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James Rountree Collett

Sept. 22, 1920 - Jan. 28, 2012

Dr. James Rountree Collett, last surviving child of Frances Adaline Rountree and Sterling Ruffin Collett, died peacefully at Heartsease, his Morganton home of 56 years, on Saturday morning. He was 91 years old.He was a graduate of the McCallie School, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and of Harvard Medical School. He received the Howard Heinman Fellowship in Pathology from N.Y.U. and was a member of the New York Academy of Sciences. He served in the Army Medical Corps during World War II and in the Air Force during the Korean War. After completing a residency in internal medicine with the Chest Service at Bellevue Hospital in New York he returned to private practice in his hometown of Morganton. He married Nancy Thornwell Bernhardt of Lenoir, North Carolina, in 1956.Dr. Collett established the Critical Care Unit at Grace Hospital. He was past president of the Morganton Chamber of Commerce, chairman of the Morganton Public Library board, a trustee of the First National Bank of Morganton, and of Wachovia Bank. He was on the boards of Knob Creek and Henredon Furniture Company, Ind.He loved gardening, opera, the Blue Ridge Mountains and his family.His decades long service to the patients under his care has been amply repaid by the kindness, generosity and compassion of those who cared for him during his declining health. His family has been humbled and filled with gratitude for the devotion of his faithful caregivers, Dr. Edward Plyler, Dr. Debra Davis, Kevin Dixon, Sue Hayden, Judy McNally, Tyler Hensley, Julia Cook, Sonya Akbar, Rodney McKinney, James Elliott, Charles Harbison, Max Cash, Malik Williams, Debbie Hensley, Tia Rutherford, Tina Padgett, Ryan Hensley and the staff of Healthy at Home.Dr. Collett is survived by his wife, Nancy Bernhardt Collett and their children: Jean VanNoppen and husband Allen; Ellen Collett and

Alexander Gruszynski; James Rountree Collett Jr. and wife Ellen; Alexander Collett and partner, Derek Long; and William Collett and his wife, Georgia. He is also survived by his grandchildren: Nancy Thornwell VanNoppen, Ellen Harper VanNoppen, Allen VanNoppen Jr., Jean Bernhardt VanNoppen, Alexander Collett Gruszynski, Adaline Rountree Collett Gruszynski, James Rountree Collett III, John

Calhoun Collett, Ruth Ellen Hay Collett, Edgar Rand Collett, Mary Margaret Collett and Mathias Alexander Collett. In addition, he is survived by the beloved children of his siblings: of brother Sterling Jr.--Sterling Collett III, Mary Ruffin Collett, Dimples Collett and Martha Mellon; of his brother, John—-Becky Collett, Del Apperson, John Collett Jr., Sallie Prouty, Robert Collett, Vicky Mitchener and Tod Collett; of his sister Betsy—-Joe Patton Jr., Betts Drennen and Chuck Patton; and of his sister Frances—-Paul Hopkins Jr., Clay Doxey and John Hopkins. He is also survived by his brothers and sisters-in-law, John Christian Bernhardt, Jr. and Mary Jane Winfrey, Alex Bernhardt and wife Anne and nieces and nephews Alex Bernhardt Jr., Lillian Sutcliffe and Mary Busko.The Family will receive friends at the home on Monday evening between 5:30 and 7:30 pm. A memorial service will be held at the First Presbyterian Church in Morganton at 2 pm on Tuesday.In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Library Foundation of Burke County, 204 South King Street, Morganton, NC 28655 or to the Grace Hospital Critical Care Unit via Blue Ridge Healthcare Foundation, 2201 South Sterling St. Morganton, NC 28655.Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

—Nancy VanNoppen