



Mr. Ralph M. Leftwich

DEC 23, 1923 - OCT 11, 2015



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Ralph M. Leftwich, 91, died Sunday October 11, 2015 in Crossville, TN. A native of Cookeville, he was born December 21, 1923, the fourth child of Sam Ernest Leftwich and Sarah Lois Wirt. He is the grandson of Elmer Wirt, the founder and first editor of The Putnam County Herald in Cookeville. Out of three brothers and a sister, two brothers survive: Robert and Sam Leftwich, both of Nashville.

The Leftwich family moved to East Nashville in 1926. Shelby Park became the children's playground, and the place Ralph later met Reba Dixon of Donelson. They each attended the birthday party in the park of a mutual friend. Ralph and Reba married September 16, 1942, then he was drafted for military service in WW II a year later. He became an Army Air Corps Flight Officer piloting the giant B-29 bomber at the age of 22. A daughter, Janice Faye, was born that year, 1945.

All four Leftwich brothers served in World War II: two Marines (Robert and Sam), one Army (Joe), one Army Air Corps (Ralph). All came home safely. After the war, their sister Catherine married a veteran from Michigan, Joseph Cavanaugh, and all the young men started their civilian careers.

Ralph joined E. T. Lowe Publishing Co. in Nashville in December 1946 and continued there until retirement 47 years later in December 1993.

The G.I. Bill enabled veterans to buy new houses, and in 1949 Ralph and his brother Sam bought next door to each other in Nashville near Berry Field. Ralph, Reba and Jan moved into their new home and shortly afterward Ralph Jr. was born on July 13.

In 1955 they moved to a larger home and lot in East Nashville's Rosebank area, near Shelby Park, still a favorite family place. In 1973 after the children were grown and married, Ralph and Reba moved to Mt. Juliet. They named their five acres Sunny Slopes. Masses of naturalized buttercups carpeted the front slope every spring.

They took apart a horse barn and rebuilt a smaller version on their property to house a boat, a tractor, supplies and livestock. They grew vegetables and strawberries, had



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pet cows for a while, fished nearby lakes, travelled, entertained grandchildren and celebrated family gatherings there over the years. Reba died December 19, 1988. Three years later Ralph met a friend from his 1940's church youth group who was also widowed, Mary Elizabeth Wilson of Donelson. They married May 24, 1992. Their expanded family included Mary Elizabeth's two grown daughters, Lisa Wilson and Lori Ford and their husbands and children.

Ralph and Mary Elizabeth began attending the 330th Bomb Group reunions, renewing his connection with his B-29 crew. They traveled across the country and back again, hosted family reunions, and enjoyed retirement. In November 2003 they moved to Crossville on the Cumberland Plateau. April 2005 they welcomed Lefty's Skylar, a beautiful Shetland sheepdog, to the family. Skylar became Ralph's constant companion and best buddy. Their mutual admiration charmed everyone they met. May 20, 2008, Lori died unexpectedly. On June 13, 2009, Mary Elizabeth died. On December 30, 2010 Ralph suffered the first of three heart attacks that eventually sent him to Vanderbilt for heart bypass surgery in April 2011.

In 2012 Ralph invited a friend from church to go with him to The Apple Barn for some fritters. Agnes Rogers accepted and they became a devoted couple attending church together and exploring interesting places on the Plateau and beyond.

On April 24, 2013 Ralph travelled to Washington DC on the WWII Honor Air Flight from Knoxville. It was an amazing outpouring of community appreciation and pride. In 2015 he completed writing his 135 page memoir: This is My Story, with Genealogies, Chronologies, Stories and Picture Albums. He is a member of The Sons of the American Revolution and a member/contributor of information to The Leftwich Historical Society.

Both as Patriot and Patriarch, his life is an example of a faith quietly lived. Wherever his life intersected with others, there was a blessing. He established an extended family that now includes three children and their spouses, 10 grandchildren and their spouses, and 17 great grandchildren. His legacy is broad through service to church, community, and country. Some of his creative gifts in design, art, photography, publishing, and building have been inherited by family members and live on in them.



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Ralph has been an active lifelong member of the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church) and his membership will now be transferred to The Church Eternal.

The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Saturday, October 17, 2015 at Spring Hill Funeral Home. A celebration of life funeral service will follow at 12 p.m. with interment in Historic Spring Hill Cemetery.



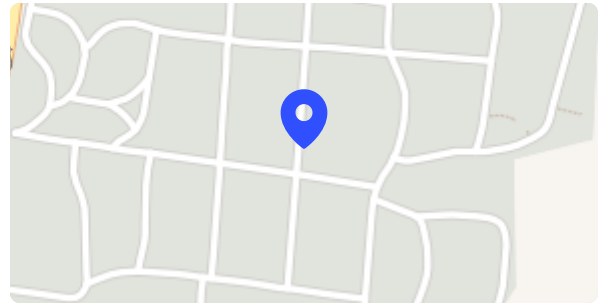
Events

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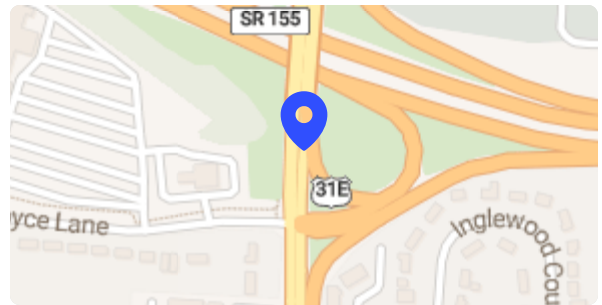
Visitation prior to Ceremony

- Saturday**, October 17, 2015
- 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM CT
- Spring Hill Funeral Home**
5110 Gallatin Pike S, Nashville TN 37216



Cemetery Details

- Historic Spring Hill Cemetery**
5110 Gallatin Road, Nashville TN 37216





Tribute Wall

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KR

Kristie lit a candle in honor of Ralph.

I am very sorry for your loss. I had the pleasure of caring for Mr. Leftwich at CMC. What a sweet man. Keeping you all in my thoughts!

October 17 at 9:27 AM



MS

Mary Ruth Birdwell Saunders posted:

In my younger years I attended Madison First Christian Church. I'm thinking Mr. Ralph M. Leftwich was a member. I remember Mr. Leftwich as one of the Best Christian Men Our Lord Ever Created. Our Thoughts & Prayers are With the Family. Mary Ruth Birdwell Saunders Nashville, TN

October 16 at 5:06 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Ralph by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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