

Benners B. Vail, III

Benners B. Vail, III, age 85, beloved father, husband and brother, of Winfield, AL, passed away at his home on July 4, 2022. Ben was born on March 18, 1937 to Dr. Benners B. Vail, Jr. and Elizabeth Mims Vail in Opelika, AL. Ben was the oldest of 10 brothers and sisters.

Ben's father was a veterinarian and his family moved numerous times during his youth, even spending time in the Panama Canal Zone. He graduated from Tupelo High School in 1955. During his high school years Ben was quite the fisherman and athlete, playing football, running track and was a lifeguard at many local pools and lakes. Following high school Ben entered the US Navy. While serving as a corpsman at the San Diego Naval Base, he was severely injured and was medically discharged. Following the Navy, Ben returned home to Alabama, in the town of Montevallo. Recovering from his injuries, he met Margaret Sue Harden of Odenville, who was a student at the Alabama State College for Women, now known as the University of Montevallo. Following her graduation, Ben and Margaret were married on January 17, 1959. Soon after Ben and Margaret moved to the Birmingham area, got jobs and started a family. To support his growing family and help his mother, brothers and sisters, Ben started work at the Birmingham Publishing Company.

It was at that time that he befriended then 'starving artist' and the later renowned Hubert Shuptrine. Hubert traded many early works for a home-cooked meal.

While Ben was a success in the printing business it was not his passion. He had always wanted to be a medical doctor, but life got in the way. In 1965, Ben enrolled at the fledgling University of Alabama in Birmingham. He continued to work in the printing business and attended college at night, and received a BA from UAB and a Masters degree in Social Work from the University of Alabama after 13 years of study. Following graduation from the University of Alabama, Ben worked for the Alabama Department of Mental Health in Talladega and Marion counties.

The early years of working in the Mental Health field were stressful as Ben had to move to many different facilities. During his tenure at a Sylacauga facility, Ben met Patricia Harrison of Lineville, AL. In 1979. Ben and Pat married. While working at the Wedowee

mental health facility, Ben and Pat became interested in stained glass art and opened a studio. Even though they would move many times over the years, both maintained their interest in stained glass.

After several years of working his way through the mental health system, Ben moved to Winfield, Alabama, where he became the Director of the Winfield Caraway Mental Health facility. He spent many years as Director, eventually retiring in 2007. Shortly after retiring, Ben and Pat moved to a lake house on the Tennessee-Tombigbee canal in Fulton, MS where he could enjoy a lifelong hobby of fishing. From 2008-2012 Ben was Head of the Trauma Group Therapy for the Extra Mile Sober Living in Mantachie, MS. In 2010 Ben and Pat decided to move back to Winfield to be closer to family and friends. From that time until he passed, Ben enjoyed fishing, growing blueberries and many kinds of fruits and flowers. He always had a garden.

Ben is predeceased by his first wife Margaret Vail Boozer, second wife Patricia Harrison Vail, his brother Dr. Richard H. Vail, his daughter-in-law Dr. Angela L. Vail and granddaughter Natalie C.

Vail. Left to cherish his memory are his brothers and sisters: James M. Vail (Betty) of Warrior, AL, Patricia Vail Peavy (Lester) of Mineola, AL, Johnny M. Vail (Patsy) of Clanton, AL, Ellen Vail (Cheryl Ward) of Swannanoa, NC, Mary F. Vail Floyd (Norval H. (Zipper) Floyd, dec.) of Trussville, AL, Robert Vail (Gina) of Tupelo, MS, Dody Vail Sparks (Marty) of Saltillo, MS, Jeff Vail (Jodi) of Tupelo, Susan Stanford (Johnny) of Belden, MS and her sister Peggy Stewart (Johnny of Quitman, LA. He is survived by his children: Dr. Benners B. Vail, IV (Angela, dec.) of Winfield, AL, Susan Vail Brunner (William) of Birmingham, AL, Lori Vail McCormack (Tim) of Auburn, AL and Jonathon Upchurch (Denise) of Ashland. His grandchildren: Benners B. Vail, V of Birmingham, AL, Emily J. McCormack and Timothy J. McCormack of Auburn, AL. And many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at the Center United Methodist Church, Brilliant, AL at 11:00 am on July 30, 2022. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are requested for the Hospice of Northwest Alabama, 1315 US 43, Winfield, AL 35594.