



## Mr. Bernard "Ralph" Wilkerson

October 12, 1937 - July 25, 2022

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Ralph Wilkerson departed this life on Monday, July 25th at his home surrounded by family. Born the second son of six children of Bernard and Frances Wilkerson, he grew up in Bells, TN, where he developed a lifelong passion for sports, hunting, and fishing. A graduate of Bells High School, Ralph played varsity basketball and baseball. After graduation, he attended two years at Murray State and then began working at Odom's Tennessee Pride Sausage in Jackson, TN. In September of 1961 he was drafted into the Army and served in Munich, Germany for two years with the 3rd Engineer Battalion (Infantry Division).

After his time in the military, Ralph returned to West Tennessee and resumed working at Tennessee Pride. A man of strong work ethic, he was soon promoted and moved to the main plant in Madison, TN where he would work for 43 years, the last twenty years as its plant manager. The sausage company not only provided Ralph challenging and fulfilling work but also the opportunity to meet his future bride Judy. The couple married in 1972.

Ralph led a life devoted to faith and family. He served as a deacon in the Baptist church for most of his adult life and was known as a man of strong convictions and steadfast loyalty to his role as a servant of God.

Ralph and Judy raised four children, and he shared with them his love of the Lord, the outdoors, hunting, and sports. One of his greatest hunting adventures occurred in 2004 in Cordova, Alaska where Ralph killed a ten-foot-tall Alaskan Brown Bear that to this day stands in the lobby of Davidson Academy. He also had a penchant for using a chainsaw, eating Dairy Queen Peanut Buster Parfaits, and following UT sports. In his later years, he became a fixture with the UT Martin football team. He cheered for the Skyhawks from the stands during home games and accompanied the team to away games. Ralph often led the team in prayer before their outings.

As a grandfather, "Pop" took great pride in his grandchildren's academic and athletic pursuits. He was a family man in all respects.

Ralph is survived by his beloved wife of 50 years, Judy Odom Wilkerson and his four children: Daughters – Cherie Roberts and husband Ryan (Nashville, TN), Shannon Price and husband Mike (Hendersonville, TN), Julie Simpson and husband Jason (Martin, TN), and son, Jason Wilkerson and wife Stacy (Joelton, TN), twelve grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

His family and friends celebrate his life of faith and service, and we will miss him always.

A visitation will be held on Wednesday, August 3 from 10am-2pm at Spring Hill Funeral Home, with a Celebration of Life Funeral Service beginning at 2pm in the Chapel.

Pallbearers are Ben Price, Jackson Roberts, Nathan Roberts, Ty Simpson, Graham Simpson, Grayson Wilkerson, and Joey Blackwell.

Honorary Pallbearer: Luke Price

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Ralph's name to either the UT Martin Skyhawks football team or First Baptist Church of Joelton's building fund for Bennett Manor.

# Cemetery Details

## Spring Hill Cemetery

5110 Gallatin Pike S  
Nashville, TN 37216

# Previous Events

## Visitation

**AUG 3.** 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Spring Hill Funeral Home  
5110 Gallatin Pike S  
Nashville, TN 37216

## Celebration Of Life Funeral Ceremony

**AUG 3.** 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Spring Hill Funeral Home  
5110 Gallatin Pike S  
Nashville, TN 37216

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Bernard "Ralph" Wilkerson*

August 24 at 02:51 AM

JR

“ *Ralph was one of the kindest and gentlest men that I have ever known, very glad to have known him!!*

**Joe Roark** - August 18 at 10:15 AM

EH

“ *When it comes to friendship...few have exemplified the meaning of the word.as well as Ralph. Not only would he be quick to offer help or advice, but it was easy to tell his offerings were from the heart! Time spent with Ralph was time well spent, Not only would it be enjoyable, but you just might learn something as well! As a Sunday School Leader, Ralph would always share his vast knowledge and promote healthy discussions. There's no doubt that there are many that will miss Ralph's presence.....I count myself in that number, I also look forward to seeing him again some day, what a day that will be! Soar High Ralph!*

*Eric & Chris Howell*

**Eric Howell** - August 04 at 07:50 PM

RE

“ *Rick Wilkerson & Sandra Ervin purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Mr. Bernard "Ralph" Wilkerson.*



**Rick Wilkerson & Sandra Ervin** - August 03 at 12:16 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mr. Bernard "Ralph" Wilkerson.*



August 02 at 03:11 PM

PC

“ *Ralph was a man of great faith, compassion and love for his family and fellowman. He was always offering his help when needed.  
The picture shown on the web site with that Ralph Wilkerson smile even during his illness. Ralph will be missed by family and a large host of friends. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. Precious Memories. REST IN PEACE.*  
Patsy Clark

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**Patsy Clark** - August 02 at 02:34 PM

TK

“ *Judy and family I remember Ralph fondly from our times with Jason and Chris playing baseball. Sorry for your loss. He will be missed. Blessings*  
Tom Kilpatrick

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**Thomas Kilpatrick** - August 02 at 03:03 AM

MS

“ *Marilyn Sherrod lit a candle in memory of Mr. Bernard  
"Ralph" Wilkerson*



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**Marilyn Sherrod** - July 31 at 06:21 PM