



## Ronald Bates

Ronald I. Bates died in the early morning hours of January, 18th surrounded and embraced by his family. His passing marked the end of a fascinating journey that began July 5th, 1935 in Belfry Kentucky with stops in Pond Creek KY, Charleston WV, Matewan WV, Germany and Japan along the way. Ultimately his journey ended peacefully in a home he built with his own hands 49 years ago that rests alongside a quiet country road in Hurricane WV. His core values were sculpted early in life as his father was grappling with a devastating injury related to a slate fall, crushing his leg while he was working in a deep Eastern KY coal mine. His father dealt with his leg injury by finding a new vocation (watch cleaning and inventing) rather than depending on others to survive. His mother was a tiny, thin seemingly frail woman with long hair that reached her ankles but in reality was an incredibly strong woman with a value system and work ethic that came from her Cherokee Indian heritage and Christian walk. His mother worked feverishly to raise 8 children with a disabled husband during the great depression. His childhood reminds us of a time in America when families came together and dealt with adversity through hard work and self-reliance. Understanding this humble beginning helps us understand the makings of a remarkable man. Ron joined the military at age 17 before completing high school and served throughout much of the Korean War. He drifted away from his mother's strong Christian values during his 6 1/2 years in the service but his Christian beliefs were reanimated when he met Dolores Ann Erwin in 1957. Dolores was a devout Christian and his initial

move into the church was an attempt to placate his mother and Dolores, but this shifted to an intense passionate calling that changed his life forever. He went from a life that was void of any spiritual connection, to a Christian, then to a minister, then ultimately a pastor. He was first ordained as a minister over 50 years ago and has been the pastor of the First Apostolic Church in Nitro WV for over 40 years. Ron was known for his generosity, brilliant mind and unconventional ability to master a multitude of skills throughout his life. His Renaissance mindset was evidenced by the many domains he mastered through the years including but not limited to owning a printing company (South Charleston Printing) and founding a construction company (Master Homebuilders). In addition to his successful ministry he also was a Certified Public Accountant with a practice in Hurricane and served as an Associate Professor, teaching accounting night classes at WV State College. He became intrigued by computers in the early 80s and by the 90s was writing software and due to his early entry in the field became a go-to person for computer issues in the family and community. He touched many lives through his ministry and his deep analysis of scriptures coupled with an extensive variety of life experiences culminated in thousands of thought provoking sermons. His favorite quote was "The man who goes before God on his knees can stand before anyone." The hallmark Ron Bates' sermon was peppered with humor and backed by a seemingly endless war chest full of anecdotes from his own life experiences. His voice and guidance in the church will be sorely missed. His wife Dolores died tragically at the hands of a home intruder 10 years ago. This was a devastating event for him, the family and the community. Dolores shouldered the load with Ron through the years and he felt she was equally responsible for his successes and accolades. In addition to his grieving he was also dealing with many challenging chronic medical illnesses over the last decade but, as expected based on his background, continued his ministry and CPA practice. He relied heavily on the church and family over the last decade while also establishing a friendship with another widowed Christian (Margie Sowards) that culminated in mutual love and

respect over the recent years. Ron is preceded in death by his wife, Dolores. He is survived by his son, Mark C. Bates MD and his wife, Angela of Encinitas CA, his daughter, Brenda Bates and Thomas Linkous, of Hurricane, WV; his grandchildren, Mark Bates II (Los Angeles, CA) and Gabriella Bates in Encinitas, CA and his sister, Sarah (Eloise) Griffith of St. Albans, WV. The family would also like to recognize Dr. James Campbell (Ron's nephew), Dr. Heather Tarantino, the entire WVU/ CAMC medical team and the staff of CAMC 2-East Memorial who all exhibited intense compassion and tireless dedication to help him throughout his illness. In addition Betty and Jim Campbell went above and beyond all expectations by always being there, day and night throughout each and every storm with infinite love and compassion. The family is also indebted to Margie for her loving support and devotion to Ron during his illness and to Dr. Mark Ayers for spiritual guidance. Funeral service will be held at 2pm Sunday, January 22, 2012 at Chapman Funeral Home, 3941 Teays Valley Road, Hurricane with Dr. Mark Ayers and Rev. Bob Forbush officiating. Entombment will follow in White Chapel Memorial Gardens, Barboursville with military honors. Visitation will be held from 6-9pm Saturday at the funeral home. Online condolences may also be made by visiting [www.chapmanfuneralhomes.com](http://www.chapmanfuneralhomes.com). In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions should be made to the First Apostolic Church, Ronald I. Bates Memorial Fund, in care of Betty Campbell, Rt. 4 Box 357, 108 Sleepy Creek, Hurricane, WV 25526.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Ronald Bates*

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October 06, 2023 at 08:41 AM