



Tommy Olin Eller

April 24, 1927 - April 22, 2022

Tommy Olin Eller, 94, of Salisbury, passed away April 22, 2022 at Novant Health Glenn A. Kiser Hospice House.

Born April 24, 1927 in Salisbury, NC he was the son of the late William Eller and Elsie Beaver Eller. He was a veteran of World War II, serving in the South Pacific. He also participated in the Atom Bomb test in the Marshall Islands in 1946.

After service he worked for Ketner Supermarket until it was sold to Winn Dixie. In 1956 he joined Ralph Ketner, Brown Ketner and Wilson Smith in the first Food Town Store. He held many positions at Food Town, Perishable Director and Area and Regional Market Director until retiring in 1982.

He was a member of Bethel Lutheran Church, Eureka Masonic Lodge, 33rd Scottish Rite, Oasis Shrine and Royal Order of Scotland. He was honored with receiving his 50 year pin from the Order of the Mystic Shrine.

Mr. Eller was a board member and Emirst of the Masonic Children Home in Oxford, NC and received the Montfort Medal for charity work. He loved helping children and was also involved in Cameron Boys Home and the Shriners Hospital for Children.

He was also a member of the American Legion, VFW and other organizations. In addition to his parents he was preceded in death by his first wife, Edith; son, Mike; daughter, Jodie Lean; brothers, Bill, T.R., Jack, Bobby, Benny and Richard Eller and sister, Becky Helms; his second wife of 46 years, Jeanie Curlee Eller.

Left to cherish his memory are his son, Steven A. Safrit, Jr. and wife Barbara of Salisbury; grandson, Blake O. Safrit; granddaughter, Sydney Drew Emblar and husband Cameron; sisters, Eloise Eller of Wilmington, Patsy Koon of Winston-Salem; brother-in-law, Bob Helms of Cary; sisters-in-law, Anne Curlee and Kim Curlee.

Also surviving are special friends, Ronnie and Bonnie Marsh, Donnie and Lynn Marsh, Janice Graham and Chris and Elizabeth Richardson.

Tommy never met a stranger. His intentional way of living joyfully in the moment was an inspiration to all who knew him.

His grandfather told him, "the best thing you can leave behind when you go is what good you have done for others". A philosophy he lived up to.

Funeral service will be held at 11am Wednesday, April 27 at Bethel Lutheran Church with Pastor Carroll Robinson officiating. A celebration reception will follow in the church fellowship hall. Masonic Rites and Military Honors will be conducted at 3PM in Rowan Memorial Park Mausoleum.

Memorials may be made to the Masonic Home for Children, 600 College Street, Oxford, NC 27565; Scottish Rite Eye Fund, 400 University Hall Dr., Boone, NC 28607; Shriners Hospital for Children, 950 W. Faris Rd., Greenville, SC 29605.

Summersett Funeral Home is serving the Eller / Safrit family. Online condolences may be made at www.summersettfuneralhome.com.

Cemetery Details

Rowan Memorial Park Mausoleum

4125 Fanklin Community Center Road
Salisbury, NC 28144

Previous Events

Funeral Service

APR 27. 11:00 AM (ET)

Bethel Lutheran Church

Graveside Service

APR 27. 3:00 PM (ET)

Rowan Memorial Park Mausoleum
4125 Fanklin Community Center Road
Salisbury, NC 28144

Tribute Wall

DP

“ Tommy Eller was a friend of my father, R.C. White, through Tommy's brother, Bobby. I recently saw Mr. Tommy's name in the Bethel News Letter from the church. I sent him a couple of cards and in February, I received one from him. I will treasure it always. My father loved the Eller family and I 'm sure he & Bobby were waiting along with the rest of the family, anxious for Mr. Tommy's arrival. I was on a trip when Mr. Tommy passed away, but I did send him a birthday card. it was only after I returned home that I learned from the Bethel News Letter the date of his arrival in heaven. Don't worry about Mr. Tommy. He has more family and friends up there than he does on earth and I feel certain he is going around shaking hands, giving hugs and laughing with all of them now. My prayers go out to the family and friends who are left to mourn and miss him. I'm sorry I didn't get to see him again as the adult I am now, but I feel certain I will see him along with my father & Bobby and all the rest of the family when my own time comes.
Debbie White Pahl
Tallahassee, FL

Debbie White Pahl - May 13, 2022 at 07:00 PM

GM

“ Tommy was a sweet and kind man. I am so thankful our Thad the opportunity to spend time together! A blessing to all who met him. Sending love and prayers to all the family.

Gwen G Massey - April 27, 2022 at 06:45 AM

PS

“ What a Awesome Human Being...
Prayer's of Comfort and Faith.
John 14:1-3

Pastor Joey Spry - April 27, 2022 at 01:23 AM

LK

“ Tommy was a beautiful part of my childhood and young adult life. He had the best smile in the world. My dad respected and loved him. I bet they're up there telling Food Town/Food Lion stories! A good, good man!

Linda Ketner - April 26, 2022 at 09:14 AM

DM

“ Tommy, we will forever hold you in our hearts. You have been a part of our family for many years. While Ronnie and I worked at Food Town/ Food Lion, you were always there for us and taught us to work hard, and consider Food Town as a big family of friends that to this day means so much to us. We have never had a better friend. We will always love you and never forget your kindness, wisdom, and love for others. Heaven gained an angel today.
All Our Love,
Donnie and Lynn



Donnie and Lynn Marsh - April 25, 2022 at 08:25 PM

BH

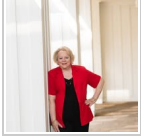
“ I began working with Food Town in 1970 in Jonesville, NC and met Tommy and he was very inspiring with his personality. When I moved to the headquarters as a Buyer in 1976 got to know him more and admired and respected him even more. Man among men!

Buddy Hedrick - April 25, 2022 at 08:06 PM

MS

“ May flights of angels sing you to your sweet rest, Tommy.

Michelle Surratt - April 25, 2022 at 03:23 PM



“ Tommy was my manager at Food Lion and he taught me more about life and business than anyone. He trusted more than anyone and will forever be like a father to me. He will be missed.

Ronnie Rinehart - April 25, 2022 at 02:57 PM

DW

“ No one had a bigger influence on my career at Food Lion than Tommy. I will be forever grateful for his guidance and friendship. RIP my friend.

Donnie Waller - April 25, 2022 at 02:49 PM

AS

“ April Simmons lit a candle in memory of Tommy Olin Eller



April Simmons - April 25, 2022 at 01:42 PM