



## Harley M. Heath,

August 25, 1920 - July 7, 2012

Harley M. Heath, Sr., age 91, of Henderson, KY, a member of the Greatest generation passed away at 7:58 p.m. Saturday, July 7, 2012, surrounded by his wife of 64 years, Norma, and all three of his children and their spouses. He was a soldier, a businessman, a husband, a father, a grandfather, and a great grandfather, and an active and proud member of his community for nearly all of his 91 years.

Harley was born to John Carlton and Elizabeth Heath of Livermore, Kentucky on August 25, 1920. He was predeceased by his parents, and all of his siblings, which consisted of three sisters and four brothers.

Harley served his country during World War II as a member of the Army and attained the rank of Sergeant. He also received EAME Theater Ribbon with two Bronze Stars. He was devoted to the youth of Henderson and served them as a coach and commissioner of the Henderson PeeWee League (predecessor to PCMA). The complex was named in his honor on April 21, 2007. He was instrumental in the creation and development of the Henderson Youth Football League as well as the Henderson Girls' Softball League. He owned and operated the Appliance Center and Family Sporting Goods in Henderson for many years. He was also an active member of the Henderson Civitan Club when it was in Henderson. He was well known for his vegetable soup that he enjoyed sharing with his friend, which according to him; he could

never get hot enough. For those who couldn't stand the heat, his pimento cheese was pretty good too.

Survivors include:

His loving of 64 years wife: Norma Heath

2 Sons: Harley Heath, Jr. and his wife, Debbie

Bill Heath and his wife, Michelle

1 Daughter: Susie Heath Moore and her husband, Ron

7 Grandchildren: Jenny Heath Louisville, KY

Jim Heath Baltimore, MD

Sarah Heath, Carlie Heath Shelton, & Rachel Heath All of Henderson

Katie Heath Lebanon, TN

Conner Heath Henderson, KY

1 Great-Granddaughter: Alexis Heath Louisville, KY

Nieces and Nephews.

Funeral Services will be conducted at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, July 11, 2012 at Benton-Glunt Funeral Home, Henderson, KY. Rev. Rick O'Daniel will officiate. Burial will be in Fairmont Cemetery, Henderson, KY. Military honors will be rendered by the American Legion Worsham Post #40.

Friends may call from 2:00 – 8:00 p.m., on Tuesday and from 9:00 a.m. until service time on Wednesday at Benton-Glunt Funeral Home, Henderson, KY.

Pallbearers will be Ray Rhorer, Pete Summers, Eddie Minton, Harold Patterson, Joey Jameson, and Gary Burton. Honorary pallbearer will be Johnny Heath, Mark Heath, Mike Heath and Duane Crowe.

A member of the Greatest generation died on Saturday night, surrounded by his wife of 64 years and all three of his children and their spouses. Harley Heath Sr. was indeed a great American. He was a soldier and businessman, husband, father and grandfather, and active and proud member of his community for nearly all of his 91 years.

My grandfather lived a full life in an era where he saw the world change more dramatically than any other period in history. Yet for all of the changes happening around him, Harley Heath lived his life until the end mostly as he did growing up in Livermore, KY. I'm quite certain that, despite being a voracious consumer of the news, the words Facebook, Google and iPad were not part of his vernacular. Apple was an ingredient in pie, not the world's biggest tech company, and Yahoo! was a screaming child in your neighbor's yard, not a search engine. What would be the point in searching for an engine, anyhow? In Grandpa's world, the engine was under the hood of your Buick. (Grandpa always bought American, and for as long as I can remember, he always drove a Buick.)

I never really understood him, just as I'm sure he never really understood me either. He and Granny took me to Livermore once when I was a kid. We went in August and, like Grandpa, most of his relatives either did not have or did not use air conditioning. I was sure I'd die of heat stroke and took refuge under a giant shade tree with a panting St. Bernard, thankful I'd have at least some company when I met my end. It took some time, and several rounds of relatives, neighbors and neighbors' neighbors, but Grandpa eventually found a house with air conditioning where I could seek temporary sanctuary from the oppressive heat of Kentucky's August, viewed by Grandpa as a lovely Sunday afternoon.

When I was very little, we would go visit Granny and Grandpa at their house in

the country, which at the time seemed like the greatest expanse of wilderness that could be, but in reality was just several acres of crops that Grandpa tended himself, a house he built himself, a pond teeming with critters, a barn of seemingly haunted disposition and, for awhile, when they hadn't escaped and were being hotly pursued by my flummoxed and irate Grandmother, two ponies named Lightning and Tootsie Roll. But oh the adventures one could have there!

Upon arrival at Grandpa's it was customary to find him in the barn, working on some project or another. He would be chewing tobacco. Always. He once told me he had a surprise for me and instructed me to look in the blue cooler in the corner. I assumed it was full of Sunkist because that was my favorite drink as a kid and Granny always stocked it in the refrigerator. (She does to this day, in fact.) When I got to the cooler I was disappointed to find a black snake waiting for me and not an ice-cold Sunkist. Reflecting on that moment, it's only logical that there would have been a snake in the cooler. Snakes, after all, were the type of presents Grandpa found fun; Sunkist was Granny's domain.

The first and only time I've ever fired a gun, Grandpa and my father gave me a 22, or a weapon of some numbered gage that corresponded

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to my ambition but took account of my haplessness, and told me to shoot the watermelon they'd placed about 25 feet away. I was unable to hit the slope of a hillside, but Grandpa assured me there would be plenty of time to practice and improve.

I was much better at driving the tractor, which was in reality just a riding lawn mower with the occasional wagon hitched on the back. But it was red and represented freedom! The first time Grandpa let me drive it by myself I immediately threw it into full throttle, careened out of control and slammed into the side of the house, right under the kitchen window where Granny happened to be standing. I hit the wall of the house and ricocheted back like a pinball. Granny flew out of the house in a combination of fury and concern as the tractor finally came to a halt. I can't remember exactly if she was yelling at me or Grandpa but I'm pretty sure it was both. Everyone walked away unscathed. The house was fine, the tractor was completely intact and I lived to drive another day. I'm pretty sure Grandpa, completely unfazed, got a kick out of all the commotion.

Like a lot of men of his generation, Grandpa loved family, even if he rarely expressed it. He had a dining room table built that could seat everyone in our

family, plus a little room to grow. Heath family legend has that it was so large it had to be cut in half and re-assembled in the dining room, but what are few scuff marks if it means everyone gets to eat together? He taught everyone in our family to love cards and it was at the card table that he was his liveliest. I always liked watching him and Granny play on the same team in pinochle, rare occasion that it was, because it brought out the best in both of their personalities: Grandpa's story-telling and Granny's southern wit and hilarious, self-deprecating sense of humor. Grandpa would fume if you couldn't precisely count the number of tricks you would catch; Granny was notorious at underbidding, yet she always expressed surprise when she caught more than she bid.

I suspect we'll miss Grandpa the most at the card table. While I am sad for our family's loss, Grandpa lived a full life. Perhaps more than sadness, I regret that we no longer have the opportunity to learn about him and his life. I often wonder what members of his generation think of succeeding generations, if we have the grit and daring to do big things and confront big challenges as they did. I hope that we do as I'd hate to let them down. I'm sure Grandpa would view such musing as an existential luxury, however, and we have more pressing matters to address: the family needs a new lead pinochle player and with Grandpa's first great-grandchild on the way, we're going to need a bigger dining room table.

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# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 10. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Benton-Glunt Funeral Home  
629 S. Green Street  
Henderson, KY 42420

## 2:00 P.M. Tuesday May 8, 2018 Funeral Service

JUL 11. 11:00 AM (CT)

Benton-Glunt Funeral Home  
629 S. Green Street  
Henderson, KY 42420

# Tribute Wall



“ *Harley M. Heath,*

November 29, 2022 at 08:01 AM



“ *I am so sorry to read today that Harley had passed away. He was always so nice to me and I never have forgotten that. Always a smile and kind word. Thank you Harley for many memories at the ballfields.*

**Pat Hall - Lexington, KY - Friend - July 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM**



“ *Sorry to hear of the loss of a good man anda good friend. Although we are out of town, you are in our thoughts and prayers.*

**Larry and Anita Ivie - Henderson, KY - friend - July 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM**