



## Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II

June 13, 1931 - July 27, 2021

Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith II, was born on June 13, 1931 in Charleston, West Virginia and passed away at age 90 on July 27, 2021 at Elmcroft Assisted Living in Hurricane, West Virginia. An only child, he was preceded in death by his parents Veleair C. Smith and Dea M. Smith. He was also preceded in death by his son Collett V. Smith. He is survived by his three children Courtlandt L. Smith (Elizabeth), Christian V. Smith (Jennifer) and Caroline K. Smith. Cort is survived by his four grandchildren Courtlandt L. Smith Jr., Wilson C. Smith, Lauren Claire Smith and Oliver Classen as well as his former spouse and mother of his children Kemp Littlepage McElwee.

Cort spent his early years growing up in Charleston primarily in the Edgewood area where he made many lifelong friends. As his father's various business interests became more concentrated in the Putnam County area, they purchased a farm and built a home on the Kanawha River near Winfield that they named Valdeacort Farm. For his high school education, he enrolled at the Culver Military Academy in Culver, Indiana. It was here that he fell in love with horsemanship and began his association with the Black Horse Troop.

After high school, Cort earned a Bachelor's Degree in Geology from Duke University. Following graduation, he served his country in the United States Air Force as an agent in the Office of Special Investigations. At the conclusion of his active service, he took graduate studies at Lehigh University before

returning to West Virginia to join the family businesses.

Cort was exposed to all aspects of the natural gas business under the Velear C. Smith Management umbrella. With Teavee Oil & Gas, Inc. and Putnam Natural Gas Company, he was active in drilling gas wells and providing industrial gas service to the various industries in the Nitro area. With Well Service, Inc, he was involved with contract well and cement work for the natural gas industry over a multi-state area. With Union Oil & Gas, Inc, he was involved with providing gas utility service. They also developed several other gas production and utility companies in Ohio during this period.

While visiting relatives in Cali, Colombia en route to review a mining venture in Bolivia with his father, Cort seized an opportunity to purchase a used drilling rig and begin a well drilling company to provide water irrigation for sugar cane operations. Over the next years, he primarily lived in Colombia where he was active in polo. After marriage in 1963, he and his family spent the next decades dividing each year by living for several months in Cali, Colombia and the remainder on the farm in Winfield, West Virginia while simultaneously running companies in both countries.

Although his business interests were primarily in drilling and natural gas, he was active in either starting or providing investment money to endeavors ranging from an early chain of ice cream parlors in Colombia, hovercrafts capable of being driven on land or water, chicken processing, jet engines, electronic gas measurement, industrial lighting, and computer contractor service. While he engaged in various agricultural endeavors on Valdeacort Farm, hay was always his main focus and its improvement, operation and production remained a priority amongst his many activities.

Cort was a founder and served on the Board of Directors of the Teays Valley National Bank from 1973 until it was acquired by Kanawha Banking & Trust in

1984. After it was acquired by United Bank, Inc. in 1987, he served on the Board of Directors of United Bank, Inc. until 2006. He was the 1980 President of the Charleston Rotary Club and long time Parliamentarian on its Planning Committee. He was an active member of the West Virginia Small Public Utility Association and Cosmos Club. Cort was a member of Edgewood Country Club and former member of Downtown Athletic Club in New York City, Club Campestre and Club Columbia Clubs in Cali, Columbia as well as many professional organizations.

Throughout his life, Cort was an active traveler. Whether accompanying his father on engineering projects from Nova Scotia to Central and South America or with his mother as a competitive golfer from the Bahamas to Hawaii, it set a pattern which took him to virtually every point on the globe. Although there are too many stories to include, his presence with his former wife Kemp in Prague, Czechoslovakia during the 1968 Russian invasion was indicative of the extent of travel which was a constant throughout his life.

In his later years, he returned to his true passion of horsemanship at Culver Academies. Concerned that it might be eliminated for budget reasons, he spearheaded a campaign to save the program by creating an impressive endowment. As an active instructor and staff member of the Culver Summer School program, he spent many years as an unparalleled cheerleader for the equitation and rough riding programs where he touched the lives of countless campers.

Following health setbacks, Cort made his home for the last several years at Elmcroft Assisted Living in Hurricane, WV. While it may have slowed him down, he remained a constant presence on the roads with the assistance of drivers Dean, Keith and Chris. With their invaluable assistance, he was able to stay active with his hay farm, travel on the back roads in search of land to

purchase, and even able to make several rewarding trips back to Indiana. During his final illness, the family is deeply appreciative to all of the staff at Elmcroft and in particular Amy, Chris, Jodi, Hattie and Amanda in getting him home and allowing him to spend his final days amongst friends and family.

The visitation will be held at Chapman Funeral Home 12848 Winfield Road, Winfield WV 25213 on Monday August 2nd from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The funeral will be in the Chapel at First Presbyterian Church 16 Leon Sullivan Way, Charleston, WV 25301 at 11:00 am on Tuesday August 3rd with a reception immediately following at Edgewood Country Club. There will be a private family interment. You may also visit his tribute page at [ChapmanFuneralHomes.com](http://ChapmanFuneralHomes.com) to share memories and offer condolences to the family.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests you make a donation in his memory to the Culver Educational Foundation for the Black Horse Troop Endowment Fund, 1300 Academy Road, Culver, Indiana 46511.

Chapman Funeral Home, family-owned and located at 12848 Winfield Road, Winfield is honored to serve the Smith family.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 2. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Chapman Funeral Home, Winfield  
12848 Winfield Road  
Winfield, WV 25213  
(304) 586-2542  
info@chapmanfuneralhomes.com  
<https://www.chapmanfuneralhomes.com>

## Funeral Service

AUG 3. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church-Charleston  
16 Leon Sullivan Way  
Charleston, WV 25301

# Tribute Wall



“ Chapman Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Velear Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II



Chapman Funeral Homes - July 31, 2021 at 08:20 AM

VD

*Wonderful memories pictured here. Family and friends can appreciate for their lifetimes.*

Volker Dan - July 31, 2021 at 11:01 AM

PD

*A very warm and loving picture of Cort's remarkable life. Thank you for sharing so many happy moments.*

*Portia Dean - August 3, 2021*

Portia Dean - August 03, 2021 at 11:35 AM

PW

*I well remember Kemp and Courtland Smith with great fondness from Cali, Colombia. I send this with heartfelt sympathy for the children of Courtland and to Kemp. He was such a nice man and I mean this as real compliment !*

Patricia R Jeffery (Mrs Scott W) - August 04, 2021 at 04:28 PM

LS

*Cort and I grew up on Edgewood Drive with Jim Revercomb, Beau Wilson, and many youngsters. We all went to different military schools, I went to Augusta Military Academy, Jim Revcomb went to Greenbrier Military and Cort went to Culver Military Academy as did Jim Thomas. At that point our lives and families absorbed most of our lives. And we didn't see each other. Often, but were all successful in business and raising our children. This movie of Cort's life is very enlightening and tear jerking, since I will be 90 years old in December.*  
*Budlafollette I*

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**Latelle LaFollette,iii, Sarasota,Florida** - August 12, 2022 at 02:56 PM



“ Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II

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October 06, 2023 at 08:41 AM

KF

“ During our first ever campus visit to Culver Academy in 2008, Cort spotted us on the perimeter of a crowd watching a Black Horse Troop demonstration. After the demo, (probably recognizing us as "newbies" and a ripe BHT recruiting opportunity!) he swooped over on his golf cart, thrust his hand out, introduced himself, and ordered us to "jump in!" for a special tour of the riding facility and grounds. "Son", he told our boy, "you can choose to be in one of four units here at Culver. But if you want to be in the BEST unit, you need to choose Troop". That was a defining moment for our son, and for us as a family. Cort's irresistible charm sold us on the Academy, and on Troop. Andrew had never ridden a horse before, which Cort probably could tell just by talking to him. But in Cort's eyes, that was a "plus". "There's nothing like horsemanship to teach a young person leadership", Cort told us. Andrew took part in countless amazing opportunities at Culver, and in Troop - culminating in riding with the Black Horse Troop in the 2012 Presidential Inaugural Parade. Attending Culver and being part of the Black Horse Troop changed Andrew's life. And it led our family to discover the special place that is Culver - a place that was so dear and important to Cort. We stayed in touch with Cort over the years. We continued to attend Culver Academy events (thanks to Cort introducing us to the school, our other two kids attended Woodcraft and Winter School). And at never failed to amaze us that Cort, it seemed, was always there, too. The last time we saw him, he was with his assistant, who was guiding him around the riding hall in a wheelchair. Excited to see him, we gathered around and asked to have a photo with him. He stopped us, and with great effort, forced himself to stand. "I will NOT be photographed in THAT!", he said, gesturing to the wheelchair with disdain. To us, that moment captured the Cort we knew and loved. I only wish we had more time to know him better. And to thank him for all he did for countless kids - like ours - at Culver. "Heels Down!"

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Kilbourne Family - August 31, 2021 at 01:59 PM

AF

“ I am very sorry for your loss of your father. Thinking of you and remembering great times in Cali and many memories together.

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**Alexandra Frappier** - August 09, 2021 at 10:55 AM

RH

“ Has been a friend of our family since his college days at Duke. I worked as a geologist for CORT for over 3 years in Winfield. Great experience. Great guy. My condolences to the family. I remember when I was a teenager being at the farm and he and his father telling tales of Cali. They once wore Roman armored suits while going down river to protect himself from the natives shooting arrows and spears at them 🤔.

*Richard Hall*

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**Richard Hall** - August 07, 2021 at 02:35 PM

SR

“ Courtlandt was my first boss back in 1970. I worked for him in Charleston office & later in Winfield office. He was a wonderful man. Always had a story after a trip especially the Russian invasion with him in the shower while it was taking place. Kemp & the boys would come by the office on the way to the airport to go to Cali and I'd drive them to bring car back and then Caroline arrived. Finally had a girl. Never a full moment with them. He had a Wang computer to try out when they first came out and he stayed at office all weekend messing with it. New technology was something we didn't have. We still developed our copies in the matrix then he purchased a little copy machine nothing fancy just one page at a time and we thought we were big time. I remember we finally talked him into painting the office blue and that didn't last long. Kemp approved but he said it looked like a bedroom so back to white it went. He was so backwards and reserved at first then Freida & I worked there and he loosened up and would laugh and relax. We had some good times. So very sorry for your loss. Will always remember his smile and what he brought to my life. Thanks for sharing him with me.  
Sherry Songer Holstion Rinehart

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Sherry Rinehart - August 04, 2021 at 01:04 AM

DV

“ Our friendship for all those years included many hours on horseback or just handling horses. I'm aware of his ( he's always been Smitty to me) business hours and many days of travels. His love of history took him to many places. He loved his family and he loved Culver and the Black Horse Troop. As my oldest friend,in time together, he was truly wonderful company.  
I now, as I write this, drink a toast to him and his family.

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Dan Volker - August 03, 2021 at 11:22 AM

FF

“ From everyone at your 811 Family. purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II.



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**From everyone at your 811 Family.** - August 02, 2021 at 09:35 AM

PF

“ Cort was a wonderful member of Phi Kappa Psi at Duke where we grew close as fraternity brothers. Cort had one of the few cars available then (1950-53) and he was very generous in lending it. I stayed close to Cort through the years and enjoyed exchanging emails with him. He had a fierce love of horsemanship and of Southern traditions. He will be sorely missed by all his Phi Psi brothers, here and where they are no doubt welcoming him with the secret handshake.

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**Phil Fullerton** - July 31, 2021 at 12:55 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II.



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July 31, 2021 at 10:37 AM



“ *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 Veleair Courtlandt Smith, II, 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 Air Force Veteran, Veleair Courtlandt Smith, II, 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 †*

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**Cheryl Skinner, Tri-state Military Museum** - July 31, 2021 at 06:49 AM



“ *Love's Tapestry was purchased for the family of Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II.*



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July 30, 2021 at 01:39 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II.*



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July 30, 2021 at 07:50 AM



“ *So sorry for your loss.  
With Deepest Sympathy,  
Mike, Charlene , and Brandon Armstead*



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**Charlene Armstead** - July 29, 2021 at 10:51 PM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II.*



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July 29, 2021 at 10:35 PM



“ *Guiding Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II.*



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July 29, 2021 at 05:57 PM



“ *Lovely One Spathiphyllum Plant was purchased for the family of Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II.*



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July 29, 2021 at 05:50 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II.*



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July 29, 2021 at 04:03 PM



“ *Mike Gregory purchased the Dreams From the Heart Bouquet for the family of Veleair Courtlandt "Cort" Smith, II.*



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**Mike Gregory** - July 29, 2021 at 03:19 PM