

Civic leader, funeral director Ed Hooper dies, services Tuesday

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Herald-Citizen Staff: Cookeville, TN

Ed Hooper has laid generations of Cookevillians to rest -- and now it's his turn. The 86-year-old retired funeral director died at his home on Saturday, May 27.

One of Cookeville's best known citizens, Hooper **owned and operated Hooper & Huddleston Funeral Home for over 30 years**. And for those years and more, he worked tirelessly at many civic and community tasks.



Ed Hooper

He won many awards and honors over the years, but took his greatest pride in serving grieving families with kindness and dignity while working at his profession.

He was a big man with a soft Southern drawl who said the most valuable service he could offer was friendship.

And while he was very serious in a serious profession, he did not forget the value of a sense of humor, even though -- or perhaps because -- his daily work involved facing death as a part of life.

Once after dropping in for a visit at this newspaper, he turned on his way out the door, smiled, and said, "You all come to see me -- while you can still see."

Funeral services will be held for **Edward Hogin Hooper** on Tuesday, May 30, at 1 p.m. in the chapel of Hooper & Huddleston with Brother Bruce McClarty and Brother Kelly Campbell officiating. Burial will be in Cookeville City Cemetery.

The family will receive friends at the funeral home on Monday, May 29, from 5 to 9 p.m.

His family includes his wife of 62 years, **Frances Jacobs Hooper** of Cookeville; two daughters and sons-in-law, Harriet Sue and Phil Hall of Cookeville and Helen Ann and Harry Ward of Nashville; one sister, Katharine Hooper of Nashville; one brother, T.C. Hooper of Greenville, S.C.; four grandsons and a granddaughter-in-law, Phillip Edward and Lee Ann Hall, Reginald Hooper Hall, all of Cookeville, and Harry Hobgood Ward Jr. and Andrew Hooper Ward, both of Nashville.

His sons-in-law and grandsons will serve as pallbearers.

Ed Hooper was born Sept. 15, 1913, in Dickson, Tenn., to the late **James Montgomery and Elizabeth Sue Hogin Hooper**.

He was a graduate of Donelson High School, where he played on their first football team.

One of his after-school jobs in those days was at a funeral home in Donelson. He drove the hearse, swept the floors, and learned how to talk to grieving families.

In 1935, he became a licensed funeral director in Tennessee. He moved to Cookeville a few years later, and by 1955, he owned and was running Hooper & Huddleston Funeral Home here.

He was a member of Collegenide Church of Christ.

It has been said that in the years before there was a Chamber of Commerce here Ed Hooper served this city by doing that job himself, and over the years, he spent countless hours working in various civic organizations, such as the Cookeville Lions Club, where he received the Melvin Jones Fellow Award, and the Cookeville Rotary Club, where he received the Paul Harris Fellow Award, both the highest awards in those clubs.

He was a retired board member of Union Planters Bank, served on the board of TTU's Business Foundation-Chair of Excellence, served as the first president of the Putnam Chamber of Commerce, was a past president of the Putnam Jaycees, served as chairman of the Red Cross Blood program, and served with the American Cancer Society.

He served as executive secretary of the Tennessee State Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers for 10 years and was once named Man of the Year in the National Selected Morticians Association.

Among his many honors was a Distinguished Alumni award from TTU and a place in the TTU Sports Hall of Fame for his commitment to helping the university strive for excellence. He was also once named the "Pride of Putnam County" by the Chamber of Commerce here.

Contributions to honor his memory may be made to Collegenide Church of Christ, Lazarus House Hospice, or the Business Foundation at Tennessee Tech University.

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