



# Frederick Kirkland

JUL 6, 1931 - MAR 14, 2020



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# Table of Contents

<b>Obituary</b> .....	Page 3
<b>Tribute Wall</b> .....	Page 5



## Frederick Kirkland

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**F**rederick (Fred) Eugene Kirkland, 88, passed away Saturday March 14, 2020. Born in Swain County, North Carolina, Fred was the only child of the late Jack J. Kirkland and Roxie K. Kirkland.

Fred is survived by his wife of 68 years, Polly Kirkland, 3 sons - Jack and his wife Cathy of Huntersville NC, Mike and his wife Carolyn of Westfield NJ & Tim and his wife Terri of Asheboro NC, 6 grandchildren - Eric Kirkland and his wife Rachelle, Mandy Kirkland Underwood and her husband Kevin, Michael Kirkland, John Kirkland, Logan Kirkland and Gracie Kirkland, and 9 great-grandchildren - Jackson Kirkland, Jackson Underwood, Joshua Kirkland, Tim Underwood, Abby Underwood, Ryan Kirkland, Catherine Underwood, Charlotte Underwood and Benjamin Underwood.

Fred was actually born on the banks of Hazel Creek, in the town of Proctor, that is now within the boundaries of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. He lived in Proctor until the seventh grade where he then began to live with his aunts Minnie and Anne to finish school eventually graduating from Marion High School in 1949.

At Marion High he played football, basketball and baseball and in his senior year he captained and led his football team as their quarterback. He claimed to be only an average student. He then started college at Western Carolina in 1950 pursuing a teaching degree but that was cut short by the Korean War where Fred served over 3 years in the Navy.

He had 3 separate tours off the coast of North Korea on the heavy cruiser USS Los Angeles, leaving the service in 1954 as a 1st Class Petty Officer. After the service Fred went on to graduate in 1958 from Auburn University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering.

Fred then went on to a long engineering career with Western Electric in Winston-Salem NC, Bell Laboratories in Greensboro NC and AT&T in New Jersey, retiring in 1987 as a Senior Member of Technical Staff. His most notable career accomplishment was in the early 80s leading the team



## Obituary

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that first utilized the then emerging computing systems developed by Hewlett Packard, to automate data collection and configuration of undersea telephone cable systems as they were being deployed.

For this he was invited by Hewlett Packard Corp to speak before the IEE in Great Britton. During the last 10 years of his career, he and Polly traveled the globe while Fred led various undersea cable lay projects with his colleague and close friend, Kevin McDonald. Fred always said that Kevin was his true brother from another mother.

While living in Winston-Salem and Greensboro in the late 60s and early 70s, Fred coached little league football, baseball and basketball in Winston-Salem and Greensboro. He and his close friend Ben Cockman mentored many young men during this time.

Fred and Polly made their final move in retirement to Franklin NC's Patton Valley in 1994. Polly was born there in 1932 so she was just returning home. Very early on they became involved in the "Friends of the Library" and Fred created the computer program that tracked membership and donations for the new library.

Fred and Polly also joined Patton UMC and began 26 years of involvement with their new church family. Fred was involved in, and sometimes led, multiple gospel/bluegrass/folk bands, and was involved in a number of church functions. Fred made many many good friends there, admired the devotion of the extended Cloer family, but he was closest to his friend Robbie Wood.

Along with wood working, and trout fishing with his son Mike, Dr. Wilde, and Robbie Wood, Fred enjoyed a number of hobbies in retirement. Fred said many times that their home in Patton Valley was his and Polly's "little piece of paradise on earth".

James Funeral Home of Huntersville NC is serving the Kirkland family and can be contacted at 704-948-9004 or at [www.JamesFuneralHomeLKN.com](http://www.JamesFuneralHomeLKN.com) . Fred will be buried on the grounds of Patton UMC. A celebration of Fred's life will be held there in the coming weeks.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made in Fred's memory to either his church "Patton UMC" or to "Hospice & Palliative Care Lake Norman" who provided loving care through his final days



## Tribute Wall

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DB

**Dixie Barker** posted:

We loved Fred so very much. So blessed to have him and Ms. Polly in our lives. We enjoyed Fred's stories and was so blessed to have him teach our Sunday School class when Martha was gone. The love he had for Ms. Polly was a blessing to see. We have so many wonderful memories to cherish.

March 19 at 10:52 AM

BH

**Brenda Holland** posted:

Fred was such a blessing to me. He was a kind and gentle man. And what a love he had for his sweet Polly and she for him. Our Sunday school class was so blessed to have him as our leader in the winter months for the last several years. We will cherish all the sweet memories he has left with us.

March 18 at 6:23 PM

LG

**Laura Green** posted:

He always told me to keep smiling and always referred to Polly as his beautiful bride. Loved this Man of God. Laura

March 18 at 3:48 PM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Frederick by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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