to Paul's sons. Your father and mother were super nice people. Paul was a smart business man and his secret was , that he surrounded himself with great managers who hired good people to work for him. I'm sure he will be missed in the Cole family.
Mike Clemons

Mike clemons - June 30, 2020 at 01:42 PM



“ *May the love of God surround you and your family during this difficult time,
May you come to know that the love of God is with you always,*

May your memories of William Paul Cole, Jr., give you peace, comfort and strength...

Rest now in the arms of our Lord your mission on earth is complete. I thank you for your service to our Country and my Freedom. You will not be forgotten.

*My thoughts
and prayers to the family of*

*US Army Veteran, William Paul Cole, Jr., is “A True American Hero”
God Bless†*

† Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13 †

Cheryl Skinner, Tri-state Military Museum - June 30, 2020 at 09:46 AM

GS

“ *Bill, Charlie, Tom, and family: So sorry for the loss of you father. He was quite an accomplished man and leaves quite a legacy. I know he was a tremendous influence not only in your lives but the lives of many in the Bluefield community. I know he will be dearly missed. My prayers are with you all during this difficult time.*

Gary Spry and family

Gary Spry - June 29, 2020 at 09:47 PM

DF

“ *Very sorry to hear of the passing of Mr. Cole. He was a class act and had the respect of many people that were lucky enough to meet him.* ”

Daniel Farmer - June 29, 2020 at 09:33 PM



“ *Serenity Wreath was purchased for the family of William Paul Cole Jr..* ”



June 29, 2020 at 04:09 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of William Paul Cole Jr..* ”



June 29, 2020 at 04:06 PM

KM

“ *I am so sorry to hear about your father's passing. We hope that the love of family and friends will comfort and strengthen you in the days ahead.* ”

Kimberly Mohr - June 29, 2020 at 01:13 PM

FE

“ My condolences to the family. Although i didn't know him personally, i feel i have learned so much from him, through his son's. He was beyond business savvy and I'm grateful to know some of the stories of this legendary man. Rest in Peace.

*kindest Regards,
 Felicia B.*

Felicia - June 29, 2020 at 12:57 PM

DG

We The Doorman And Bellman At The Greenbrier send our Heart Felt Condolences To Paul Cole Family At This Time If There Is Anything We Our Families Can Do For This Beautiful Family Either Today Or In The Coming Days Remember We Are Here For You All

Dale Mann Supervisor Front Door Greenbri - June 29, 2020 at 01:24 PM

KR

SO sorry for your loss keeping you all in my prayers

kenneth I richmond - June 30, 2020 at 12:49 AM

JK

Thoughts and prayers for Bill, Charlie and the

Jim and Linda Knowles - June 30, 2020 at 11:48 AM

CS

My deepest sympathy he was a wonderful man I was fortunate to play bridge with him once but I'll always remember that.

Claudia Salce - July 01, 2020 at 09:42 AM


Judith
Fleming

I had the privilege of playing bridge with Paul . and I send my condolences to his family

Judith Fleming - July 01, 2020 at 03:59 PM

JR

We played bridge many times against Paul over the past few years. He was always a gentleman and will be missed.

Jim & Marcia Richling - July 02, 2020 at 01:26 PM