



**MAX ERNEST DUER, JR**  
**September 5, 1943 - March 16, 2026**

Max Ernest Duer, Jr's story began on September 5, 1943. He was born to Max & Corrine Duer Sr. in Nevada City, California, and was diagnosed soon after with a heart defect. He beat the odds spoken by the doctors and lived about 77 years longer than they predicted. He passed away on March 16, 2026, at the age of 82 in Birmingham, AL after an extended illness.

In 1946, his parents moved to Opelika, AL to open Duer's Western Auto, and he became an older brother to Donna, Robert & Ron. Max or Maxie, as he was often called, graduated from Opelika High School in 1960.

He then attended Alabama Christian College in Montgomery, AL, where he met Sally Kaye Jones. After meeting her the first time, he proclaimed to his roommate that she was the girl he was going to marry. A few months later, he was involved in a serious car accident, which left him in a coma. Little did he know that Sally Kaye had planned to break up with him that day. Because of the wreck and Sally Kaye's time with him and his family during his recovery, that never happened. They were married on November 29, 1963.

Max completed his Bible degree at Harding University, Searcy, AR. After graduation, he and Sally moved a few times within the midwest/south while he preached. Eventually they moved back to the Auburn/Opelika, AL area. They opened up a Western Auto store in Auburn, AL. Ultimately, they merged with his parents' store in Opelika. The store located "on the tracks on 8th Avenue North" was run by the Duer family until 1991.

Max, as a trained preacher, loved to teach and preach and many Sunday mornings could be found in the living room of his home loudly whispering his planned sermon or Sunday school lesson. It was a blessing to hear him read scripture publicly. He made the verses come to life with his passion and inflection. He served Tenth Street church of Christ, Opelika, AL as Bible Class teacher and deacon. He also served as a song leader...sometimes from the pulpit and sometimes from the pew, much to the chagrin of the actual song leader.

Max loved a joke, the punnier the better. While he was a good story teller, his eyes would twinkle and give it away that a joke was coming. As a master wordsmith, he loved playing Scrabble, and enjoyed the puzzle page of the newspaper.

Max also loved watching Jeopardy. He loved it so much, he would use 5 of the 6 recording time slots on his VCR to record the 30 minute show but timed with precision to miss all the commercials.

He never met a meal he didn't proclaim as "the best I have ever eaten." He would often declare something was "so good we don't need dessert," but he would eat dessert anyway. Prone to combining traditional foods in non-traditional ways with mixed reception from others, he was mixing peanut butter with chocolate ice cream before it was available in stores. However, his addition of orange juice with his morning cereal never gained broader appeal.

It was always clear he loved his wife Sally, and they were married for 62 years. He would come home after work and the first thing he would do was hug and kiss her, regardless if they had just seen each other an hour earlier. Even in his last days, his face would brighten when she walked in the room and he would say, "You are so pretty" and she would say, "You are so sweet."

Together, they raised three sons and cared for a number of children as foster parents, both short and long term. In their retirement, Max and Sally would serve on mission trips to Oradea, Romania. Both grew to love the people of Romania deeply.

He was preceded in death by his parents Max & Corrine Duer and brother Robert. Max is survived by his beloved wife, Sally Duer; his children, Chuck (Jane) of Vestavia, AL, Steve (Shannon) of Wetumpka, AL, and David (Dia) of Nashville, TN; and his siblings, Donna Eldridge (Allan) of Mobile, AL and Ron of Vestavia, AL, his grandchildren, Brent, Grace & James and several nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends on April 4th at 10th Street church of Christ from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM with a memorial service to follow. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Agape of Central Alabama ([www.agapeforchildren.org](http://www.agapeforchildren.org)) or the Romania Mission Fund at 10th Street church of Christ (500 North 10th Street, Opelika Alabama 36801).