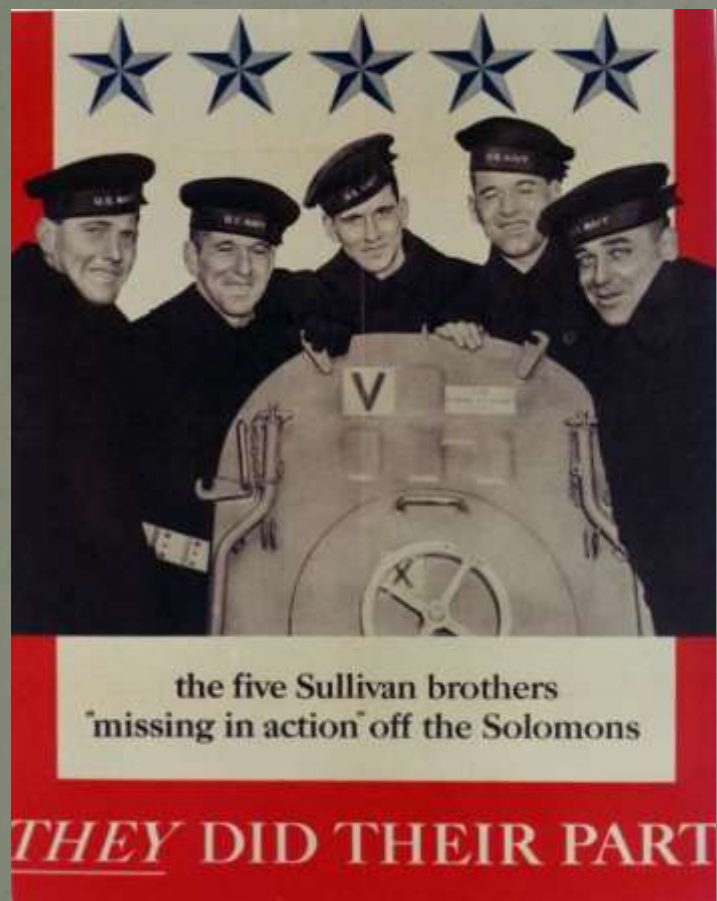


The Five Payne Brothers

An Alexandria Family & Their Service



A number of families sent multiple siblings off to fight in the Second World War. The most famous were the five Sullivan brothers from Waterloo, Iowa, who served together on the light cruiser USS *Juneau*. Tragically, all five brothers perished when the ship was torpedoed and sunk in November, 1942. [Library of Congress image]



Alexandria sent its own family of five brothers off to war . . . the Paynes . . . and all five survived. Ralph and Grover Jr. ("Jack") served in the United States Army, while Francis, Harold and David served in the Navy; their sister Nancy worked on the home front, and married a United States Marine.

As we remember the Second World War, and commemorate the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, it is fitting to reflect on the sense of duty and selfless service to their country that was demonstrated by the Payne family. Throughout American History, in peace and in war time, so many families have similarly sacrificed to defend the freedoms we enjoy here at home, in places all around the world.

When The Lyceum staff mounted a larger exhibition on World War II in the James Coldsmith Gallery several years ago, titled *Alexandria Goes To War*, the Payne brothers were featured in a section that discussed

military service, but few details were given about each brother. To commemorate the anniversary of American entry into World War II, and to recognize this remarkable family, The Lyceum staff presents *The Five Payne Brothers: An Alexandria Family & Their Service*.

Sunday afternoon, December 7, 1941 . . . Ralph, Francis, Harold, Jack and David Payne were all at their mother's house, 11 West Spring Street in Alexandria, listening to the football game between the Washington Redskins and the Philadelphia Eagles on the radio. As early as the first quarter of the game, odd urgent messages came over the loudspeaker, requesting that various military and public officials report to their offices immediately. At halftime, the boys went out into the yard for a group photo. Except for one brief meeting, it would be the last time that the five brothers would be together until after the war ended.

The Payne brothers, December 7, 1941, left to right --- Ralph, Jack, Harold, David and Francis.



“Rip” and Ruth

The Payne brothers and their sister received a solid upbringing from their parents Grover Cleveland Payne and Ruth Deeton Payne. While never particularly comfortable in a material sense, both parents looked after the family's needs the best they could, especially during the trying years of the Great Depression.

Grover (known as “Rip” to his friends, apparently) was born in Franklin County, Virginia in 1886. He worked as an electrician, installing some of the first wiring in homes and businesses in Alexandria. During the First World War, he did similar work for the Virginia Shipbuilding Corporation at Jones Point, and was listed in the Alexandria City Directory as an electrician or electrical contractor until 1934.



MISCELLANEOUS

READ THIS

I will wire your home or place of business the way it should be wired, and I will furnish you fixtures at cost. I will run your service from pole to house and save you money. Phone and I will call. Large and small orders solicited. "If it's Electrical, I do it." Grover C. Payne, electrical contractor, 603 North Columbus street. Phone 1089-J. 110-6p.

He was also an avid sportsman . . . a passion he passed on to his six children, who were all athletic . . . and was active with community football and baseball teams in the 1920's.

' Practice game will be staged on the High School grounds Thursday between the Dreadnaught team and a picked team also from the club, under the direction of Grover C. Payne. "Rip" is working under cover on his line-up, having some "dark horses" to spring on the fans and will no doubt give the Dreadnaughts what is badly needed that is, stiff practice work, in preparation for Sunday's game with the crack Clarendon Club.

The Alexandria Dreadnaughts (above) were a local baseball team, though the same name was also used for the local football team at one point. In 1922 (right), coached by "Rip" Payne (in center, standing) the football team was known as "The Independents."

By 1942, Grover Payne had moved to Baltimore to work as an electrician for Bethlehem Steel and was no longer living with his wife and children. He died in Baltimore in 1951, but is buried beside his wife Ruth in Fairfax County, Va.



Ruth Deeton Payne was born in Alexandria in 1894. Her grandfather, George Deeton, had been the first keeper of the lighthouse at Jones Point, when it was initially lit in 1856. Several years later, he also participated in the Coroner's inquest following the Marshall House incident, which resulted in the first deaths of the Civil War.



Ruth was a kind, caring woman, who was active in the local Methodist Protestant Church for her entire life. During World War II, with her sons away, she not only cared for their wives and families but helped look after those of other local servicemen, as well.



Ruth in 1914 (above), the year before her wedding to "Cleve," as she called him; in East Potomac Park, ca. 1921, with (left to right) Harold, Jack and Francis.

As was the case with so many people across America during the Great Depression, money was tight, and the Paynes moved often. The boys helped out from a very young age, doing odd jobs and working part-time all over town. By 1936, "Mrs. Ruth Payne" was listed by herself in the Alexandria City Directory. She began work about this time as a saleswoman at the J.C. Penney department store on North Washington Street in Alexandria, a job she would keep until she retired in 1960.

Ruth Deeton Payne was a lifelong member of the Methodist Protestant Church in Alexandria, taught Sunday school, sang in the choir, and served as President of the Ladies Aid Society. Well aware of her own rich family history, she spent countless hours doing genealogical research, as well. Always exceptionally proud of being a "Five-Star Mother," Ruth passed away in 1984, and is buried in Mount Comfort Cemetery in Fairfax County, just south of Alexandria.

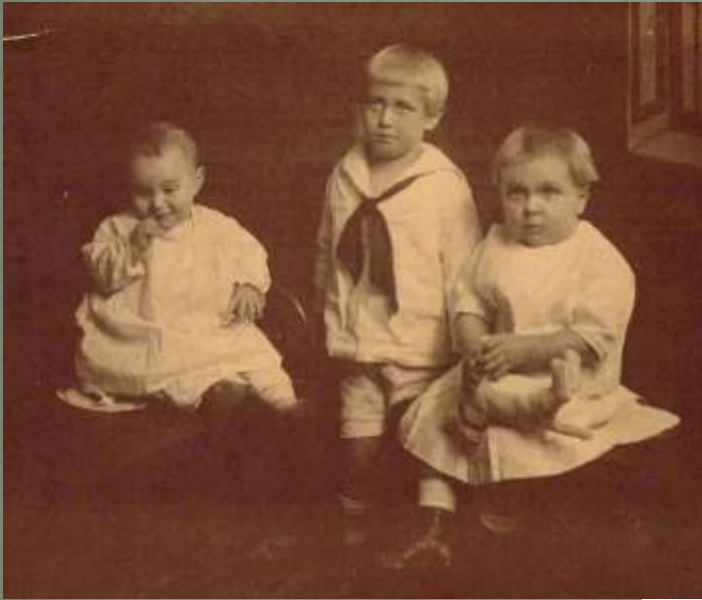


Ruth Payne in 1944 with (left to right) David, Ralph, Harold and Jack.



“A Pretty Rough Neighborhood”

Despite their mother's affectionate and loving guidance, the Payne boys grew up on the edges of a gritty, industrialized 1920's and -30's Alexandria, often playing in dusty vacant lots and abandoned buildings. In an oral history interview in 1999, Harold Payne remembered scavenging saleable glass and metal in the city dump along Montgomery Street, pick-up baseball games in the Quaker cemetery with headstones as bases, and having lunch with the guard at the jail. David Payne, the youngest, recalled that the five of them made up their own tight-knit little gang in what he recalled was “a pretty rough neighborhood.”



Sharply dressed Harold, Ralph and Francis in 1920 (above), and four of the five Payne brothers in the late 1920's, (left to right) Ralph, Francis, Harold and Jack.



Ralph Lucian Payne

Born in 1916, Ralph was the oldest of the five Payne brothers. At Alexandria High School, he played football and participated in drama, served on Student Council, and was a member of the school's Corps of Cadets. About the time that he neared graduation in 1933, in the depths of the Great Depression, his father's absence required that Ralph act as the head of the family. He had worked as a delivery boy for Timberman's Drug Store, but now took a job as a stenographer in the War Department, and was apparently a very skilled typist. By 1940, Ralph had saved enough money to enroll in the pre-law program at George Washington University, but put that off to enlist in the Army the following year.



Alexandria High School yearbook photo, 1933.

and was made a First Lieutenant and unit commander in the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division.

Ralph initially trained at Camp Wheeler in Georgia as part of the 4th Platoon, C Company, 8th Battalion, but by 1941 he was in the Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, GA. In 1942, he completed Parachute School,



In June, 1944, Ralph landed in Normandy with the rest of the 101st Airborne. As his unit fought through the hedgerow country of northern France, he carried out a number of dangerous reconnaissance missions for which he received the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart.



Back in Alexandria at a USO dance, he met a young English teacher named Mary Hubbard, and the two married in 1945. After the war, Ralph returned to law school, earned his degree from George Washington University, and practiced personal injury law in Alexandria. He was one of the organizers of the Northern Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, and past president of the Alexandria Bar Association.

(Above) Lt. Ralph Payne receives the Silver Star and congratulations from General Dwight D. Eisenhower in August, 1944; at Fort Ward Park in 1987 (right).

Ralph Payne died in 2008, and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



Francis William Payne



Often called “Fritz” by his brothers but always Francis by his mother, the second of the Payne boys was born in 1917. A member of the first class to graduate from the brand new George Washington High School in 1936, Francis was a beloved part of many activities at the school, and was voted both “Wittiest” and “Most Original.” Like his father, Francis worked as an electrician, and even built an electrostatic air cleaner for his mother, who suffered from emphysema.

In 1940, Francis married Mabel Dutton, and the couple welcomed Ruth’s first grandchild in August, 1941. The war came to America that December, and in the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Francis joined the U.S. Navy shortly

after Christmas. For most of his service, he was an Electrician’s Mate on the USS *Randolph*, an Essex-class aircraft carrier. In March, 1945, while the ship was anchored at Ulithi in the western Pacific, a Japanese twin-engine kamikaze plane crashed into the stern of the ship, killing twenty-seven sailors and damaging her so badly that emergency repairs took three weeks.



FRANCIS WILLIAM PAYNE

“The hero and the man”

Cadets '32, '33, '34, '35

Tonebrokers '33

Dramatics '33, '35

Surveyor Staff '35, '36, '37

Compass Staff '36, '37

Football '36

T. F. L. S. '34; President '35



(Upper left) On the left, with Harold, summer, 1921; (left) GWHS yearbook, 1936; (right) USS *Randolph* after kamikaze attack, 1945.

Altogether, Francis spent forty-two months in a combat zone, even manning an anti-aircraft gun at one point for an injured shipmate. After the war, he worked for the telephone company as an electrician, but returned to the Department of Defense as a member of the Naval Signal Corps. According to his son Bill, one of his tasks in that job involved setting up the secure hotline in the White House so that President Lyndon Johnson could communicate directly with the Soviet Union.



Liberty in Honolulu, 1945, his first in 5 months.

Francis Payne died in 1993, and is buried in Quantico National Cemetery, Prince William County, Virginia.



70th birthday at Fort Ward Park, 1987.

Harold Wilson Payne

Even in a family dedicated to doing for others, few people personify the word “service” like Harold Payne. Harold was born in 1919 and attended elementary school in the old Alexandria Academy building, which had been started with a gift from George Washington. Like his siblings, he worked at a variety of jobs as soon as he was old enough to contribute to the family’s income. As a teenager, he delivered groceries for a store in Market Square, as well as working in a slaughter house, a Safeway store, and for the local power company . . . as an electrician, like his father and brother Francis.

Also like Francis, Harold began secondary school in the old Alexandria High School on Cameron Street, but graduated from the new George Washington High School, in 1939. He was a star athlete who ran track, played football and baseball, and was also a member of numerous clubs.

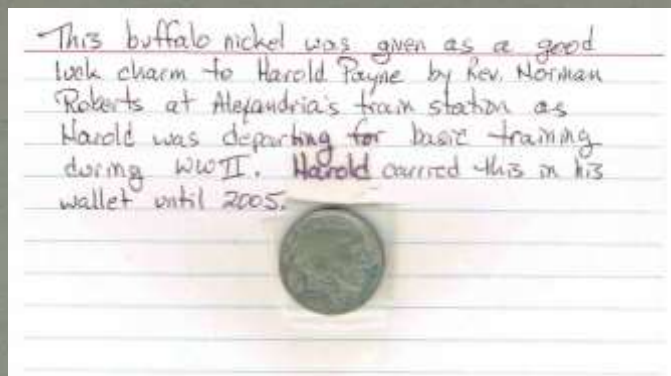


Harold in 1920.



(Left and above) At George Washington High School, 1938-1939.

Enlisting in the U.S. Navy in 1942, Harold originally wanted to be either a pilot or in submarines, but the Navy had other ideas and he wound up an Aviation Electrician's Mate. He trained in Newport, RI and eventually became Chief Petty Officer in charge of the electrical shop for VR-6, a transport squadron based at Dinner Key Naval Air Station near Miami, FL.



(Clockwise from far left) Harold Payne at Newport, 1942; his lucky nickel; CPO Payne (far right) with his crew at Dinner Key NAS; the VR-6 baseball team's outfielders (Harold kneeling on left).





In October 1944, Harold married his high school sweetheart, Morse Sheppard, in a small ceremony in Florida. A little over a year later, he had enough points to be discharged from the service, so he and Morse returned to Alexandria. An insurance job in Omaha and a short stint with the railroad in Potomac Yard was followed by a call back to the Navy in 1951. During the Korean conflict, he ran the electrical shop at the Quonset Point (RI) Naval Air Station. He later worked in his brother-in-law's appliance store on Mt. Vernon Avenue, before going back into the insurance business.

Harold and Morse in 1944 (left), and on a Home Beneficial Insurance Co. trip to the Bahamas, 1966; Sheppard & Conklin (right).



Buffalo Bills, . . . **HAL PAYNE**, former star guard with the Presidents in 1937 to '38, and also captain of the team, an All-Stater, will return to the city today from Omaha, Nebraska. **HAL'S** in the insurance business, and has been transferred to Washington . . . and that's that.

Newspaper clipping from 1949.

No doubt inherited from his mother, a strong desire to help people drove Harold Payne to join the Lions Club in Alexandria in 1954, giving him an outlet for that impulse for the rest of his life. In 2000, he received the prestigious Flora Krause Casey Award for his decades of work in various local public health efforts, which included the Casey Health Clinic for low-income patients, the McIver Braille Transcribers, the Old Dominion Eye Bank, and the Arlington Hearing Aid Center among many others. As he said in a 2000 newspaper interview about his award and service, “I grew up poor, and I wanted to help repay the efforts of other people who helped me.”

Harold Payne died in 2005.



Harold Payne as Alexandria's Registrar of Voters in the early 1980's (left), and working the Lions Club Sight & Hearing Screening mobile unit at the Alexandria Waterfront Festival in 1993 (standing under Lions' emblem above).

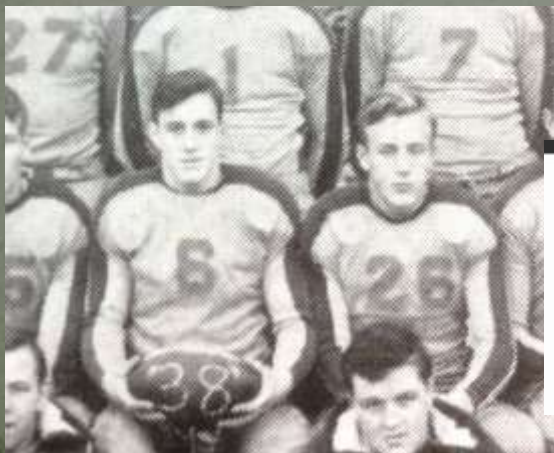
Grover Cleveland Payne, Jr.



Named for his father, Grover Cleveland Payne, Jr. took on the nickname “Jack” as a baby, and it stuck. He was born in 1920, and was the only one of the six Payne children to be born outside the home, entering the world at the 3-year-old Alexandria Hospital on Duke Street. Like his brothers, he knocked around the sandlots and wharves of Depression-era Alexandria and attended George Washington High School, where he excelled at sports. Jack played football (becoming Captain of the team the year after Harold), basketball and baseball, developing a life-long interest in youth sports along the way.

He completed a year at American University (during which he also played varsity football) before the war came along. Jack initially tried to join the Marines and then the Navy, but was rejected from both due to an eye condition. With his three older brothers already in the military, he enlisted in the Army and trained at Camp Lee, outside Petersburg, Va.

(Above) Jack (top, with hat) with neighborhood friends about 1929; (left to right, below) Harold (6) and Jack (26) on GW’s football team; 1940 GW yearbook; Captain Payne, the linebacker; on the basketball team (12) in 1939.



Jack Payne

This school-spirited senior has been active ever since he entered the halls of G. W. First he entered the Cadet Corps, where he rose to rank of corporal. Then his career as an athlete began. He has been on the varsity football, basketball, and baseball teams. He also found time to belong to the Pep, Glee, Monogram, and Dance Clubs.





In June of 1943, Jack was transferred to Washington & Lee University in Lexington, Va. for special training, a move that introduced him to Phebe Brownlee. Phebe was a Sergeant in the Women's Army Corps, but had also worked as a riveter in the Douglas Aircraft plant in California before entering the service. The two hit it off, and were married on New Year's Eve, the only day they could both arrange leave. The next year, expecting their first child, Phebe was discharged from the Army and moved to Alexandria, but she and "Baby Jack" reunited with the new father at his postings in Texas and then Arkansas. Orders to serve overseas sent Jack to Okinawa shortly before the Japanese surrender in 1945, and then to Korea as a member of the 382nd Station Hospital, 10th Army.



(Left to right) Sergeant Jack Payne, 1943; with Phebe, New Year's Eve, 1943; seventeen days in a tent and no dining table on Okinawa; First Sergeant Payne (on right) in Korea, 1945.



Following his discharge from the service in 1946, Jack returned to his pre-war job as a clerk with the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac RR, while he and his growing family lived just outside of Alexandria in Fairfax County. Like Harold, Jack also worked at the Sheppard & Conklin appliance store before serving as president of Amana-Metropolitan Food. In the early 1980's, he retired from a retail sales job at the Sears in Alexandria's Landmark Center. By that time, Jack and Phebe had been living in Springfield for some time, but he maintained his involvement in Northern Virginia community organizations and sports leagues. A Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Jack also served as Post Commander three different times, and participated in VFW and American Legion activities and trips. "The Linebacker," as family members called him, was also a charter member and the President of the Alexandria Sportsmen's Club, helped to organize the Alexandria Athletic Officials Association, and coached numerous youth teams.

Jack Payne died in 2014, and he and Phebe rest together at Quantico National Cemetery.



David Lee Payne

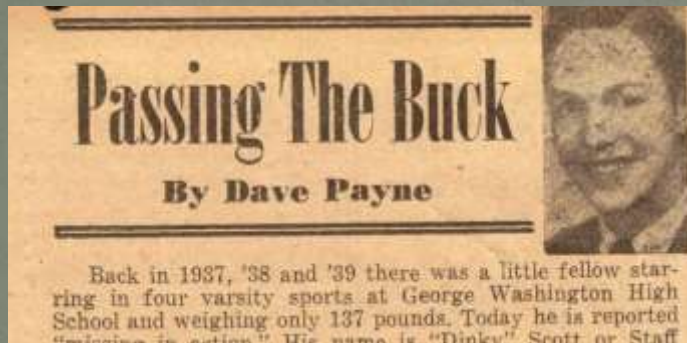
The youngest of the brothers, David Lee Payne was born in 1926. With four older brothers and an older sister, it was probably difficult to be heard in the Payne household, but David apparently developed “the gift of gab” according to his brother Jack, with whom he was close. He idolized his oldest brother Ralph, the war hero who was a father figure to him, as well as Harold, who David called “the best natural athlete I ever saw.”



David Payne ca. 1930 (left) and with his sister Nancy in 1932.



Smart, charming and handsome, David had a strong interest in sports, like his brothers, and was a good football player. His sports interests, though, also extended to announcing and reporting (high school sports column, left). Following graduation from George Washington High School in 1943, David enlisted as a Naval Aviation Cadet and participated in V-12 training programs at a variety of universities including Emory, Duke and the University of Miami.



David's dreams of being a pilot ended when he "washed out" of flight school for failing to pass the "vertigo test."

Spun in a chair and then required to stand, David always got sick; his service in the Navy was thus as an Air Traffic Controller and an Air Support Technician instead.



(Left to right) High school graduation, 1943; on the right with Francis, Phebe, and Jack's new son, 1944; on the left, with Harold in Miami, 1945.



After the war, David attended the University of Georgia, where he majored in journalism, played football, and even announced some of the games. By the time he received his degree in June 1949, he had also met and married Marilyn Jean Dillon, an attractive young woman who had worked as a model.



Pursuing a career in broadcasting in Virginia in the late 1940's proved to be a tough task, so David, Marilyn and their infant son headed west to California in 1950. There, David made the switch to work with Certified Grocers of California, moving rapidly up the ladder to executive sales. His brother Jack's observation that David could "sell snow to an Eskimo" proved true, as he often appeared in radio and television spots as a spokesperson.

(Left to right) The young happy couple in 1948; David and oldest son Tommy in 1950; the family in California, 1963.

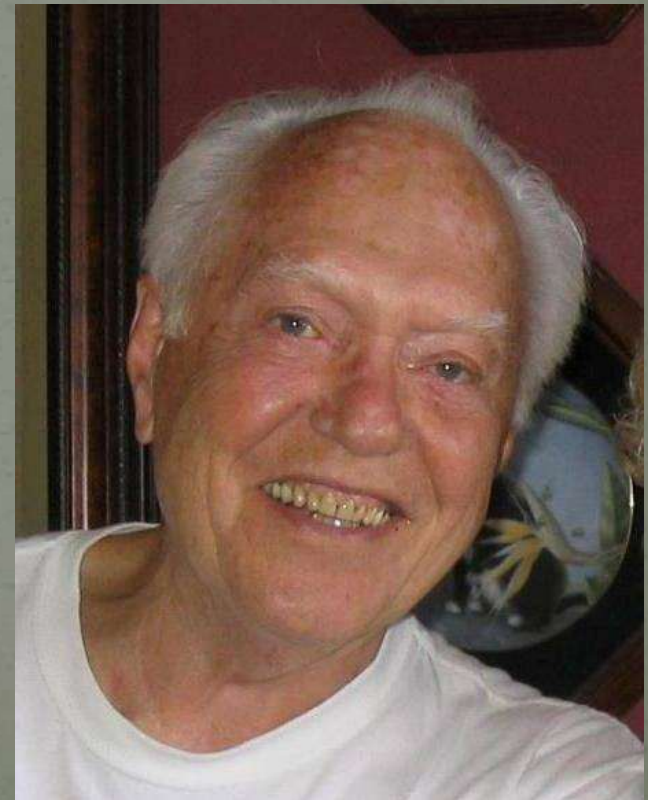


Having traveled a long road from the family poverty of the Great Depression, David Payne was the most financially successful of the brothers, but kept his success in perspective. The main value of money, he told his son Tom, late in life, was that it simply gave you more options.

David Payne passed peacefully in his sleep on September 5, 2014 . . . just three days after his beloved brother Jack.



Always a diehard Georgia Bulldogs fan, 2008.



Nancy Hope Payne

Ruth Payne's only feminine compatriot in her early household of rough-and-tumble boys was her daughter Nancy, who was born in 1923. Attractive and out-going, Nancy was the definition of "Most Popular," a title she earned well at George Washington High School. She was on the Executive Council of the Pep Club, which organized rallies and events and taught their fellow students songs, she was the Head Cheerleader when her brother Jack was Captain of the football team, and she performed in school plays.



(Left to right) With brother Jack in front of Christ Church, about 1926; with Pep Club Council, on far left; in dark sweater, as a sophomore cheerleader; description of "Grin and Bear It" from the GW yearbook, 1939.



"Grin and Bear It"

Resume: A comedy dealing with unsophisticated youth as it flutters uncertainly on the wings of sixteen. George and Terry McIntyre as played by Charles Biondi and Nancy Payne are the problem children who together with the other members of the cast provide moments of tenseness as they work out their adolescent problems. Betty Worsham again turns in a delightful performance as Prudence, the vamp, who tells George he is too young.

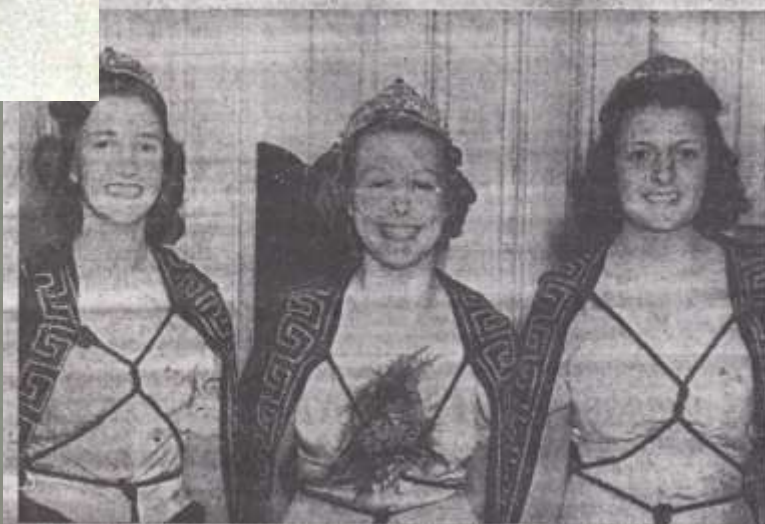
Outside of home and school, Nancy began to serve the community, as well. She joined "Job's Daughters" as a teenager, a service organization for young people who were related to a Mason; her father may have been Master of the historic Potomac Lodge in Georgetown at one time.



In May 1943, Nancy married John W. Cain, a United States Marine, and the couple had two daughters before the marriage ended. Another marriage to Samuel Banks gave her a son. In the early 1960's, she started working for the Federal Aviation Administration, which included three years in Alaska.

(Left to right) Senior picture at George Washington HS, 1941; the "Honored Queen" (center) in Job's Daughters, 1939; engagement announcement, 1943.

JOB'S DAUGHTERS INSTALL OFFICERS



Among newly-elected officers installed by Alexandria Belter No. 4 Job's Daughters on Saturday night in the Masonic Lodge 3000s were these three members who will assist in the administration of business in 1940. Left to right, Katherine Shereva, senior princess; Nancy Payne, honored queen; and Charlotte Runalds, junior princess.

Staff Photo by Park



ENGAGED TO MARINE—Plans for the wedding of Miss Nancy Hope Payne and Pvt. John Wallace Cain of Arlington will depend upon his orders in the Marine Corps, but the couple expects to be married in the near future. The bride-elect who has four brothers in the armed services is the daughter of Mrs. Ruth D. Payne of 11 West Spring Street. Her fiancé is the son of Byron H. Cain, quartermaster clerk in the Marine Corps, and Mrs. Cain of 2915 Sixth Street, South, in Arlington.—(Photo by Loran Studio).

Through the years, Nancy remained close to her mother and five loving brothers. Nieces and nephews remember her for being as kind and lovely in person as she appears in photographs.



Nancy Payne passed away in 1999, and is buried at Mt. Comfort Cemetery with her parents.

(Left) Nancy with her mother and brothers in 1958; at Fort Ward Park with the boys in 1987 (below).



This is the “Sons in Service” flag that Ruth Deeton Payne hung in her window after her fifth son, David, enlisted in the U. S. Navy. Thankfully, she never had to affix a gold star over any of the blue ones, to indicate that she had lost one of her boys.



The Payne family gathered to celebrate Mother's Day in 1958, on the steps of the Alexandria Methodist Protestant Church, Alexandria, Va.



Thank You

The staff of The Lyceum relentlessly pursued various members of the Payne family for information and photographs to help tell the story of these five men, their parents, and sister. Everyone we talked to was friendly and helpful, as well as pleased to know that the brothers' service would once again be recognized. We would especially like to acknowledge the assistance of Harold Payne Jr., Mary Payne Krombel, Virginia Payne, and Thomas Payne.

This journey actually began about sixteen years ago, when Jack Payne came to The Lyceum to add his family's story to an exhibit in progress about Alexandria and the Second World War. He was wonderful to know and to work with, and while talking about his brothers, showed the same smile that appears in most pictures of him. I am honored to have met him, and to have the chance to preserve some memories of his family's service.

Jim Mackay, Director