



## Claude Garland Martin

April 11, 2026

Claude Garland Martin, 80, died on Saturday, April 11, 2026, at Brethren Village, Lancaster, PA.

He was born in South Boston, Virginia, the son of the late Claude G. and Lula Francis Martin.

Claude was married for 58 years to the former Jane Lenz of Newport News, VA. He graduated from Halifax County High School. Claude was also a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and business administration. He was also a graduate of Smithdeal Massey Business College with an Associate Degree in business.

Claude was a Specialist 1st Class in the United States Army stationed in Germany for three years. He was formally employed by the Richmond Times-Dispatch in the circulation department. Claude was also a Certified Public Accountant with Arthur Young Associates C.P.A., Richmond, VA.

At age 35, he became President and CEO of Lancaster Leaf Tobacco Company and was there until retiring as Chairman of the Board. Claude was a former member of the Hamilton Club, various golf clubs, and tobacco organizations. His work took him to many countries in the Far East, Europe, Africa, South America, and the USA.

Claude was an unaffiliated Christian. He had many interests, including gardening, golfing, traveling, fishing, and his numerous cats and dogs.

He is survived by his wife, Jane Lenz Martin; his sister, Margaret M. Blair, Richmond, VA.; his sister-in-law, Dr. Nancy Lenz Harvey of Williamsburg, VA; his numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

He was greatly admired by his family, friends, and co-workers. He was a firm believer in hard work, honesty, and integrity.

Claude was a generous supporter of education, animal shelters, St. Jude's Children's Hospital, and Mount Vernon. His family is grateful to the doctors and nurses of the Anne B. Barshinger Cancer Institute for their kindness and efforts on his behalf.

A Graveside Service will be held at the Peninsula Memorial Park, 12750 Warwick Blvd. Newport News, VA 23605 on Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 11:00 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate contributions to any of the institutions mentioned above.

Please visit Claude's memorial page at [www.TheGroffs.com](http://www.TheGroffs.com)

# Previous Events

## Graveside

APR **16**. 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

Peninsula Memorial Park  
12750 Warwick BLVD  
Newport News, VA 23606

# Tribute Wall

MO

“ Jane - it was my honor and privilege to serve with Claude for many years as part of the Universal Leaf family. He was a thoughtful, intelligent person who always treated me and his fellow colleagues with respect. I will treasure the memories and trips to LLTC that Claude help make memorable. Praying you through this difficult time of loss. Mike O.

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**Mike Oberschmidt** - April 19 at 08:08 AM

TW

“ Hi Jane,

*Eden and I send our condolences to you. Hard to process Claude has left you and all he touch throughout his life.*

*I was so glad to have been able to talk to him on the phone even though we were on the other side of the world.*

*I owe Claude so much, for the opportunities he gave to me and others. His loyalty was above reproach.*

*I, we, will miss him so much and I pray your sorrow will be tempered by your many happy memories together.*

*God bless you Jane, God bless Claude.*

*My many memories of him and you will remain with me forever.*

*Tom and Eden Walsh*

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**Thomas Walsh** - April 19 at 01:33 AM

BP

“ Dear Jane,

*I am overwhelmed with the sad news of Claude.*

*During his active period in LLTC, I had the pleasure working in your husbands special team.*

*It was Claude who gave me the confidence and trust during my first years as general manager in Indonesia.*

*His support and patience gave me the opportunity to make me a better person. Although he was my boss, he often gave me the feeling being a dear friend.*

*I don't think that many employees will talk so positive about their boss, but for sure all of his employees will probably feel the same.*

*Luckily I had the opportunity talking to him lately which made this conversation extra special.*

*Claude will be remembered as a very special person with a great heart. I will dearly miss him.*

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**BEREND PRUMMEL** - April 15 at 11:06 AM

HR

“ *In the early '70's Claude and I worked together at Arthur Young on audits of Universal and Lancaster Leaf. We had many trips together to Lancaster where we worked and played hard. He was a people person. We both ended up leaving Arthur Young to work for our client. Claude went to Lancaster a few years after I joined Universal. He led what we called the "dark" business to new heights as the company expanded via acquisitions of Dutch and German companies that had dark air-cured operations. We put all the dark air cured businesses into one group and Claude became its leader. He managed a wide range of personalities into a successful team, no small feat. I admired his ability to do that with humility and a sense of humor. He was well loved and respected in the company and a friend to many. I regret that we drifted apart in retirement. We were friends and colleagues throughout our careers. Hart Roper*

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**Hart Roper** - April 15 at 08:46 AM

WU

“ Hello Jane! I was glad to be able to talk to Claude a few weeks ago. I wish I could have thanked him for hiring me and getting me into the tobacco industry. He was also the one who promoted me to President of Lancaster Phils in 1994 when I was 33 years old. He was one of my best mentors. We shared a lot of very good and challenging moments together which i will forever cherish. We will keep him in our prayers and memories.  
Winston Uy

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**Winston Uy** - April 14 at 10:05 PM

NS

“ Claude was a consummate professional and an enormous contributor to Lancaster Leaf and Universal. More importantly, he was an even better person. I shall always treasure our friendship and the rewarding times we spent together.  
Ned Schaaf

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**Ned Schaaf** - April 14 at 12:39 PM

DH

“ Claude was a great boss and usually looked on the brightside of things. He will be missed. Jane, I will keep you in my prayers and know you have a friend to listen when you need it. Diane Jackson Hastings

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**Diane B Hastings** - April 14 at 12:30 PM

TG

“ Miss Jane, Claude was a very dear colleague and friend. He was one of a kind and will be remembered fondly. Although he has gained his wings, his spirit will surely be with you. May all your memories make you smile and know he is watching over you. Know that all the times spent with you and Claude, lunches, parties and even the yard sale were fun and the love you shared was evident.

May Hod continue to wrap his arms around you during this time and in the future. God bless. Tami

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**Tami Gehris** - April 14 at 12:24 PM

LB

“ Sincere condolences from Larry Benjamin & Family...

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**Larry Benjamin** - April 14 at 10:18 AM

TF

“ The Blair Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Claude Garland Martin.



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**The Blair Family** - April 13 at 07:43 PM

JR

“ We will miss the times spent with Claude at his home in Lancaster. He and Jane always showed us much kindness and good food. Even when we showed up with friends they were welcome in their home. We will miss him but God has a better home for him.

*Love Joe and Lee Rice*

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**Joe and Lee Rice** - April 12 at 11:31 PM

NC

“ Dear Jane, My heart ached for Claude and you and all that you have likely been through. I always enjoyed Claude's and your visits to the dental office. You became special people to me after so many years. It warms my heart every time I use the flower vase you gifted me. I wish you well during your new season of life. Sincerely  
*Celeste Neuhard*

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**Neuhard Celeste** - April 12 at 04:19 PM

BD

“ Dear Jane,  
Nonnie and I are saddened to learn of Claude's passing, Claude was a trusted colleague and I will cherish our good times together. In our retirement years I always enjoyed our golf outings in Pinehurst at the Pinecrest Inn with all of Claude's friends and business associates.  
*Rest in Peace dear friend, you will be missed.*  
*Barry F Dillehay*

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**Barry Dillehay** - April 12 at 09:08 AM