

MARTIN EUGENE “GENE” WILHITE, SR. OBT.

Memorial services for Martin Eugene “Gene” Wilhite, Sr. 88, of Cookeville, will be Sunday, March 12 at 3 P.M. from the Cookeville Chapel of Hooper Huddleston Horner Funeral Home with military honors by the Veterans Honor Guard. Interment will be in the Corinth Cemetery in White County at a later date. Bro. Luke Wilken and Bro. John Whitson will officiate.

Mr. Wilhite passed away, Thursday, March 9, 2017 at Bethesda Health Care Center in Cookeville.

He was born July 18, 1928 in Sparta, TN. He was the youngest of eight children born to Harvey Cooke and Maggie Belle Martin Wilhite.



He married Joy Catherine Riley on the 12th of May 1962 and they enjoyed 42 years of marriage before her death.

Gene served as a Specialist Third Class in the U.S. Army during World War II. He graduated from Tennessee Tech with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education. He later received his Master of Education degree from MTSU.

Gene taught school in Edgewood, Florida, Sparta, Algood, Cookeville Jr. High and Jere Whitson Elementary. Then after retirement, he went back as a substitute teacher for many years.

He was known for his three great loves: gardening, softball and singing. Above all he loved people and never met a stranger.

He played softball until the age of 80, where he got the nick name “Mean Gene” on the pitcher’s mound. He was honored in the Herald Citizen as the “Ironman of Softball” and later the Gene Wilhite Softball Tournament was held in his honor.

Gene was a past song leader at Silver Point Church of Christ, as well as former song leader and deacon at Jefferson Avenue Church of Christ. He sang in a Barber Shop Quartet and led singing at NHC of Cookeville once a month for many years. He began leading singing at the age of 11 at Corinth Church of Christ.

Survivors include sons Martin, Jr. “Marty” Wilhite of Gatlinburg, Jeff and wife Barbara (Neill) Wilhite of Baxter, Grandchildren: Tara Neill of McDonough, GA., Jade Wilhite of Lake City, TN, Erin and Chase Smagala of Rocky Top, TN, Great-Grandchildren: Braxton and Owen Wilhite and Coltyn Hayes all of Baxter, Sister-in-law Patty and husband Edward Clark, Brother-in-law Charles Walker, Nieces: Mary Camp, Glenda Jones, Madge Walker, Mary Jo Tate, Charlotte Bytheway, Carolyn Fox and Janet

Chaney. Nephews: James Bell, Harold Holland, Ken Walker, Bill Camp and a host of great nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife, parents, son Jim Wilhite, two brothers and their wives: Cooke and Lois Wilhite and Willard and Wilma Wilhite. Five sisters and their husbands: Ruth and Harry Camp, Lola and James Bell, Pattie and Tom Holland, Dimple Walker and Gene's twin sister, Willene and her husband, Joe Green and a niece, Norma Amis.

Memorial contributions may be made to Cookeville Regional Charitable Foundation, memo. Imagination Library, 1 Medical Center Blvd, Cookeville, TN 38501.

Gene's family will receive friends Saturday from 4 to 8 PM and Sunday from 1 until service time at 3 PM at the funeral home.

Cookeville Chapel of Hooper Huddleston Horner Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements (931)526-6111. You may share your thoughts and memories at hfhfunerals.com

*See more Schoolyard Tales at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>