

Edward Turner "Ned" Luther (1928-2018)

Wilmore - Edward Turner "Ned" Luther, age 90, Wilmore, Ky., died Friday, September 28, 2018, at Baptist Health Lexington after a long, happy life well lived.

Born February 11, 1928, in Nashville, Tenn., to Margaret Matilda McCall Luther and Elijah Turner Luther, he graduated from Cohn High School in Nashville in 1945, and after completing his freshman year at [Vanderbilt University](#), withdrew to enlist in the Navy at the end of [World War II](#). He resumed his education at Vanderbilt and graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in geology, and then received his master's degree in geology and chemistry, also from Vanderbilt, in 1951 (with a straight-A average!). He spent most of his professional life with the Tennessee Division of Geology, and reached the pinnacle of his career when he was named State Geologist of Tennessee in 1990. Ned was a Fellow in the Geological Society of America, and served as chair, vice chair, and secretary of GSA's Coal Geology Division over the years. He was a charter member of the American Institute of Professional Geologists and was a registered professional geologist in Tennessee and a member of the Vanderbilt chapter of the Society of Sigma Xi. He was the author or co-author of more than 40 professional publications, but the publication dearest to his heart was "Our Restless Earth: The Geologic Regions of Tennessee," an affectionate description of the state he loved and called home for 74 of his 90 years.

Ned loved music and singing; he was a member of the choir at every church he ever attended, and a member of the Men of Song at Wesley Village in Wilmore up until the last days of his life. He sang bass, and could knock out a mean version of "Ol' Man River." He was a particular fan of guitarists from Chet Atkins to Andres Segovia and the folk music of Peter, Paul and Mary, but not so much of Elvis Presley or the Beatles (to the chagrin of his daughter). His greatest joy was books; he read thousands in his life and kept a running list on his computer, complete with his personal rating, of every book he read. If you look up "voracious reader" in the dictionary, Ned Luther's picture is there. The other great passion in his life was Vanderbilt athletics, especially the men's and women's basketball teams; he spent many happy hours with his children watching (and sometimes agonizing over) Vanderbilt sports.

He was an uncommonly kind and decent man with a sly, dry wit. He loved a good (or more accurately, bad) pun, and although he was a soft-spoken man, when he spoke, it was worth listening to.

Besides his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife of 59 years, Patricia Ann Worthy Luther; brothers Jerry Robert Luther and Norman Kennedy Luther; sister Margaret June Luther; son-in-law James-Ben Stockton; brother-in-law Hubert H. Townes; nephew Douglas Michael Townes; aunt Eddie Lee McCall; and a succession of very good dogs. He is survived by his daughter, Margaret (Meg) Kennedy Luther Smath, and her husband, Richard; son Daniel Edward Luther; grandson Joseph Edward Smath; sisters-in-law Joy Luther, Jan Luther Wendell, and Peggy Townes; nieces Candace Luther, Edyie Townes, and Elaine Townes Jay; nephews Robert Kennedy Luther, John Norman Luther, and Steven Kennedy Luther; great-nephew James Daniel Haas; great-nieces Elizabeth LeeAnn Haas and Crystal McGee; and great-great-niece RaeLee Young.

A memorial service will be held at Belle Meade United Methodist Church, 121 Davidson Road, Nashville, Tenn., on Friday, October 5, 2018, at 11 a.m. Visitation will take place from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. before the service, and interment at Harpeth Hills Cemetery will follow the service. Memorials are suggested to Vanderbilt University, PMB 407727, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240-7727, Belle Meade United Methodist Church, or Wesley Village, 1125 Lexington Rd, Wilmore, KY 40390.

His children would like to thank the staff and residents of Wesley Village for providing him a happy home for 16 years and taking such good care of him in his declining years.

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