



## Charles Ronald "Ron" Willeford

July 6, 1937 - November 27, 2024

Charles Ronald "Ron" Willeford, 87, of Salisbury, NC passed away Wednesday, November 27, 2024 at Liberty Lane Hospice in the W.G. Hefner VA Medical Center.

Ron was born July 6, 1937 in Coffeen, IL to the late Virginia Elizabeth Willeford and Virgil Earl Willeford. He was a graduate of East Peoria High School.

Ron attended Bradley University, then transferred to Greenville College, in Greenville, IL. Here he met Rita Hannum, love of his life, married her at 22 and were together for the next 65 years. They went on to raise unusually outstanding children- all above average and good looking!

At age 24, Ron was drafted to serve his beloved country. His Military service was in Okinawa Japan in Army counter intelligence where he learned to speak Japanese.

After serving overseas, he returned to continue studies in international business. Ron attended the American Institute for Foreign Trade at Thunderbird School of Global Management, now at Arizona State University. There he was awarded both a Bachelors and Master Degree in International Management. Ron held various executive, administration, senior accounting and business management roles. These included international sales positions as well as Chief Financial Officer roles in both Libya and Bolivia, working with multinational oil companies.

Early career roles included Merchandising Manager for Sears International in

Venezuela and working in various international positions using his Spanish and French.

Upon returning to the USA, Ron spent some time working with his Alma Mater, Greenville College as their Director of Purchasing.

Ron later moved the family to Florida, and become a Co-founder of a Land Development Corporation, developing "Hunters Creek" near Disney World. Upon successful sale of this Development, he initially retired at 47 years of age, to enjoy world travel. Being restless, Ron returned to work at the age of 65. This part of his working career ended in selling modular homes with Contempri Homes in Eureka, IL. There he designed and sold 98 homes in the span of 3 years before retiring for a second and final time.

Ron loved to travel, learn about different cultures and held a passion to explore new ideas and new things. He enjoyed fishing, eating good food, and loved dreaming up ways of making money. However, these things are secondary to special nights with his kids, often exposing them to different life experiences and ideas. Ron was also passionate about providing and caring for his family. This included helping others he met along the way, especially in their time of need. In this area he was generous, never passing up an opportunity to give others encouragement and a leg up.

In these last years of Ron's diminishing health, he refocused his efforts at knowing more about the Lord who saved him. He desired to know more about Jesus, with a special longing to grasp more about Heaven. This became a priority for Ron. Today he is experiencing that reality of eternal life. I'm sure this is what he will want us all to remember most about his life.

Ron was a member of Glad Tidings Assembly of God in East Peoria, IL. He enjoyed class reunions for EPHS with the Class of 1956.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his granddaughter, Brittany Nichole Patrick and sister, Gena Willeford.

Left to cherish his memory is his wife Rita F. Willeford of Salisbury, NC; son, Gary Willeford and wife Jamie of Salisbury, NC; daughters, Ronita Willeford-Van Donkersgoed and Gary John Van Donkersgoed of Costa Rica and Beth

Patrick of Sanford, FL; brother, Victor Willeford, of East Peoria, IL; nine grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

A graveside service will be held at 9 AM Friday (Dec. 6) at the Salisbury National Cemetery. A Celebration of Life will follow at 10 AM in Building 19 of the W.G. Hefner VA Medical Center. The family will speak to friends following the Celebration of Life.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to Samaritan's Purse, PO Box 3000, Boone, NC 28607, with NC Hurricane Relief in the memo line.

Summersett Funeral Home is serving the Willeford family. Online condolences can be made at [www.summersettfuneralhome.com](http://www.summersettfuneralhome.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Salisbury National Cemetery

501 Statesville Blvd.  
Salisbury, NC 28144

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

DEC 6. 9:00 AM (ET)

Salisbury National Cemetery  
501 Statesville Blvd.  
Salisbury, NC 28144

## Celebration of Life

DEC 6. 10:00 AM (ET)

WG Hefner VA Medical Center  
1601 Brenner Avenue  
Building 19  
Salisbury, NC 28144

## Visitation Following Service

DEC 6 (ET)

WG Hefner VA Medical Center  
1601 Brenner Avenue  
Building 19  
Salisbury, NC 28144



# Tribute Wall



“ *Summersett Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Charles Ronald "Ron" Willeford*



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**Summersett Funeral Home and Cremation Center** - December 05, 2024 at 03:07 PM