



## Tobie Oliver Surprenant

September 9, 1920 - July 3, 2017

Mr. Tobie O. Surprenant was born in Saskatchewan, Canada and was 96 years old when he passed. He was a direct descendant of Louis Hebert, the first permanent settler of Canada; and of Louis Jolliet, Canada's greatest Canadian-born explorer. Mr. Surprenant was raised in Vermont and Connecticut. Throughout his youth and young adulthood in Connecticut he helped with the family business, The Jewett City Ice and Oil Service. He attended high school in Jewett City, where he was a member of the baseball team. After high school, he played semi-pro football locally. He then took his athletic talents to the boxing ring in Connecticut professionally. During his boxing career he held the record for the most consecutive one round knockouts.

At the onset of World War II he answered the call to serve his country. He spent 3 ½ years in the European theatre, specializing as a Radio Operator and also qualifying as a Rifle Marksman. He was honorably discharged on November 30, 1945 and had achieved the rank of Sergeant.

After the War he attended Stetson University where he was a member of the Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity and graduated Magna Cum Laude with majors in English and Romance Languages. Subsequently he earned a Masters Degree in Latin American Affairs from the University of Guatemala, where he also taught English. He then returned to UNC where he did graduate work and taught Spanish. He also taught High School French in Connecticut and English at the University of Miami.

In 1956 he was accepted in the US Foreign Service where he spent twenty-one years in various foreign countries as a Cultural Affairs Officer. He retired in 1977 and resided in Bethesda, MD until 1997, when he moved to Raleigh to be near his daughter, Sally Williams and her family. Post-retirement he continued in government service for several more years, escorting and interpreting for visiting foreign dignitaries in their travels across the United States.

Mr. Surprenant enjoyed singing and was a member of the Brasilia National Chorus and

many barbershop quartets throughout the World. He also enjoyed the game of bridge and played regularly in several Raleigh bridge clubs. He was an active Rotarian in different countries for most of his life, and was the first President of the Bethesda-Potomac Rotary Club in Maryland.

He is survived by sister Francis Collings of St. Petersburg, FL; former wife Violeta Sommer and current husband John Sommer of Durham, NC; son and grandson Pierre and Christian Surprenant of Farmville, VA; daughter and son-in-law Sally and Richard Williams of Raleigh, NC and granddaughters Nancy and Angela Williams; daughter and son-in-law Micaela Bracamonte and Andreas Olsson of Brooklyn, NY and grandsons, Pascal Bracamonte and Julien Olsson.

In lieu of flowers, family requests that memorials be made to the American Heart Association at <https://donatenow.heart.org/>

# Events

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**JUL** **Funeral Service** 02:30PM - 03:30PM

**9**

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Renaissance Funeral Home and Cremation  
7615 Six Forks Rd, Raleigh, NC, US, 27615

**JUL** **A Gathering of Friends and Family** 03:30PM - 04:30PM

**9**

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Renaissance Funeral Home and Cremation  
7615 Six Forks Rd, Raleigh, NC, US, 27615

# Comments

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“ Sharon Mirchandani lit a candle in memory of Tobie Oliver Surprenant



Sharon Mirchandani - July 08, 2017 at 10:26 PM

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“ Sally and family, I remember the first time I met Tobie, He would come over to visit Sally at Whispering Pines. I thought to myself, he is such a nice man. Over the last 4 years, I got to know him pretty well. Always upbeat and loved everyone. I remember all of the nice lunches we had with Sally Hall and so many friends He was like a father to me. We would talk about the past. I learned so many things from him. He loved his bridge games, always ready to play. He was always so helpful to everyone. I remember the long talks we had, when I took him to Nags Head last year. He was such a joy to be around. I am really going to miss seeing him everyday. We would always meet on the elevator. Remembering when he, Sally and Vickie came to my home to visit me, after I had some surgery. He was such a caring man. May he rest in Peace, and prayers for your whole family. Sharon Mirchandani ( Miss Sally Halls Caregiver)

Sharon Mirchandani - July 08, 2017 at 10:22 PM