

Memories of Carl Vernon Corley

I am happy to share what I remember about my uncle Carl from the perspective of a young girl who was raised by Carl's parents (my grandparents) beginning in 1952 when I was 3 weeks old. Carl lived in the house with us in Florence, Mississippi. Carl was creative...drawing and writing prolifically...yet always managing to spend hours playing make-believe and teaching me. In his room Carl had a collection of interesting books on history and art which he encouraged me to peruse. He was the one with camera always in hand snapping family photos. He was so much fun and an incredible influence.

Carl was devoted to family. When his father was dying of cancer in our home I watched Carl take loving and meticulous care of him. Then when his father died in 1961, Carl took a job in Baton Rouge and moved. While building his life in Louisiana, Carl continued to come home to Florence frequently to visit and check on us and eat his favorite banana pudding lovingly made especially for him by his mom. Carl loved flower gardening and was forever digging up plants from her yard to take back with him. This would have been in the same time frame that he was writing the books with which you are familiar.

Out of love and concern, Carl sent an allowance every two weeks in the mail. My grandmother insisted I put half in the bank for college, and I could spend the other half on school clothes, etc. Often during these weekend visits Carl would take me and a high school girlfriend to Jackson to shop on Capitol Street on Saturday mornings. Oh the memories! We'd first make a stop at the cafe of the old Heidelberg Hotel for coffee and pie. I remember one year he helped a friend and me pick out our prom dresses. When I graduated high school in 1970, Carl handed me the keys to his '68 Mustang as a graduation gift.

Over the years Carl and I always stayed in touch. In his old age Carl remained capable, active, productive, and determined to live independently. Regrettably, I never could convince Carl, an Elvis fan to the core, to come up here to Memphis for a visit and tour of Graceland.

During the 2016 flood of the Amite River, I could not locate Carl for 3 days. I called everywhere frantically and then learned he had been rescued and taken to a shelter. I went down there to find that at age 94 Carl had lost everything to the flood and could not return to his home and familiar surroundings. I arranged for him to live in the LA Veterans Home. At first he seemed content and genuinely thankful to be alive, even entrusting the care of his beloved pup Skippy to my daughter in Mississippi where he resides to this day.

Looking back however, I now realize that he was unable to adjust to the new environment and simply gave up his will to live. He died 3 months after the flood. I brought his remains back to Florence and buried him next to his parents and siblings in Richland Cemetery. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/172219138/carl-vernon-corley>

A meager sketch could never do justice to the countless and rich memories. Carl Corley always gave more to others than he received in return. He never forgot a birthday, Christmas, or Easter, including my daughter. Yes, he spoiled those he loved for sure. As my cousin from next door said of Carl, he was always a gentleman to the end. Carl Corley was certainly unique, beloved, and every Mississippi girl's dream uncle who had an enormous impact on who I am today.

Gaynell Corley Perry, November, 2023