

OBITUARIES



Robert Pemberton Smith

Robert Pemberton Smith, 98, died Friday, November 10, 2017.

Robert was born in Richmond, VA and lived in the Philadelphia, PA, area for many years before moving to Port Royal Plantation in Hilton Head, SC in 1990. In recent years his residence has been at TidePointe.

He is survived by his wife, Betty-Jane Bennett Smith, whom he married Nov. 6, 1943. They were blessed with two daughters; Pamela Smith Dials of Santa Fe, NM and Deborah Bennett Bailey of Westbury, Wiltshire, England, five grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

Robert graduated from the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in Lexington, VA June 1940. Shortly thereafter, he began a job and a training program as a Naval Architect at the Norfolk Navy Yard in Portsmouth, VA. He was working there when the U.S. entered World War II, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941. He immediately volunteered to join the Army, even making entreaties to his former officer advisor at VMI who was a senior official on General Marshall's staff at the Pentagon. However, he was informed that his position as a Naval Architect was considered a "critical skill" of great value to the war effort, and he would serve the nation's war effort best in that capacity. Thus, he remained in his position as a section manager responsible for preparation of the damage control and

information documentation for the Navy vessels designed, built and repaired at the Norfolk Navy Yard throughout the war.

After the war, Robert joined an international, project management, design and construction company based in Philadelphia that provided its services to gas and electric utilities, steel and other metals companies, chemical manufactures and other types of businesses that required specially designed heavy industrial plants and laboratories. His career reached its peak as a vice president of business development for Philadelphia-based United Engineers and Constructors during the period of nuclear power plant undertakings with the management, design and construction of several significant generating facilities.

Before moving to Hilton Head, he was a member of the Union League of Philadelphia. He was also a member of The Springhaven Club, one of the older golf clubs in the Philadelphia suburbs, and he served as chairman of The Rose Valley Folk, a family social and theatrical club in suburban Philadelphia.

Robert and his wife, Betty Jane, maintained a lifelong interest in music. At VMI he was instrumental in starting the Institute's Glee Club, did solo work, supported the beginnings of their concert tours, and became the club's president in his senior year. Over the years he sang in many Episcopal Church choirs, including All Saints Episcopal Church in Hilton Head where he was also a vestryman. In association with The Rose Valley Folk, he was part of and eventually chairman of The Valley Voices, a large touring mixed chorus that sang in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey areas.

In Hilton Head, he was a board member of the Port Royal Plantation Club where he served as the membership chairman for several years. His long interest in

family history, which he shared with his wife Betty Jane, led to his publication of several manuscripts. He served as President of The Heritage Library Foundation, where he became a family history consultant, and did research and lectures with a special emphasis on Hilton Head history. For his service to the Heritage Library Foundation, he was presented the award for Meritorious Service in March 2011. Using his genealogical expertise, he also served as the Registrar for the Hilton Head Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Funeral arrangements are being made through The Island Funeral Home and Crematory. A memorial service will be held at the TidePointe Ballroom on Monday, November 20 at 3 p.m. Interment will be in the Smith-Petty-Moore family plot in historic Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, VA. Memorial donations may be sent to The Heritage Library Foundation, Inc., 852 William Hilton Parkway, Suite A-2, Hilton Head, SC 29928.

Islandfuneralhome.com.

NOV 14, 2017
ISLAND PACKET