



Allan R. Simpson, Jr.

JUN 25, 1918 - APR 27, 2015



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Allan Ruthven Simpson, Jr. of Sperryville, VA passed away peacefully on April 27, 2015 in his own home. He was 96.

Born in Canton, OH June 25, 1918, Mr. Simpson was the son of Allan R. Simpson, Sr. and Mabel Marie Bates Simpson, who died shortly after his birth. His father remarried to Clara Thiessen Simpson, and together they reared Allan, Jr. who was their only child.

Mr. Simpson enjoyed an extraordinarily productive and highly honorable life. After graduation from Canton McKinley High School and Muskingum College (both Ohio), he trained in Carlisle, PA with the US Army officer corps, serving from 1942 until World War II ended in 1945. After a brief stint as a medic, he transferred to the Army Air Force, where he became a B-17 navigator, joining a crew that flew missions over Berlin. He retired from the Air Force as a lieutenant colonel in the mid-1960s.

A journalist by vocation, Mr. Simpson worked from 1945 to 1975 for the Canton Repository (OH) daily newspaper, rising from reporter to state editor, editorial writer, columnist and associate editor. He retired from "The Rep" in 1975 to become director of communications (press secretary) in Washington, DC to the Honorable Ralph Regula, longtime congressman of Ohio's 16th District. A devoted conservationist, Mr. Simpson and Mr. Regula initiated in 1964 the Ohio-Erie Canal "towpath" restoration project, initially a 16 mile stretch at Canal Fulton, OH. While Mr. Simpson wrote some 170 "Along the Towpath" columns touting the need for and progress on their joint vision, Congressman Regula devoted much energy to the greater Ohio-Erie Canal Project, which today stretches in reclaimable locations from Cleveland to Portsmouth, OH, beckoning annually thousands of hikers, bikers, historians and tourists to take a ride on a restored canal boat or just enjoy a wilderness sojourn at any one of the canal entrance points along today's 100 plus miles.

A visionary and adventurer, Mr. Simpson in 1959 drove his family of six in a Chevy station wagon from his native Canton to Anchorage, Alaska the year the Alaska Highway opened, entertaining folks back home with image filled correspondence columns.



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Four years later, when the “newly opened Inter-American Highway” debuted for travel to Panama, the family drove all the way from Canton in a Volkswagen camper-van, and again, Mr. Simpson’s regular columns stirred the imaginations of “Rep.” readers back home.

While reporting firsthand on world events, or providing life-saving inoculations as a volunteer member of missionary medical teams, Mr. and Mrs. Simpsons’ adventures took them to five continents.

When in 1959, during the height of the Cold War, Nikita Khrushchev arrived in Pittsburgh, PA, Mr. Simpson was a member of the press corps that met and interviewed the first Soviet premier ever to visit the United States.

Mr. Simpson is the author of five books: *The Prescription for World Peace* (1984), *Along the Towpath: A Journalistic Rediscovery of the Ohio and Erie Canal* (2003), *On Assignment with Al Simpson: A peek into five continents with a peripatetic reporter* (2010), *Words of Love from a grandfather to his fledgling granddaughter* (2010) and “I hope your heart recovers soon”: *Profile of a Teenage Suicide* (2012). He was finalizing work on his sixth book, *Searching for the Soul*, at the time of his passing.

A devout Christian, Mr. Simpson served as an elder at the John Knox United Presbyterian Church in Canton, OH, the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church in Mclean, VA and as a deacon of the F.T. Baptist Church in Sperryville, VA.

Mr. Simpson was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 63 years, Marion Elizabeth Yund Simpson; a son, Heath Raymond Simpson; a grandson, Trevor Ruthven Simpson; and a grandson-in-law, Air Force Captain Jason Yardley.

He is survived by sons, Allan Bruce Simpson (Jane), and Scot Simpson (Leah) of Mukilteo and Edmonds, WA, respectively; his daughter, April Heddleston (Jon) of Sperryville, VA; ten grandchildren: Jonathan Oakes (Lisa) of Sterling Heights, MI; Heather Yardley of Aurora, UT; Star Miller (Casey) of Marysville, WA; Jonathan Heddleston (Sarah) of Fairfax Station, VA; Chad Heddleston (Elizabeth) of Williamsburg, VA; Shea Simpson of Seattle, WA; Mars Simpson of Mukilteo, WA; Joy Heddleston, a missionary serving overseas; Bret Heddleston of Wheaton, IL; and Nicole Cox (Matthew) of Everett, WA.



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Also surviving are nine great grandchildren: Lauren and Kevin Oakes of Sterling Heights, MI; Dylan, Jackson, Kellen and Harrison Yardley of Aurora, UT; Norah and Maeve Heddleston of Fairfax Station, VA; and Kiera Cox of Everett, WA.

A memorial service has been scheduled for 11 am on Saturday, May 30, 2015 at the F.T. Baptist Church, 3143 Slate Mills Rd., Sperryville, with Rev. Dan Yowell presiding. A luncheon will follow in F.T.'s fellowship hall.

Memorial contributions to F.T. Baptist Church, PO Box 62, Sperryville, VA 22740.

Found and Sons Funeral Chapel of Culpeper is serving the family.



Tribute Wall

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TD

Tom Domer posted:

I did not know of Mr. Simpson's passing, until today. He taught me how to play drums, back in the late 60s - mid 70s. In the process, he taught me how to strive for perfection. Mr. Simpson was an awesome mentor and a true gentleman. I have often thought about him, through the decades. RIP. Tom Domer Canton South High School Class of 1976

February 9 at 9:29 AM

NM

Nathan And Mitzi See lit a candle in honor of Allan.



May 29 at 3:53 PM

AH

April Heddleston July 22 at 2:21 AM

Thank you so much Mitzi and Nathan. I am just seeing this for the first time, today, July 22. We really appreciated you being at Dad's service also. You were a dear friend to him.

LD

Lisa Dodson lit a candle in honor of Allan.



May 6 at 9:47 AM

AH

April Heddleston July 22 at 2:22 AM

Thank you so much for remembering my dad in this thoughtful way. We appreciate it.



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KH

Kathleen Fernandez Hillibish posted:

I was so sorry to read about Al's death in the Canton Repository. My husband, Jim Hillibish, and I had fond memories of visiting him and Marion while he still worked for Cong. Ralph Regula. Jim, a long-time reporter at the Rep, was hired by Al in 1975. I was privileged to see them both again in the late 1990s when he came to the Ohio & Erie Canalway to promote his book, "Along the Canal." I was the site manager at Zoar and a board member of the Canalway Coalition. If it hadn't been for Al and Ralph's promotion of the canal, this wonderful resource would not now exist. Jim and I always looked forward to getting Al's Christmas letter, and when I didn't get one this year, I wondered if he was ill. I lost my wonderful and talented husband Jim this past September after a 25-year battle with kidney cancer. I thank Al for seeing what a gifted writer he was and giving him a job at the Rep. From the obituary, it sounds as if Al and Marion have created a great family. May you take comfort in your memories of such an accomplished man. My deepest sympathies to you all. Kathleen Fernandez Hillibish, Canton, OH

May 4 at 8:58 AM

SF

Scott Foltz posted:

So sad to read of Mr. Simpsons passing. I spent at least 10 years going downtown Canton to take drum lessons. Always had so much respect for Mr. Simpson. Remember doing a duet drum and dance act with April Simpson, that her dad put together. My deepest sympathy to the family in the loss of a wonderful person..Scott Foltz

May 2 at 12:14 PM

WH

Wendell Horn posted:

Our sincere condolences to Al's family. I knew Al when he worked many years for my dad--Clayton G. Horn-- who was editor of the Canton Repository. Al was a very kind man who led a very productive and adventurous life. He will be long-remembered in Canton. Wendell and Jill Horn

May 2 at 3:12 AM



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Missy lit a candle in honor of Allan.



May 1 at 3:01 AM



Missy May 1 at 3:02 AM

Mr. Simpson was a sweet, kind, gentle man that I was blessed to have known. God bless and keep his family during this time.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Allan by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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