



*Dr. Cameron Keels,
Jr.*

June 30, 1930 - April 10, 2025

Dr. Cameron H. Keels, Jr., 94, of Morganton, NC, peacefully passed away Thursday, April 10, 2025, at Grace Ridge Retirement Community with his family by his side. Born on June 30, 1930, in Marlboro County, SC, to Cameron Keels, Sr. and Annie Lea Atwater Keels, he was preceded in death by his wife of almost 70 years, Joyce Keels; his sister, Sarah Wilson Mahler and brother-in-law, John Chetwood Mahler. Cameron is survived by his children, Dr. Martha Ann Keels (Dr. Dennis Clements) and Cameron Keels Austin (John Harper); grandchildren, Dr. Gillian Clements (Ben Elgin), Morgan Duquette (Bryan), Dr. Meredith Waldon (Chris) and Sarah Alonso (Kyle); great-grandchildren, Stella Popescul, Alexander Popescul, Bayley Duquette, Marshall Duquette, Hugo Waldon, Freddie Waldon, Oscar Waldon and Cassidy Alonso.

Cameron attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1947-1950, where he was a member of Pi Delta Alpha, honorary society and received his DDS degree from the Emory University School of Dentistry in 1954. He met Joyce while attending dental school at Emory University and the two were married in the Little Chapel of Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church on the Emory University campus in 1954. Soon thereafter, Cameron was commissioned into the United States Navy to serve as an Officer and Dentist on the USS Glacier AGB-4 with Admiral Richard E. Byrd and embarked on the renowned expedition to Antarctica. After his naval service, the couple settled in the beautiful foothills town of Morganton where Cameron established his dental practice. Joyce served as his Office Manager for 51 years until their retirement in 2005.

Cameron was passionate about dentistry and continuing education. He received a Fellowship from the Academy of Dentistry in 1985 and achieved the Mastership Award in 1991- the Academy's highest honor. He was a member of the American Dental Association, the North Carolina Dental Society, the

honor. He was a member of the American Dental Association, the North Carolina Dental Society, the First District Dental Society and the Western Piedmont Dental Society. He was one of the first dentists in Burke County to perform implants.

Growing up in McColl, SC, Cameron developed a love for fishing and hunting. His uncle, Coach Tilson of Brevard, NC, taught him to fly fish in the Davidson River when he was 9 years old. He was hooked for life! His love of trout fishing and the mountains was what ultimately led him to settle in

Morganton. Cameron knew almost every trout stream in Western NC. He was a charter member of the Table Rock Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the North American Fishing Club. He also served as President of the NC State Council of Trout Unlimited for several years.

Community service was a priority for Cameron. He was a lifelong member of the First United Methodist Church. He joyfully sang each beloved hymn in his beautiful bass voice. An active member of both the Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis Club for over 70 years, he served both as President and even handed out Be Terrific certificates at Oak Hill Elementary School well into his late 80s. There, he also loved entertaining each third-grade class with stories of his trip to Antarctica. Along with his best friend, Dr. James Thomas, Cameron supported oral health initiatives and the Head Start Program to serve the children of Burke County.

Gardening was one of Camerons favorite hobbies. He enjoyed perfecting his crop of tomatoes, beans, cucumbers, squash and other tasty vegetables, and loved sharing his bounty with friends and neighbors. Each spring and fall, he ritually helped Joyce plant flowers throughout their yard. He also loved playing golf with his family and friends at Mimosa Hills Country Club. He was his so proud of his 2006 hole-in-one!

Cameron will best be remembered for being a devoted, loving, and lifelong companion to his wife, Joyce, and a wonderful father to his two daughters, Martha Ann and Cam. He always cherished his time with his granddaughters and great grandchildren. His love for his family and traditions is his lasting legacy.

A Celebration of Life for Cameron will be at 3pm on Saturday, April 26, 2025, at First United Methodist Church in Morganton. The family will receive friends following the service. The service will be live-streamed beginning at 3pm, on the Facebook page of First United Methodist Church Morganton, <https://www.facebook.com/fumcmorganton.com> or <https://www.youtube.com/@fumcmorganton/streams>.

The family asks that in lieu of flowers, please consider a memorial contribution to the FUMC Music Fund. (<https://onrealm.org/FirstUnitedMeth42980/-/form/give/now>) ~ (select Music Fund).

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Visitation

April 26, 2025

3:45 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

First United Methodist Church Morganton

Service

April 26, 2025

3 p.m.

First United Methodist Church Morganton

Committal

N/A

Tribute Wall

Over the years and across the miles, Dr. and Mrs. Keels were always gracious to us when our paths did cross. We are so sorry for your loss. Frank and Pam Wallis

—Frank and Pam Wallis

Cameron was my dad's fishing and hunting buddy for fifty years or so as well as a family friend. He and all the stories generated over all those years will be treasured.

—Joseph Thomas

Cameron was my dentist for a time and also a golfing friend. I'll always remember the stories he would tell us about life and his experiences. What a fine person. Rest in Peace, brother.

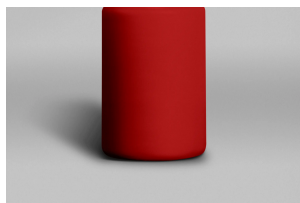
—Gary Abernethy



—Brittney Ruddy



Loved, Loved this sweet man ..he was my dentist for yrs .. I loved going to him . He kept me entertained with some



...was going to him. He kept me entertained with some funny,funny fishing story's .. my boys and my husband went to him .. his wife was precious to.. he will be certainly be missed ...

—Joann Riddle

Cameron and I want to send you our thoughts and prayers on the passing of your dad. He and your mom were such great friends to our mom as Grace Ridge neighbors for so many years. Your dad so often shared his garden tips with her (and with us) as they tomato farmed together. While we were visiting during mom's last year in health care , he and I would often meet in the garden to talk about dogs and bird hunting while he picked tomato's so I could take a little Burke County produce back home with me. I'm sure he's got a good crop growing right now.

—Scott Cutting

It was pleasure to take care of Dr Keels . My prayers are with the family during this time. Sincerely , Patricia Davis

—Patricia Davis

So sorry for your loss. Your Mom and Dad were such fine people.

—James Belote

—Carolyn Turner