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James Farrell Austin, Sr.

Dec. 4, 1931 - Sept. 6, 2018

James Farrell Austin, Sr., 86, of Morganton, NC died Thursday, September 6, 2018. Born in Stanly County, NC on December 4, 1931, he was the son of the late James Otho “J.O.” Austin and Bessy LeGrande Scarborough Austin.

The family moved to Alamance County in 1936 where he grew up and attended public school. Farrell was a graduate of Altamahaw0Osspiee High School where he edited the school yearbook, designed a permanent class ring, played football and basketball, and enjoyed a number of other extracurricular activities. He then attended UNC Chapel Hill prior to service with the U.S. Army during the Korean War, serving in military intelligence. After being honorably discharged, he transferred to Elon University, where he graduated in 1957 with a degree in business administration. He returned to UNC for graduate work in business, then began a 30-year management career with the Kayser-Roth Hosiery Corporation in Burlington, becoming production coordinator of men’s branded hosiery. While in Burlington, he was active in the Jaycees, served on the consistory, and assisted with the youth program at the First Reformed Church.

Farrell and Celeste moved to Albemarle when he was offered and accepted a position as Vice President of Manufacturing of Austin Knitting Mills. While in Albemarle, he was a member of the Lion’s Club, served on the administrative board,

Albemarle, he was a member of the Lions Club, served on the administrative board, and assisted with the youth program at Central United Methodist Church. He was elected vice president of the Stanly County Manufacturers Association, and was a member of the board of directors of the Stanly County Memorial Hospital. He greatly enjoyed golf and the rounds played with his golf buddies at Stanly County Country Club where he was a member, as well as at Piney Point Golf Club.

After the sale of the company, the family moved to Lincolnton when Farrell took a position with the Sweetree Mills.

Subsequently, an opportunity arose to join Silver Knit Industries and Farrell came with them to Morganton in 1977 as production manager of Drexel Knitting Mills. Since he and Celeste arrived in Morganton he has been a member of First United Methodist Church where he served many years on the administrative board as well as on a number of church commissions, many of which he chaired. He was a past president of the Forest Hill P.T.O., was active for a number of years in scouting and served as a Webelo Den Leader of Cub Pack 200, and as committee chairman of Troop 200. He was also a past member of Mimosa Hills Country Club.

After the closing of Drexel Knitting Mills, he retired from the textile industry and began a new career in fine jewelry sales with the Brendles Company, working with them as a diamond consultant until the company ceased operations. While there, he received a number of achievement awards in fine jewelry and diamond sales, and he developed a number of very fine, loyal personal clients.

Farrell was a firm believer in lifelong learning and enjoyed travel, good books, and especially good friends, food, and company. He took great pleasure in a number of hobbies, of which he once said he might be considered reasonably decent at golf, photography, painting, and cooking. However, his greatest joy was always his family and the time spent with them.

He is survived by his son, James Farrell “Jay” Austin, Jr. (Rebecca) of Black Mountain, NC; daughter, Jamie LeGrande Austin Johnston (Watkins) of Montgomery, AL; grandchildren, Watkins Cook Johnston, IV and Carol Hartwell Johnston; sister-in-law, Gail Craver; and a number of very close, special nieces, nephews, and their children.

In addition to his parents, Farrell was preceded in death by his wife of 55 years, Carol

In addition to his parents, Farrell was preceded in death by his wife of 55 years, Carol Celeste Anderson Austin; an infant daughter; an infant sister; and a sister-in-law, Bobbe Conrad.

The graveside service will be held at 2 p.m., Saturday, September 8, 2018 at Fairview Memorial Park in Albemarle, NC. Military honors will be provided by the N.C.

National Guard. The family will greet friends in the cemetery following the service.

The family has requested that memorial contributions be made to the Children's Home Society of NC, P.O. Box 14608, Greensboro, NC 27415-4608 or to First United Methodist Church, 200 N. King Street, Morganton, NC 28655.

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

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.