



Craig Wayne Allen

April 3, 1928 - June 2, 2022

Craig Wayne Allen, “One of The Last Few Good Ones” 94, passed away June 2, 2022, with loving family at his side. He grew up in Butler, PA and was a World War II Navy Veteran. He could drive anything and did, from big rigs to passenger buses to RVs. He was a retired bus driver with the Port Authority of Allegheny County in Pittsburgh, PA and was very active in the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 85, for many years. After retirement he parlayed his ability to fix anything into a second career in construction, taught himself wood working and gifted hundreds of little wooden stools and Adirondack chairs to children’s organizations and grateful families. Craig and his beloved wife Susan loved traveling the country in their RV and square danced for many years, serving jointly as Presidents of the Western PA Square Dance Association. They celebrated 60 years of marriage in August, 2021. He was a devout Catholic and a proud Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, tirelessly volunteering his time and talents until his health no longer allowed. He was a devoted father and was always there for his two daughters. He marched hundreds of miles as a Marching Father with the Golden Triangles Baton and Drum Corp and attended many dance recitals.

Craig was a huge football fan and loved the Steelers. He enjoyed cheering on his favorite college teams, Penn State, The University of Pittsburgh and Indiana University. He enjoyed doing puzzles, reading, and fishing. He was an avid birdwatcher and cherished spending time with his family.

Craig was predeceased by his wife of sixty years, Susan Rose Allen, whom he missed every day since her passing in October of 2021, and his mother Ola M. Allen of Butler, PA. He is survived by his loving daughters and cherished son in laws, Susan Holly Barton (Rick) of Bloomington, IN, Paige A. Grodecki (Jon) of St. Johns, FL and his adored grandchildren, Kyle Barton and Chasey Grodecki who were the joy of his life. He leaves behind two brother- laws, William O'Neil and wife Lee, who were like a brother and sister to him, of Exton, PA, John O'Neil (Diane) of Lower Burrell, PA and sister-in-law, Roseann Bartlett (Jay) of New Kensington, PA as well as many very special nieces, nephews and grand-nieces and nephews. He was larger and louder than life, was dearly loved and will be greatly missed.

The family will hold a private memorial service and internment will occur at a future date at New St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery in New Kensington, PA.

Tribute Wall

PA

“ *Paige lit a candle in memory of Craig Allen*



Paige - March 16, 2025 at 11:00 PM

RB

“ *2 files added to the album Memories Album*



Rick Barton - June 13, 2022 at 05:02 PM

KW

“ *Craig was our next door neighbor and he became a beloved figure in our neighborhood with his generosity of making Adirondack chairs free-of-charge for children in the neighborhood. He touched the hearts of many!*

Kathy Wolf - June 13, 2022 at 02:08 PM

RB

“ 5 files added to the album Memories Album



Rick Barton - June 10, 2022 at 11:59 AM

“ *Chairmaker Article from Bloomington Herald Times Newspaper
12/2020*

In the Highlands neighborhood of Bloomington, small pink, blue and white Adirondack chairs, just the right size for children 5 years old or younger, are on porches, placed in backyards and tucked away in storage.

That’s because it’s common for Craig Allen, a 92-year-old World War II Navy veteran who lives in the neighborhood, to build the chairs in his garage, sometimes with three heaters to keep warm enough to continue working. Then he flags down families with children to offer free chairs. “It’s been like a second lease on life,” said Susan Allen, his wife of nearly 60 years. “Craig has always been a very active, physical person. He managed the warehouse at a construction company. He was involved in union activities. And he was always go, go, go, and for him to have to slow down, this has been a godsend for us. It’s something that he does that no one else does.”

One day in the summer, Heather Gustafson was walking with her husband, Dan. The couple pushed a stroller with their daughter Rosemary, 1, as their daughter Josephine, 4, walked with them. They happened to pass by the Allens’ house, and Craig called them over. “The oldest one, she always wears princess dresses and little wings and stuff,” Gustafson said. “She was running ahead of us and he probably saw her first.”

Allen asked if they’d like chairs for their daughters, telling them to come back later that week to get them. Gustafson said Josephine is shy, but when they brought the chairs home and put them on the front porch, her daughters crawled up on the chairs right away. “Probably like everything else, that’s nice this year — it’s been a really hard year — it’s been really sweet to have an interaction with neighbors that’s uplifting,” Gustafson said. “Our little girls just love the chairs so much, they really do, they play with them anytime we’re outside and they love having something their size.”

When asked for an interview on a phone call, Craig Allen's wife said he shook his head, but obliged with a shrug, giving her the go ahead to share why he does what he does. Susan Allen laughed and said her husband isn't shy by any means, but he is hard of hearing, especially over the phone, and doesn't want the publicity, fame or money.

Building and giving away the chairs is just what he does, she said. She said he's been woodworking for about 25 years and used to make picnic tables, children's swing sets and playhouses. As he got older, he developed heart and neurological conditions and couldn't move around as much to carry large pieces of lumber. But for the chairs, which he started making around 15 years ago, he can do all of the work in a very small space, Allen said. "Once he started, it was the kids that prompted it on," Susan Allen said. "The kids just get so excited about it. I've seen 3-year-olds try to carry these chairs with them. And frankly, they're heavy wooden chairs."

Allen first built the small chairs, along with a children's playhouse, for a preschool when the couple lived in the Southeast. Parents liked the chairs so much that the school decided to sell them in an auction, which raised enough money to buy four computers, Susan Allen said. At one time he sold them, but around a decade ago, started to just give them away, she said. "He loves it," his wife said. "There's nothing like a baby's smile to just set him for days. I think he gets more pleasure out of it than the children do."

Many chairs are given to people who Craig Allen waves down as they happen to walk by with their children in strollers or riding small on bicycles, his wife and neighbors say.

"Everyone in the neighborhood knows them, and I have so many friends that have also walked by with little kids and he's waved them down, too, and given them multiple chairs for however many kids they have," Gustafson said. "It's really sweet and generous."

Brianna Bult, who lives across the