



Vernon "Pee-wee" Rhodes

July 29, 2011

Vernon Elwin "Pee-wee" Rhodes, 76, died Friday, July 29, 2011 at home surrounded by his family in Cape Girardeau after a lengthy illness. The son of Ollie Dayton Rhodes and Beulah Pearl Downs, Pee-wee was born in Barnhart, Missouri on February 4, 1935, the youngest of seven children. In 1959, he married the former Carole Dalton, who survives him as well as a daughter and two sons: Kelly (Kerry) Holloway of Fayetteville, AR; Mark Rhodes and Scott (Samantha) Rhodes of Cape Girardeau. He is also survived by a brother, Edwin "Pete" Rhodes of Cape Girardeau; and, two sisters, Evelyn (J.L.) Seal of Farmington, MO and Vivian Wampler of Montrose, CO. Pam Rhodes (mother of Sam & Zac Rhodes), along with many nieces and nephews also survive. He was predeceased by his parents and three brothers: Alvin Rhodes, Dayton ♦Mac♦ Rhodes and Marvin Rhodes. He was blessed with and is survived by six grandchildren who he could not be prouder: Ryun Holloway, Kelsey Holloway, Casey Holloway, Samuel Rhodes, Zachary Rhodes and Annabelle Rhodes. He would have been grandpa again in October. The grandchildren will dearly miss him but will cherish the tremendous influence that he had on their lives. He also leaves behind his best friend Daisy. While a short little friend (dachshund), she was his constant companion, traveling buddy, ice cream eater, faithful bedside partner and bodyguard. She will truly miss her buddy. Pee-wee left high school, convincing his father to sign for him and joined the Marines when he was 17, along with six of his friends. He spent six proud years in the service, including embassy

duty protecting dignitaries in Ecuador. Peewee said many times that it was the Marines that saved and changed his life then set him on his way to success based on the lessons he had learned in the Corps. Once out of the service he went to work as a bread salesman and became friends with Jack Lewis, Sr., founder of Bunny Bread. Despite his success at Bunny Bread Company, Peewee always wanted to go into business for himself. In the early 60s, Peewee and his brother Pete along with their families moved to Cape Girardeau and opened three Gulf service stations in Cape, Jackson and Perryville. Peewee and Pete ended up selling two of the stations leaving the Cape station. In 1963 Jack Lewis offered Peewee a job to manage the Plaza Car Wash in Cape. If Peewee successfully managed it, he would own half the business. Peewee and Lewis closed the deal with a handshake, the first of many deals sealed by only a handshake. After a few years Pete joined Peewee and they expanded into the tire business via the purchase of a retread business which included a new 1964 truck with tire racks. Its color was Chevrolet's 504 paint code, green, better known as "Plaza Green." To this date, Plaza Tire Service has had over 500 trucks and all of them have been this same green color. Peewee said he could never afford to change the color. Selling retreads at the car wash for only \$7.50 apiece, he also began selling new tires. A hand-operated tire changer had been mounted on the sidewalk outside Plaza Car Wash and due to city ordinances the tire changer had to be moved. A decision had to be made, close the car wash or get out of the tire business. There simply was not enough room to do both. Peewee's decision is obvious today and was a trademark of how he always did business. He stopped washing cars and renamed the business Plaza Tire Service. Today, Plaza Tire is one of the country's largest tire retailers with 49 stores in 4 states. Peewee always believed the many years of service and loyalty, by the now over 350 employees, was a major contribution to the success of the company. Though "officially retired" from the tire business, Peewee's entrepreneurial spirit kept burning with successful ventures into real estate development, construction and wholesale truck sales. To keep track of all the

daily news he rarely missed a day at the Pancake House with all his friends at the morning "Liars Club". In business, Peewee will be remembered for his tenacious work ethic, leadership, positive attitude and personal relationships built through his partnerships and with employees through 48 years of successful business. Throughout his life, both business and personal, he never met a stranger and was known far and wide for his open, engaging and friendly approach to all things. No matter what walk of life you were from he always treated you with respect and dignity. Although his sons, Mark and Scott, have operated the company in recent years, Peewee remained a consistent presence visiting the office on a near daily basis until very recent weeks. He said he was letting the younger generation keep Plaza Tire Service going/growing because, as he always said "You grow or you go!" Visitation will be Sunday, July 31, 2011 at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Cape from 4-8 pm. A Celebration of Life service will be held on Monday, August 1, 2011 at St. Andrews Lutheran Church under the direction of Pastor Paul Short at 11:30 am. Burial and interment will be at Memorial Park following the service. In lieu of flowers memorials can be made to Southeast Hospital Hospice, St. Andrews Lutheran Church or the charity of choice.

Tribute Wall

JK

“ To the Rhodes Family - Thinking of you and sending our sympathy, love and prayers. We really enjoyed our introduction to Peewee and our visit with him at Jay and Stacey's wedding shower. Jerry and Rosemary Kamps

Jerry and Rosemary Kamps - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

BF

“ Our thoughts, prayers and sympathy are with all the family in your loss of Mr. Rhodes. May you find the Lords peace in knowing he now lives in eternity. God Bless you all.

Bruce Monell & Family - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

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Bruce Monell & Family - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ Deepest sympathy to all of you. You all are in our thoughts and prayers. So sorry we could not attend, but we are there in spirit.

Jean Ann Brown, Sandy Jackson, & Mike Green - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ Scott and Family: Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Carl Froemsdorf - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RD

“ I will miss talking to PeeWee. We had developed a real good friendship and he will sure be missed by all

Roger DePriest - January 08, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Kelly and Kerry, We are so sorry to hear about the loss of Peewee. Just wanted to let you know that we are keeping you and your family in our thoughts and prayers. Mike and Sherry Sanders

Mike and Sherry Sanders - January 08, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ Vernon "Peewee" Rhodes

John Inchiostro St Louis Wholesale Tire - January 08, 2011 at 12:00 AM

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John Inchiostro St Louis Wholesale Tire - January 08, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BJ

“ Aunt Carole and family Our deepest sympathies. Our thoughts are with all of you today. love,Bobbi

Bobbi Wampler Jenkins - January 08, 2011 at 12:00 AM