



**Memorial service**  
**11 February 2012, 15:00**  
Wylie-Baxley Funeral Home  
Merritt Island, FL

**Programme**  
**Welcome**  
**Memorial Presentation**  
**Contribution of memories**  
**Refreshments**

**Fred Minier Howell**  
19.Feb.1931 - 15.Jan.2012

*Conducted by:*  
*Gordon Howell • Jeffrey Howell*

## **Biography**

Fred was born in Buffalo, New York; the youngest of four siblings: his eldest brother Sidney, brother Alan, and sister Alibeth. All are deceased, as are his father Sidney Sr. and mother.

Fred grew up mainly in New Jersey: his chief home being the lovely estate known as Ridgewood. Fred would recall a largely happy childhood on the estate with its private lake, extensive grounds, pool and an enormous main house. Too young to join the war, unlike Sidney, he followed the footsteps of his father and grandfather and matriculated at Cornell University in 1947 under a partial ROTC scholarship. He graduated in 1951 with a Bachelors in Engineering (and would later go on to earn a Masters degree in Business Administration).

Following a few months interlude in New York City, he joined the Navy. He was commissioned as an officer and joined a naval minesweeper, and in early 1952 shipped to the Korean War. He was promoted to executive officer (second in command) with rank Lieutenant j.g. of the USS Toucan, which had the distinction of being a rare steel-hulled minesweeper still on active duty (steel hulls were of course susceptible to magnetic mines. Most minesweepers had wooden hulls). Despite this liability, the ship took part in active duty, sustaining live fire and involved in the clearing of several minefields. He was honourably discharged in 1955, and

continued to serve in the Navy Reserve until 1966. He always remembered his navy years fondly.

Following the navy he moved back to new York city where he started his career as a professional engineer. While engaged as a draftsman, he met his future wife Susan at a party in Greenwich Village. They were married on 25 October 1959, and shortly thereafter Fred took a post in Rochester NY. Their first son Gordon was born there on 19 September 1960 followed by Jeffrey on 18 March 1963.

Fred never worked as anything other than a mechanical engineer, and over the years was engaged on numerous projects across many areas of the field. He developed a specialism in printer technology and some of his notable achievements included one of the first portable bar code printers (used primarily in retail operations such as supermarkets where quick, reliable on-demand printing was required) and lottery ticket printing machines - many of which are still in use today. He garnered several U.S. patents, notably one for the portable UPC bar code printer.

He also worked on diverse projects such as amusement park rides for Disney, household ceiling fans, automotive parts and more. His numerous job changes meant that the family moved many times during the childhood of Gordon and Jeff; following

## Biography (cont)

upstate New York, they lived in Hingham Massachusetts, Basking Ridge New Jersey, Hopkinton MA, Barrington Rhode Island, upstate Maryland and Merritt Island, FL. Fred treated each home as a new project, enhancing and improving the family houses with his own hands, building extensions, attic rooms, cellar conversions and even a pool house in Hopkinton.

He was a man of strong values: hard work, honesty, fair dealings and self sufficiency. He never accepted state aid or even assistance from friends and family. Indeed, a remarkable fact of his career was that up to shortly before his (first) retirement, a period of some 40 years, he had taken only one day off owing to sick leave! These values never left him, even to the days before his death where he would steadfastly refuse even offers of assistance in climbing stairs and other physical endeavours. His values gave him a strong will power. When advised by doctors in the mid 1980s that his smoking habit of over 40 years was killing him, he broke the habit "cold turkey" without any aids or assistance. His iron ethical sense was instilled in his children to their immense benefit and form his greatest legacy.

Gordon left the household in 1977 to enter private school and then university, brother Jeff stayed with the family in their first move to Florida, where he attended high school, and then left to go to college. Fred and Susan moved back to New England for a few years and then moved permanently back to Brevard County Florida where they were to spend the rest of their lives. Fred left full time employment at the age of 65 but continued to work part to,e as a consulting engineer for another 10 years, stopped only by a early onset of Alzheimer's disease. Although this sad condition greatly impaired some of his memories and self sufficiency, even up to a fortnight before his death he was perfectly aware and able to conduct conversations, move himself and even put together 1500 piece puzzles.

Following the death of his spouse of 52 years, just 6 weeks before his own death, rather than fall into despair or despondency he was stoic to the end. Although beset by several critical conditions, he was a man who had defeated cancer 3 times, was rarely sick, and shrugged off pain and injury like he was taking off a pair of gloves. We are sure that following a wonderful Christmas spent with his family, he decided that he had nothing left to live for, and like his other life-affirming decisions, he simply decided that it was time to die. His quiet strength and courage will be greatly missed by all who knew him, and most especially by his loving children.

