



## William Parker "Bill" Wright

December 16, 2017

William Parker "Bill" Wright passed away peacefully on December 16, 2017 at the age of 93 ... a long life, well lived! Bill was the only child of George Leslie Wright and Anne Kavanaugh Parker (a prominent cotton farming family in the Moorhead area of Mississippi). In his early school years, against the backdrop of the Great Depression, his father took a job as a cotton broker in Memphis and moved the family to Tennessee. Much of his summers were spent with his Parker family cousins near their Mississippi homestead. As a youth, Bill was a member of the Sea Scouts in Memphis promoting boating skills and an awareness of our maritime heritage. His dad died when he was 15, and his mom worked as a high school librarian to support the two of them. When Bill graduated from high school, the country was three years into World War II. In the summer of 1943 he was inducted as an aviation cadet, and 18 months later was a graduate flight officer in the Army Air Corp with qualification to co-pilot four engine aircraft (notably domestic deliveries of B29 Superfortress bombers). With the war soon over, Bill hung up his aviation credentials and entered the University of Tennessee, graduating in 1949 with a degree in Transportation. It is there, at a Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity event, that Bill met Eleanor Lloyd Keener, his first wife and mother to his children, William Parker Wright, Jr. and Eleanor Lloyd (Lea) Wright. After graduation and a wedding, he and Lloyd moved back to Mississippi to run the family farm. In 1953, with Lea on the way and young Parker a toddler, the family returned to Knoxville and Bill took a job with his father-in-law at McClung Appliances as an outside salesman (a job he held until the dissolution of the company in the 1970's). After Lloyd's untimely death in 1981, Bill married long time family acquaintance Mary Clarke Bailey ... and after her passing in the late 80's, he and friend Betsy Bowman Townsend were married. In earlier years, Bill was an avid tennis player competing in biweekly doubles matches. He was an active member of St. John's Cathedral where he served faithfully for years as an usher. In his advancing years, he was a founding member of the ROMEOS (Retired Old Men Eating Out). To all who knew him, Bill was the consummate southern gentleman and will be greatly missed.

Bill is preceded in death by wives Eleanor Lloyd Keener (1981); and Mary Clarke Bailey (1989) and son, William Parker Wright, Jr. (1988). He is survived by his wife Betsy

Townsend Wright and daughter Eleanor Lloyd (Lea) Wright; grandchildren Marilyn Lloyd Wright (Knoxville); William Parker Wright III and wife Blair (Crossville, TN); Kathryn Morgan Rutherford and husband Stefen (Smyrna, GA); nephew Bruce Keener IV, wife Lynne, (Montgomery TX); niece Kathy Lafferty Orr, husband, Mike, (Auora, N.C.) and three great-grandchildren.

A Memorial Service will be held at St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, at 2:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 19, 2017, and the family will receive friends immediately following in the Great Hall; The Very Reverend John Ross officiating. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to St. John's Cathedral, P.O. Box 153, 413 West Cumberland Avenue, Knoxville, Tennessee, 37901. Arrangements by Rose Mortuary, Mann Heritage Chapel. Online condolences at [www.rosemortuary.com](http://www.rosemortuary.com).

# Events

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**DEC 19** **Memorial Service** 02:30PM  
St. John's Episcopal Cathedral  
413 Cumberland Ave, Knoxville, TN, US, 37902

**DEC 19** **Visitation following service**  
St. John's Episcopal Cathedral  
413 Cumberland Ave, Knoxville, TN, US, 37902

# Comments

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“ Sally & Richard Hayes

**Richard Hayes** - December 19, 2017 at 10:33 AM

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“ Besty, our prayers are with you. Please know we think of you often. Love Myron and Cathy Williams

**Myron and Cathy Williams** - December 18, 2017 at 05:49 PM