



It is with a heavy heart that I report the passing of Byrd Saville.

Byrd H. Saville, Jr., age 92, passed away peacefully on Christmas Day, 2023. He was predeceased by his wife of nearly 67 years, Judith Ann Saville, and his younger brother Walter Saville.

Byrd was born in Atlanta, Ga. on November 21, 1931. Forced to permanently leave home at age 9, he grew up in Dahlonoga, Ga. under the care of Hayley E. Montague, a retired Director of the Georgia State YMCA. Byrd served as President of the school student body during his junior year of high school and excelled at basketball, baseball, and English literature. Byrd entered the Navy at age 17 serving in the Pacific during the Korean War. He trained as a radar operator and served aboard the USS Requin, the Navy's first radar picket submarine.

Byrd left the Navy after meeting Judith Ann Bloomgren to marry in April 1953. Judy and Byrd lived thereafter on the Peninsula, first on Back Creek in Hampton, then for nearly 60 years in the Hidenwood section of Newport News.

Byrd began his career with GMAC but quickly moved to Suttle Motor Corporation where he met longtime mentor and friend, George Suttle. In 1961 Byrd entered the real estate industry joining Harrison & Lear Realtors where he remained active for 50 years. At Harrison & Lear Byrd initially sold single-family homes but soon moved into commercial brokerage specializing in complex land assemblage for national retailers and local investors. He was also a general partner in various Harrison and Lear-sponsored residential and commercial development projects.

Byrd was active in the community serving a variety of organizations including the United Way where he Chaired the first annual campaign on the Peninsula to achieve \$1 million in contributions. He was also a member and later Chair of the Regional Redevelopment & House Authority, a member of the Virginia Peninsula Economic Development Counsel, a member of the Board of Riverside Hospital System's rehabilitation operating unit, and later Riverside Hospital System. He was also a Board member of Newport News Saving Bank where he fought for change during the Savings & Loan crisis. Byrd generously contributed time and money to support his favorite local elected representatives.

Byrd was a competitive sportsman throughout his life. In the 1970s he was widely recognized as a leading sailboat racer on the lower Chesapeake Bay and was the inaugural winner of the Blackbeard Trophy awarded by Hampton Yacht Club. He won or placed in dozens of one-design regattas and was sought after by owners to skipper larger racing yachts. Byrd snow skied for forty years on mountains throughout the American West and was a regular participant in amateur NASTAR racing events, repairing, and tuning his equipment. At age 50 Byrd took up golf in earnest, eventually achieving a single-digit handicap for a short time and playing and winning his flight in tournaments throughout the year. Finally, at age 60, Byrd became an accomplished sailplane pilot flying his high-performance glider until nearly 80. He also spent time hunting and fishing, even reloading his shotgun shells.

Byrd belonged to Warwick Yacht Club, Hampton Yacht Club, and James River Country Club where he encouraged (some say harassed) the Greens Committee to improve playing conditions. He was also a long-time member of Newport News Rotary, the Hampton Roads German Club, and multiple bible study groups.

In more recent times Byrd became an active member of the United States Submarine Veterans Association promoting the national visibility of his old boat, the Requin, which is on display at the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh.

Faith was central in Byrd's life, and he was a member of the Hidenwood Presbyterian and later First Presbyterian Church. The reverend Walter Kennedy was a force in Byrd's life, and he lived in the belief of Walter's Irish benediction:

May the Light of God shine through you,
and the Grace of God renew you,
and the Love of God pursue you,
today, tomorrow, and all your life's tomorrows,
till time shall be no more.

Known to many as a recontour of legendary proportion, Byrd, despite little formal education or professional training, took full advantage of his opportunity in life. He is survived by his only child, B. Hagen Saville, daughter-in-law Eve M. Saville, and three granddaughters, Eva, age 23, and twins, Charlotte and Leigh, age 20.

Although the family will celebrate his life in private, donations in Byrd's name can be made to Tidewater Soaring Society, 14212 Iron Mine Springs Rd., Windsor, Va. 23487.

The family would like to thank the many caregivers at the Huntington assisted living and Newport skilled nursing facilities for their tireless service in the final year of Byrd's life.

The Base Commander and individual members of the Hampton Roads Base of the USSVI.org wish to extend heartfelt condolences to the family, and also formally recognize Byrd's submarine service-connected contributions as a radioman aboard [USS *Requin* \(SS/SSR/AGSS/IXSS-481\)](#) and to the security of the United States.