



“Jerry was a great guy and just a wonderful human being. Anything he could do for people, he would do it”

*Linda Hartley
2014*



chapter 7.2

JERRY LEE HARTLEY

Eldon & Verda’s second-born (b. 1948 - d. 2013)

Written by Jerry’s cousin, Kenneth Brown, which includes information submitted by Jerry’s widow, Linda O’Niel.

Jerry Lee Hartley was born on March 28, 1948, in a house built for his parents on a place that was called Grandma Hartley’s “upper forty.” The place wasn’t far from Grandma Hartley’s Williams Hollow farm house and was near the village of Arden which, by 1948, was pretty much a ghost town.

At the time of his birth, Jerry’s big brother, Raymond, would have been five years old.

In 1951, Eldon, Verda and the two boys left and moved to Wichita, KS. Eldon began working for Boeing Aircraft Company, and eventually the family was able to buy a nice brick home in Haysville south of Wichita.

{Ken’s Flashback -- I guess it was 1957 when my mom, Jerry’s Aunt Kiree, moved us from Ava, MO, to south Wichita. Jerry was on a youth league baseball team there in Haysville, and he invited me to join. I did, and we had a really great time together on that team. Jerry was a steady second baseman, and I thought he was a great little baseball player--better than I was for sure.

I was around Jerry and his family a lot during Jerry’s pre-teen years. I think I spent many nights at their house. Never a dull moment around that house. Jerry was this amiable little tike who was always pleasant and easy going. As for his brother, Raymond, well, I loved him dearly; but with Raymond, I just had to grab onto his belt and just see where he would drag me.}

Jerry grew up in Haysville and south Wichita. He attended Haysville Elementary Schools and later went on to graduate from Haysville’s Campus High School in 1967 and joined the U.S. Navy that same year.

Jerry Ships Out in 1967

Jerry spent four years of active duty in the U.S. Navy, all

served in Norfolk, Virginia. It was in Norfolk in 1969 that Jerry met his soul mate, Linda Louise O’Niel, in a Krispy Kreme donut shop. The two were married in Norfolk on April 23, 1971.

After Jerry and Linda were married, they returned to Wichita. Following in the footsteps of his

brother, Raymond, Jerry joined the Wichita Police Department and was on the force seven years. Then he began restoring cars out of his garage in Mulvane, KS, a community outside southeast Wichita.

Then in 1980, Jerry’s knowledge of cars and car bodies led him to his next job as an auto claims adjuster for Farmers Insurance Group. Jerry worked up in the organization and became a Catastrophe Supervisor for Farmers. He led a team of six adjustors who would be sent by Farmers to specific spots around the country where there had been major catastrophes: (e.g., storms, floods or fires).

The team had a huge RV, and they would be driven to the site of the catastrophe, and they would work out of it. Jerry got to see a lot of country but also saw a lot of heartache in his work at those disaster areas.

Jerry retired from Farmers Insurance in 2012 after 31 years with the company.

During most of the time Jerry pursued civilian careers, he remained in the U.S. Naval Reserves; and Linda was enlisted as well. He retired from the Naval Reserves in 2002. Linda retired just five years later in 2007.

Retirement Cut Short

The last time I saw Jerry was in August 2012 at the funeral of his older brother, Raymond. A few years earlier, Jerry, Linda and Aunt Verda made a trip down into the



Jerry with his brother, Raymond, in their Wichita Police uniforms in the mid 1970s

Jerry’s Life in a Nutshell

- Born Douglas County, MO in 1948
- Graduated Haysville Campus High School in 1967
- Joined U.S. Navy in 1967. Retired from the U.S. Naval Reserves in 2002
- Jerry married Linda O’Niel in 1971
- Careers: Wichita police officer (seven years), restored car bodies, claims adjustor with Farmers Insurance for 31 years; retired in 2012
- Retired to South Boston, VA in 2012
- Died of cancer on August 7, 2013, at age of 65





Above, Jerry's 1950s childhood Haysville home. Photo taken in 2008 after the original red brick had been painted.

Ozarks where I lived, and they stayed the night with Joy and me. We had a really quality visit that time. Otherwise, I saw Jerry at funerals--first his Dad's, then his Mom's, and finally Raymond's. And at all those gatherings, Jerry was busy handling all the arrangements for the family--he was on duty.

To me Jerry is still that steady little second-base-man, doing his job and taking care of people. In what his widow, Linda, sent to me, she said what most of the Hartley cousins already know, "Jerry was a great guy and just a wonderful human being. Anything he could do for people, he would do it."

But Linda also says that Jerry loved antique shops and flea markets. That I did not know.

The last time I talked to Jerry was in late spring of 2013. I had called him to tell him of our plans for this Hartley book you're reading now. In the conversation, he told me he'd developed an interest in Civil War history, and was looking forward to visiting sites over in Virginia where he lived.

After I told Jerry our Great Grandfather, William Hartley, had served for four years in the Union Army and was part of the "March to the Sea" under the command of General Sherman, Jerry volunteered to help research that for us.

I don't have all the details, but I'm guessing Jerry did not yet know of the cancer within him that would take his life just a few months later.

In the notes I received from Linda, she stated: "we did not have children, because it was not in God's plan." We all struggle to understand how Jerry's sudden death, just at the time he could enjoy his free time with Linda, could have been in God's plan. Rest in peace, my cousin.



At left, Linda (O'Niel) and Jerry Hartley, 1972



At left, Jerry and Linda with Jerry's Mom, Verda. Photo taken at the 2000 Hartley Reunion near Clearwater KS.



Above, last known picture of Jerry; it was sent out by his widow with his obituary



At left, Eldon Hartley and his daughter-in-law, Linda (O'Niel) Hartley pick strawberries from Eldon's garden on VanDale Street in south Wichita