

## WELL-KNOWN ATTORNEY JOHN POTEET DIES

b. 9 May 1929, Algood, Putnam Co., TN

d. 6 October 2014

Wife: Bettie

Father: Sam Denton Poteet (1899-1963)

Mother: Berilla Holladay (1902-1986)

Sibling: Robert Huston Poteet (1923-1987)

Sibling: Sam Holladay Poteet (1927-1999)

Sibling: George Thomas Poteet (1932-2004)

By Mary Jo Denton

**COOKEVILLE** — John Poteet, one of the best known attorneys in the Upper Cumberland, died Monday, Oct. 6, at the age of 85. He practiced law here for 30 years, served as Cookeville city attorney at one time, taught business law at Tennessee Tech, and gave years of service to the community through civic and church activities.



But impressive as it was, his successful career was not what made everyone he met consider him a dear friend. No, it was that twinkle-in-the-eye wit and charm, his gift for connecting with others, and his contagious zest for life.

As his grandson, Ryan Dalton, said, “Papa — as he is known to me — was someone who knew how to deeply appreciate and enjoy every passing second of life. With him, there was no such thing as an insignificant moment, or person who was not worthy of his time, wit, jokes, wisdom, and laughter.”

He was born May 9, 1929, in Algood, the son of Sam Denton Poteet and Berilla Holladay Poteet. In the 1940s, Sam Denton Poteet served as Putnam County sheriff, and the family lived at the Putnam County jail during that time, perhaps a factor in John’s career choice and interest in public service. John was a graduate of Tennessee Tech and a graduate of the College of Law at the University of Tennessee. He served in the United States Air Force during the Korean War and was stationed near Paris, France, for a time. In 1951, he and Elizabeth (Bettie) Mann, also of Cookeville, were married in Paris.

Here in Cookeville as he practiced law, earning the respect of colleagues and many others who still speak of him with fond admiration today, he and his wife brought up their daughter, Beth Poteet Anderson, and two sons, John and Jack Poteet, and also counted Beth’s best friend, Jenny Jackson Spurlock, as a “bonus” daughter.

“He was the best dad in the world,” his daughter said. “We rode bikes, went to the pool, took night walks, camped, boated, entertained, and traveled.”

His children and grandchildren delighted in his company, as he always had time for adventure, whether it was sailing, scuba diving, flying planes, or hang gliding. He loved

tennis, he loved traveling, and he made sure his children learned to enjoy attending plays, going to museums and art exhibits, and traveling.

He adored his wife of 63 years, and she was with him in his final hours on Monday, holding his hand and talking to him, reminding him of their lifelong adventures, traveling the world and living in other places for weeks or months or years at a time, but always returning to Cookeville, their daughter said.

“They always held hands,” she said. “They had a love story like no other.”

In the courtroom, John Poteet was known for his courtesy, as well as for his knowledge of the law, colleagues recalled.

“He was an excellent lawyer who won his cases by his expertise in the law, his ability to communicate, and his knack for fitting them together to properly present his case,” said attorney Jerry Jared. “He was always a gentleman in court and accomplished his goal of properly representing his clients without being rude and mean to the opposing counsel. He was also a walking encyclopedia as to the history of Putnam County and the families living here. He will be missed by his profession, his friends, and the community as a whole.”

Retired Chancellor Vernon Neal said, “He was not only a great lawyer, but also a great person and a dear friend. He was always upright and very professional.”

Chancellor Ron Thurman described him as “always a perfect gentleman.”

“He was old-school professional. He was a gentleman always, and a worthy adversary. He was from a dying breed, those who practiced law when it was more a profession than a business. Their word was their bond. There was no need to write it down. If they gave their word, that was their bond.”

In addition to his parents, other family members who preceded him in death include three brothers, Robert, Sam, and George Poteet, and a grandson, Tanner Dalton.

His family includes his wife, Bettie; his daughter, Beth Poteet Anderson; two sons, John (Ginny) Poteet and Jack (Lena) Poteet; one “bonus” daughter, Jenny Spurlock; one sister, Doris Alford; three grandsons and one granddaughter-in-law, Ryan Dalton, John Dalton (wife Darcy), and Eli Anderson; and two great granddaughters, Callie and Tessa Dalton.

A celebration of his life will be held at the Leslie Town Centre in Cookeville on Saturday, Oct. 18, 2014, beginning at 2 p.m., and it will be a party featuring some of his favorite snacks and a time for laughing, joking, and story telling, family members said.

The family suggests that any memorials to honor him be donations to the Rising Above Ministry, P.O. Box 222, Cookeville, TN, 38503, or to the Algood Methodist Church, where he was a member.

Hooper Huddleston and Horner Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 9 October 2014

\*See more about the History of Putnam Co., TN & surrounding areas at:

<http://www.ajlambert.com>

**GEORGE THOMAS POTEET**

b. 31 August 1932, Algood, Putnam Co., TN – d. 12 November 2004, Algood, Putnam Co., TN, (US Air Force, Korea) md **Betty Ruth (Gooch) Poteet**, b. 2 April 1932, Monterey, Putnam Co., TN – d. 14 January 2013, Chattanooga, Hamilton Co., TN, d/o **Luther Gooch** (1888-1963) & **Effie May Johnson** (1896-1974). George Thomas Poteet, s/o **Sam Denton Poteet** (1899-1963) & **Tennie Berilla Holladay** (1902-1986). George T. & Betty Ruth (Gooch) Poteet are both buried in Bohannon Church Cemetery, Monterey, Putnam Co., TN.

\*See Sam Denton Poteet buried Cookeville City Cemetery.

\*See Sam Holladay Poteet Obt. buried in Cookeville City Cemetery.

\*See Robert Houston Poteet buried in Cookeville City Cemetery.

Mr. George Thomas Poteet, 72, beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend, was called to Heaven on Friday, November 12, 2004.

Mr. Poteet was born in Algood on August 31, 1932, to the late Sam Denton and Berilla (Holladay) Poteet. His brothers, Robert Poteet and Sam H. Poteet, preceded him in death.

Survivors include his loving wife, Betty Ruth (Gooch) Poteet; three devoted children, Debbie Poteet, Penny Poteet, and Phillip Poteet; four adoring grandchildren, Molly Poteet, Madelyn Poteet, Thomas J. Poteet, and Burke Carey; a son-in-law, Chris Carey; a daughter-in-law, Emy; a brother, John Poteet; a sister, Doris Alford; and several nieces and nephews.

George and Betty were married June 12, 1954, and resided in Cookeville most of his life. They were members of Cookeville First United Methodist Church and later Algood United Methodist Church. George was instrumental in the renovation of Algood United Methodist Church, which is now on the Historical National Register.

George served honorably in the United States Air Force during the Korean Conflict. After he returned from service, he attended Tennessee Tech University.

He was the owner of Poteet Insurance and Associates, Inc. in Cookeville for 20 years and was a real estate and property developer.

He retired, and he and his wife enjoyed their time camping and traveling. Later, he resumed work with Tennessee State Park system as a facility specialist in charge of all campgrounds in the State Park system. Mr. Poteet was active in many civic and community organizations such as Adjutant American Legions Post 46, Cookeville Jaycees, Cookeville Rotary Club, United Givers Fund, Upper Cumberland Boy Scouts, Big Brothers, First Aid Instructor for American Red Cross, Religious Heritage Foundation, very active in POW-MIA nationally, politically active in local and state elections, and volunteered as Santa Claus anytime he was needed.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis or a charity of the donor's choice.

Special care provided by Hooper, Huddleston, & Horner Funeral Home of Cookeville