



Eldridge Stephen Bell Jr.

November 22, 1928 - May 30, 2026

Eldridge Stephen Bell, Jr., 97, of Oak Ridge, TN, passed away May 30, 2026. He was the devoted and loving husband of Rose Anne Hartman Bell for 20 years, and she survives him. Born November 22, 1928 he was the youngest child of the late E.S. Bell, Sr. and Kathleen (Kate) Prillaman Bell of Check, VA. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife of 53 years, Betty Lee Hamrick Bell; infant twin sons, Barry and Bruce Bell; special niece and nephew, Mary Ann Bell Julg and Doug Bell, as well as great-niece-in-law, Chastity Gamble-Julg; and his siblings and their spouses.

In 1945, Steve joined the US Army and was stationed in Italy on a post-World War II peacekeeping mission. He then earned his Bachelors' and Master's of Science degrees at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech). In 1950, he married Betty Hamrick. He was called back to duty during the Korean War and deployed to Tokyo, Japan, serving in the Eighth Army and achieving the rank of Corporal. Upon his return, he began his engineering career with General Electric in NJ and Maine. In 1961, he began a 35-year career with Virginia Tech as an Associate Professor of Agricultural Engineering.

Steve and Betty raised their growing family in Blacksburg and participated in many activities including square dancing (Steve was faculty sponsor of the Tech Trompers for many years) and active membership in Blacksburg United Methodist Church (BUMC). The Steve and Betty Bell Scholarship Endowment

Fund at BUMC continues to provide students with funding assistance for college.

After Betty's death in 2003, Steve continued to attend square dances, at one of which he met his second wife, Rose Anne. After their wedding in 2005, they lived in Knoxville and then Oak Ridge, TN where they continued to enjoy dancing, US and international traveling, and family and church activities.

In addition to his wife, Steve is survived by his children Ginny Martin, Rodney Bell (Karen), Michael Bell (Carol), Jackie Triplett (Bill), Susie Johnson (Glenn), and Pam Reed (Robert), as well as special niece- and nephew-in-law Arlene Bell and Charlie Julg (Dana) and his wife's daughters, Denice Parten and Lorri Hartman (Rob). Grandchildren are Petie Martin, Joshua Bell (Asheley), Andrew Bell, Charles Julg, Kelli McDonald (Greg), Scott Johnson, Megan Glass (Jen), Sophie Reed, Meghan Vann (Adam), Robyn Hollmeyer (Adam), Caitlin Bigness (Shaun), and Heather Van Hout (Michael). Great-grandchildren are Emerson, Maddox, Hank, Walt, Ethan, Asher, Millie, Beckham, Shepherd, Cooper, and one great-great grandchild. Steve is also survived by his nieces and their families: Julie DeCuypere, Kay Baber, Sherry Bolton (Tom), and Deidra Gold (Steve).

A visitation will be held at First United Methodist Church of Oak Ridge, TN on June 6 at 2:00 p.m. with a celebration of Steve's life at 3:00 p.m. A graveside service will be held on June 12 at 2:00 p.m. at Roselawn Memorial Gardens in Christiansburg, VA followed by a visitation at Blacksburg United Methodist Church at 3:00 p.m. Gifts in Steve's memory may be made to the Steve and Betty Bell Scholarship Endowment Fund at Blacksburg United Methodist Church, PO Box 931, Blacksburg, VA 24063.

Upcoming Events

Graveside Service

JUN 12. 2:00 PM (ET)

Roselawn Memorial Gardens
2880 N. Franklin Street
Christiansburg, VA

Visitation

JUN 12. 3:00 PM (ET)

Blacksburg United Methodist Church
111 Church Street SE
Blacksburg, VA 24060