



Ralph Terrell Simmons

January 27, 1933 - September 14, 2015

Ralph Terrell Simmons (Col. U.S. Army, ret.) passed from this earth to the blessings of a Heavenly home on Sept. 14, 2015, after a valiant fight with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). Ralph was welcomed into this world on Jan. 27, 1933 by his parents Colby (C. D.) and Linnie Cockrell Simmons, and by older brother Charles E. Simmons. All of them predeceased him.

He was a life-time member of First Baptist Church in Laurel, growing up through Sunbeams, Royal Ambassadors, B.T.U. and V.B.S. He was baptized by the Rev. Lewis Gee Gates. He served his church in many ways throughout the years. As a teenager he ran the controls for services to be aired on radio, and then much later he taught Sunday School classes for shut-ins on television. He sang in the choir, served as a deacon and was chairman of the Building Committee for the Laurel FBC Family Life Center.

Ralph's education consisted of Lamar Elementary, Stewart M. Jones Jr. High and George S. Gardner High School. He then graduated from Mississippi Southern college with a Bachelor of Science degree. He was of member of Kappa Alpha social fraternity, and Omicron Delta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi honorary societies. He participated in ROTC, and as a 2nd Lt. then 1st Lt. he served two years active duty in the Army, being stationed at Fort Sill, OK and Fort Bragg, NC. Showing great potential he was offered the opportunity to attend Finance School, which he accepted. He was then assigned as Finance Officer at a base in Orleans, France. Ralph continued in the Army Reserves until he retired as a Colonel.

Jobs were scarce when Ralph finished his active service, and after a couple of years working with an Army buddy at his father's car dealership, Ralph began his business career with Northern Electric Company. He served the company for 32 years through several name changes, and traveled extensively as Treasurer, then as V. P. of Sunbeam Oster. After retirement, Ralph was co-founder and served on the Board of the First National Bank of the Pine Belt. Ralph was a very active alumni of Mississippi Southern University, at one time serving as President of the World-Wide Alumni Association. He was a member of the USM Hall of Fame. He was a giving person, not only to USM but to several other colleges including Jones County Jr. College where he served on the Board of Directors and William Carey University. He was a member of the Kiwanis Club and was Lt. Gov. of the La.-Ms.-West Tenn. District of Kiwanis International. The Laurel Kiwanis Club honored Ralph by naming the Most Pancake Ticket Sales plaque in his honor. He was President of the Laurel Sertoma Club and was also honored by the Junior Auxiliary League as "Humanitarian of the Year." He supported many charities, including the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and the Wounded Warrior Project. He loved his family, as well as his many close friends and their families. Surviving him are: his sister Doris Simmons Whitcomb and husband Glenn (loved like a brother) of Baytown, TX; his nephew and four nieces: Patrick Simmons of Biloxi, MS; Laurel Simmons Hill (and husband Bruce) of Tylertown, MS; Kay Lynn Whitcomb; Nancy Whitcomb Hall (and husband Mark) of Baytown, TX; and Betsi Whitcomb Johnson (and husband Heath) of Dripping Springs, TX. Ralph's relationships with his two great nieces and four great nephews was much closer than most. With love and support: Rachel Hill of Tylertown; Whitney Hall, Hunter Whitcomb Hall and Garrett Simmons Hall of Baytown; Colt Johnson of Tulsa, OK and Case Whitcomb Johnson of Dripping Springs.

Ralph received wonderful care during his battle with ALS from Dr. Jack Evans, who supported him medically, spiritually and as a friend. The family wishes to express their heartfelt thanks to him as well as to Ralph's steadfast friends

who came to see him almost every day.

The family also wants to give their deep appreciation to K&A Divine Caregiving Service and individual care givers: Ketrenia Hare, Evelyn McAdoo, and Johnny Cooley. Without their loving care Ralph would not have been able to stay in the home he had lived in since he was ten years old. Services will be 2:00 pm Saturday Sept. 19 at Memory Chapel in Laurel, with visitation at 1:00 pm. Dr. Randy Turner will lead, with special music by Mark Hall and Jonathan McKenzie.

Pallbearers: Randy Moore, David Rice, Noel Rogers, Bob Gholson, Lowell Howell, Bob Pierce, Grayson Lacey, Kent Holifield, John Randall Moore, Charles Lightsey, Michael Cudworth and Mit Cole.

Honorary Pallbearers: His Sunday School class, members of Kiwanis club and dear friends.

In lieu of flowers, please honor Ralph with donations to the Wounded Warrior Project or the Salvation Army.

Tribute Wall

GG

“ *Ralph was a dear friend and will be sadly missed.*

George and Janice Gavin - September 19, 2015 at 03:17 PM

FC

“ *A quiet man of faith and integrity. He will be missed. First Baptist Laurel will never be the same. Our condolences.*

Fred and Melinda Cooley - September 18, 2015 at 03:45 PM

SB

“ *Doris and family I will be unable to see you Saturday due to a family commitment I will cover that day in prayer. Ralph was such a pillar in Woody's and my life. He loved my Meg and Daniel like his own. Supporting prayers Sharon Barham*

Sharon Barham - September 17, 2015 at 08:28 AM

EL

“ *Ralph was an incredible man of faith and integrity! Dedicated to others and unselfish. Always asked to pray at meetings and gatherings as his prayer was always the epitome of godly communication. He was a great friend and counted him as a "foxhole buddy" as you could always depend on him to be faithful to his commitments. He will be sorely missed by many but we all know his relationship with the Lord and His Word was exemplary. We know he went by express travel to be with our Saviour and no longer has to deal with the afflictions here on earth. Praise be for the Christian example he was and continues to be to so may others! I regret i will have to be out of state and miss the funeral but know that he will continue in my thought daily ongoing till i depart as well. Farewell my friend! Ed Langton Hattiesburg, MS Fellow USM alum and believer.*

Ed Langton - September 16, 2015 at 11:45 AM

DD

“ *Ralph was a great friend.*

Donald G Driskell - September 15, 2015 at 03:20 PM