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Continuing the Tradition ~ Preserving Our History

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This issue is dedicated to our dearly departed, forever missed friend

Glenn V. Laxton

1942—2016

* trivia master * FOOD ENTHUSIAST * *Emmy award winner* *

* **Jerry Lee Lewis junkie** * BELOVED FRIEND * *volunteer*



world traveler * WISH GRANTER * *writer* * movie extra

* history nut * *captivating story teller* * Laurel & Hardy fanatic * *father*

Glenn V. Laxton, 1942-2016



This past June, the Blackstone Valley Historical Society lost one of its most valuable human assets with the death of board member, Glenn Laxton. Glenn was most known for his career as a local television news reporter, but it was as an observer and recorder of state and local history that he made his mark with us.

For decades he survived and mastered the news Niagara that made his life of morning and evening television deadlines. In the local news business, the 24 hour/seven days a week largely was framed by breathless stories of Rte 95 car accidents, inner city house fires, and the hi-jinks and lo-jinks at the State House. Somehow, in the seemingly endless flood of 'blink and bling,' Glenn made time to step back and capture 'Not-to-be-Forgotten' portraits of the individuals in Rhode Island who made up everyday life. He provided the 'perspective of time,' historical insight. In the 'Gotcha' world of sound-bites, Glenn sunk his teeth into the more meaningful meat of the news scene and provided considered judgment for those of us made dizzy by the Crescent Park-like carousel of stories that passed for the history of our times. In the local news world, sometimes a knock-off equivalent of Rhode Island's inexpensive costume jewelry business, Glenn was the Gorham-like craftsman fashioning more durable and substantial products. He shared these insights while accomplishing a side career in popular music, a twenty-year stint in the RI National Guard concluding with the rank of Major, carrying on a vigorous family life, being a movie extra, following baseball, and serving on the boards of civic entities like the RI Heritage Hall of Fame, and the Blackstone Valley Historical Society.

Glenn is not-to-be forgotten. – Al Klyberg.



Glenn Laxton had a very special bond with the Blackstone Valley Historical Society.

The first presentation that Glenn did for the Society was in 2007 about the history of "Lonsdale Bakery, Joseph Jenks Arnold, prop., Est. 1875". The Bakery building, a replica of which stands on our property, was on the grounds of his mother's childhood home and, as a child; she actually played in the building. Glenn donated memorabilia relating to the bakery to the Society.

2008 marked the start of the 50th anniversary year of the Blackstone Valley Historical Society. As part of the celebration, a video documentary was commissioned by the Society. Called, "In Your Own Backyard: 50 Years Preserving and Promoting Our Blackstone Valley Heritage," the documentary was written and narrated by **Glenn Laxton** This BVHS 50th Anniversary documentary has captured the essence of the Blackstone Valley so that others might be inspired to get involved with the Historical Society.

In 2011 Glenn shared his many years of correspondence with one of comedy's most famous individuals. As a young boy, **Glenn Laxton** wrote letter to comedian Stan Laurel, and surprisingly, Mr. Laurel answered him. This led to a long correspondence with the tall, thin half of the Laurel & Hardy duo. He also showed us examples of Laurel & Hardy's skits.

Always one to help out, Glenn, at the last minute, narrated the December, 2015 talk on Albion. He stepped in the Bob Tessier, who became ill at the last minute.

Truly a man "not to be forgotten". – Pat Armitage

I guess one of the fondest memories I have of Glenn would be when we worked together on our WWII ceremony honoring about 30 Lime Rock Grange members. I asked Glenn to interview the 6 veterans that lived nearby with a camera man. Glenn jumped eagerly at the task and helped preserve our History and now we are lucky enough to have that footage forever. Also, Glenn suggested we ask retired RI Army National Guard General Reggie Contracio to bring his band and play music of that era. It turned into a full blown USO dance! The big surprise was when we heard the music switch gears from the 40's to the 50's we all turned around and there was Glenn with the band backing him as he sang and played an outstanding version of Jerry Lee Lewis's " Great balls of fire ". Glenn was great! I was blown away. He will be sadly missed.

-Jason Dionne

It was wonderful to have a chance to work with such a talented and kind person. Last November, when Bob Tessier had unexpected health problems, Glenn gave Bob's presentation on the Early Settlers of Albion for him. When I mentioned that I was trying to find out information about the Lincoln Woods Dairy, he was instantly interested and started helping me research. We will miss him so much.

-Lori Melucci

Glenn was a very quiet, soft-spoken, and honest gentleman. He loved and respected History and the people who created such (History). His love of the History of the Blackstone Valley in particular was endless. He will truly be missed by all who ever had the pleasure of either knowing him for many years or briefly in conversation.

-Bob Ferri