



## Mr. William A. Kelly

February 3, 1926 - July 11, 2014

William Augustus “Bill” Kelly passed away Friday, July 11, 2014 at his home in Rome. He lived in Elberton from 1951 through 2010 and moved to Rome in 2010, residing at Renaissance Marquis Retirement Center.

Born in Athens on February 3, 1926, Bill was the son of the late Dr. George Washington Kelly Sr. and Annie Sue Griffin Kelly of Carlton. He was married for 67 years to Frances Harris Kelly, who survives him. He is also survived by two daughters and their husbands, Janet Kelly Wiley and Hayden of Elberton, and Fran Kelly Preiss and Lindsay of Rome; two grandsons and their wives, LCDR William Hayden Wiley and Cathy of Arlington, Virginia, and Walter Harris Wiley and Shea of Duluth; and three great-grandchildren, Grace Elizabeth Wiley and Claire Madelyn Wiley of Arlington, Virginia, and Noah Fisher Wiley of Duluth. His sister, Mary Kelly Derby of Beavercreek, Ohio, five nephews, and two nieces also survive. In addition to his parents, Bill was predeceased by his brothers George W. Kelly Jr. and Wade H. Kelly Sr., and half-brother Sam H. Kelly.

Bill grew up in Carlton and graduated from Elberton High School in 1942. He attended Emory University from 1942-1944, was drafted and served in the U.S. Army during World War II and with the U.S. Occupation Forces in Japan for several years following the war. Bill married Frances Harris, his high school sweetheart, on September 24, 1947, and continued work in Japan. He returned to the States and entered the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, where he completed the B.S. degree in Political Science in 1950 and Master of Arts degree in Public Administration in 1951. He was a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society at UT.

Bill and Frances moved to Elberton in 1951, where he went to work as a Power Specialist for the U.S. Department of Interior, Southeastern Power Administration.

Bill Kelly began his legendary career with the Elberton Granite Association in 1954, when he was named EGA’s General Manager. He served as EGA’s chief executive for 36 years, retiring as Executive Vice President in 1991. After his retirement, Bill remained with EGA as a Consultant for ten additional years. Under his leadership, EGA membership increased from 29 to 126 member firms; the EGA headquarters building was constructed and later expanded; the staff increased from one employee to 13; the Elberton Graniteer magazine was founded and published quarterly with a national circulation of over 13,000;

the downtown Elberton Monument Display was established; the Bicentennial Fountain was erected in downtown Elberton; and the Elberton Granite Museum and Exhibit was built to document the Elberton Granite story for thousands of visitors annually. Bill and Frances represented Elberton at hundreds of state, regional, and national Memorial Industry conventions, averaging 100,000 miles per year, and always effectively promoting Elberton as the “Granite Capital of the World.”

Bill became well known in the Association Management field at both state and national levels, and earned the professional designation of Certified Association Executive in 1972. He served as President of the Georgia Society of Association Executives in 1987-88, and he received the 1982 Cliff Clarke Award as Outstanding Association Executive in Georgia. On the national level, Bill served on the Board of Directors of the 20,000 member American Society of Association Executives from 1986-89 and as ASAE Vice Chairman in 1989-90. He received ASAE’s “Key Award” in 1982, the highest national honor attainable for an association executive.

In addition to his numerous professional activities, Bill Kelly also volunteered his time and talents in a variety of civic and community projects, working tirelessly to improve the quality of life for all Elbert Countians. He was an active member of the Rotary Club of Elberton for 50 years, where he served as Club President, PolioPlus chairman, member of the Scholarship Committee, and Historian/Archivist, and he was named a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International.

Bill was one of a small group of citizens who formulated plans for construction of the Elberton Civic Center, and he served as volunteer treasurer for the Civic Center for more than 30 years. He served as a member of the Elberton-Elbert County Hospital Authority for nine years, and was president of the Elberton Country Club for three years. Bill helped organize efforts to promote passage of bond issues and SPLOST projects, serving as treasurer for several SPLOST committees.

Bill worked with Joe Fendley Sr. and Tom Evans Sr. to establish the Elberton Sister City Program with Mure-Cho, Japan. This program has been recognized as one of the most successful Sister City programs by Sister Cities International.

Bill was a member of Elberton First United Methodist Church. He served as a member of the church’s Administrative Board and was pianist for the Manning Coed Sunday School Class for many years.

Bill was recognized by the Elbert County Chamber of Commerce as 1967 Booster of the Year; Distinguished Service Award recipient for 1976-77; 1982 Achievement Award recipient; and Elbert County Ambassador Award recipient in 2002.

Bill was a long-time member of the Elbert County Historical Society and supported their work to preserve Elbert County’s heritage. He spent many hours documenting his own family history and genealogy, writing his personal Memoirs, and corresponding with his numerous cousins throughout the country.

Bill and Frances enjoyed traveling and traveled worldwide for both business and pleasure as long as they were physically able. In 1987, they achieved some notoriety as they researched and visited the gravesites of all 39 signers of the U.S. Constitution. They instilled an appreciation and love for travel in their children and grandsons, arranging numerous educational sightseeing trips throughout the U.S. and abroad. Grandson Will Wiley accompanied them to conventions in several major U.S. cities, and over a period of several years, they took grandson Walt Wiley to visit every one of the fifty state capitol buildings in the U.S.

Memorial services honoring the life of Bill Kelly will be held Sunday, July 27, 2014 at 3 p.m. at the Elberton First United Methodist Church. A time of visitation with the family will be held in the church Fellowship Hall immediately following the Memorial Service. A private entombment will be held at the family mausoleum in Elberton's Elmhurst Cemetery. The family suggests that memorial gifts be made to The Kelly Endowment of Elbert Memorial Hospital Foundation, 4 Medical Drive, Elberton, GA 30635; or to the donor's favorite charity.

Daniel's Funeral Home of Rome and Hicks Funeral Home of Elberton are in charge of arrangements for William A. "Bill" Kelly.

# Events

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**JUL Memorial Service 03:00PM**

**27**

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First United Methodist Church

132 E. Church St., Elberton, GA, US, 30635

**JUL Visitation 04:00PM**

**27**

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First United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall

132 E. Church St., Elberton, GA, US, 30635

# Comments

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“ So sorry for your loss. He contributed so much to Elberton. You can feel proud about all his accomplishments for our town and raising a wonderful family. I know you will miss him, but he is in a much better place.



**Libby Eavenson** - July 26, 2014 at 12:20 PM

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“ You are in our prayers.  
Lisa Anderson Ruffin

**Lisa A. Ruffin** - July 20, 2014 at 05:32 PM

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“ Frances and Family, You're in our thoughts and prayers. Praying God will give you comfort and strength.

**Judy & Mike Eavenson and Family** - July 14, 2014 at 08:14 PM

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“ Frances and Family, my thoughts and prayers are with you all during this most difficult time. Bill did so much for Elberton and its people, and he will be greatly missed!

**Anne Winn** - July 12, 2014 at 08:56 AM

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“ JANET WILL KEEP YOU AND FAMILY IN MY PRAYER. SUSAN WEBB

**SUSAN WEBB** - July 12, 2014 at 06:27 AM



“ So sorry I missed the Memorial Service. Mr. Kelly was my boss for a number of years & he and Frances were such fine people. He will be missed by many of his friends everywhere. He was quite a respected member of our community as the newspapers have printed and Tom Oglesby was certainly on the mark in his remarks. Send my sympathy to his family.  
Betty Boswell Anderson

**Betty G. Anderson** - July 29, 2014 at 11:48 AM