



Ralph Bardwell Murray

July 30, 1929 - January 6, 2024

On January 6, 2024, Ralph Bardwell Murray passed away at the age of 94, following a brief period of declining health. Born in Atlanta on July 30, 1929, to Leonard Ely Murray and Mary Shorter Bardwell Murray, Ralph grew up on Mathieson Drive in Buckhead, attended R. L. Hope Elementary School and graduated from North Fulton High School in 1947. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia in 1951, where he was a member of the Ga Beta Chapter of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity. A talented pianist, Ralph entertained more than a few revelers at SAE over his four years, including his beloved Virginia Claire Simmons, of Bainbridge, Georgia, with whom he would have celebrated 73 years of marriage on March 17, 2024.

Following graduation from UGA, Ralph enlisted in the Air Force, serving as a Second Lieutenant during the Korean War. He and Virginia Claire subsequently settled in Bainbridge, where Ralph began his career with Elberta Crate and Box Company and served as manager of the Simmons farm. The young family would later relocate to North Palm Beach, Florida, while Ralph managed Elberta's South Florida operations. Upon his retirement from Elberta in 1992, Ralph and Virginia Claire returned home to Georgia and embarked on a thirty-year adventure that took them from Reynolds Plantation at Lake Oconee to The Landings in Savannah, and ultimately, to Buford, where they settled near their daughter, Mary Ellen Ward, and her family. The two were seldom apart, enjoying Sunday drives and weekends in the mountains of

North Carolina, where they enjoyed a home at Lake Toxaway for many years. The consummate gentleman, Ralph was a gregarious and humorous blue-eyed soul who loved a good newspaper, a cold Coca-Cola, and driving just a little too fast on the back roads of Georgia. He was an avid golfer and fisherman in his younger years, and especially loved entertaining his grandchildren aboard his boat, the "Ginny Sea." Ralph was also an accomplished cook, with a heavy focus on dessert and a bag of Starlight mints always at the ready. His lifelong passion for music transcended every genre, from jazz and blues to classical, and he could still tickle the ivories well into his nineties. It brought him great joy to be able to share his talents with his grandchildren, and he delighted in their own achievements, musical and otherwise. Ralph is survived by his loving wife, Virginia Claire Murray, and their four children, Mary Ellen Ward (Earl), Ralph Bardwell Murray, Jr., David Simmons Murray (Suzanne), and Mark Estes Murray (Sarah). He is also survived by his nine beloved grandchildren, Lauren Ward Bess (Jason), John Murray Ward, Ralph Bardwell Murray, III (Lacey), Palmer Andrew Murray, David Simmons Murray, Jr., Elizabeth Murray Kline (Max), Mark Estes Murray, Jr., Thomas Spencer Murray, and James Simmons Murray, as well as four beloved great-grandchildren, Emerson Claire Bess, Ellen Catherine Bess, Lauren Ramsay Bess, and Oliver James Kline. Ralph was predeceased by his daughter-in-law, Margaret Palmer Murray, his parents, Leonard and Mary Murray, and his brother, Leonard Ely Murray, Jr. and his wife, Julie. Ralph was also a member of the Rotary Club of Bainbridge, A man of deep faith, he was an acolyte at The Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta, and a vestry member of St. John's Episcopal Church in Bainbridge, St. Mark's Episcopal Church in North Palm Beach, St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Savannah, and a founding member of Holy Cross Cathedral in Loganville. A funeral service will be held at Holy Cross Church, 3836 Oak Grove Road, Loganville, GA, 30052, on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 10:00 am, followed immediately by interment in Oconee Hills Cemetery, 297 Cemetery Street, Athens, GA 30605. In lieu of flowers and should friends desire, contributions may be made to Holy

Cross Church or the Ga Beta Chapter of SAE at the University of Georgia.

Cemetery Details

Oconee Hill Cemetery

297 Cemetery Street
Athens, GA 30605

Previous Events

Funeral Service

JAN 11. 10:00 AM (ET)

Holy Cross Cathedral Church (Anglican)
3836 Oak Grove Road
Loganville, GA 30052

Interment

JAN 11 (ET)

Oconee Hill Cemetery
297 Cemetery Street
Athens, GA 30605

Tribute Wall

BC

“ Thoughts and prayers to the entire Murray family from the Chandlers in Tallahassee.

Bill Chandler - January 13, 2024 at 11:14 AM

JA

“ Dearest Virginia,
I am praying for you and your family. I'm so blessed to call you a friend, and that I got to meet Mr. Ralph. So kind and sweet, with the bluest eyes I've ever seen.
We can rejoice that he's in the arms of our Savior...
With much love, Judy M Angelo

Judy M Angelo - January 10, 2024 at 04:43 PM