



## Joe Edward Sparks

August 7, 1944 - October 22, 2024

Joe Edward Sparks, Ph.D.

August 7, 1944 – October 22, 2024 - Joe was born August 7, 1944 in Rutherfordton, NC to the late Leon Cole and John Hayden Sparks. An avid learner, he excelled both academically and athletically in high school where he loved playing baseball. He received his B.A. from Wake Forest in 1966 where he was a member of Omicron Delta Kappa and served on the Honor Court. He then went on to receive his Master of Divinity from Vanderbilt University in 1969 and his Ph.D. from the University of Alabama in 1976.

He continued his love of education as Dean of Men at Mercer University and as Associate Dean of the College and Assistant Dean of Students at Birmingham-Southern, then as Chief Development Officer at the University of Alabama-Huntsville. After his career in higher education, he transitioned to work in strategic planning and development. He spent seventeen years with Teledyne Brown Engineering, then worked with Analytical Services, Inc. and Booz Allen Hamilton until his retirement.

In his spare time Joe loved working with wood, refinishing and restoring as well as creating many pieces of furniture. He was a voracious reader and enjoyed watching college basketball and visiting his home state of North Carolina.

He is survived by his wife Gail; children Sara Van Asch and her husband Fraser (Raleigh, NC), Anna Sparks (Chapel Hill, NC), Charlie Sparks (Hillsborough, NC), Lance McKoy and his wife Laura (Dallas, TX), Heather

Porch and her husband Jason (Huntsville); grandchildren Alan Van Asch, Spencer Porch, Jackson Porch and Sophie Porch; the mother of his children Sara "Scottie" Sparks; and his cherished cat Prissy. He also leaves behind many extended family members, friends and colleagues who will miss him, his wit and his wisdom dearly. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Jerry and sister-in-law Ann Sparks, and grandson John Parker Porch. A celebration of Joe's life will be held Saturday November 2nd at First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville. Visitation will begin at 1pm and the service at 2pm followed by a private service for the family in the Memory Garden. Arab Heritage Memorial Chapel in Arab, Alabama have been entrusted with arrangements.

In lieu of flowers please consider making a donation in Joe's memory to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund ([nc.gov/donate](http://nc.gov/donate)) to help with the recovery of his beloved NC mountains following the recent storm, or to First Presbyterian Church, 307 Gates Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35801.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Visitation

NOV 2. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville  
307 Gates Avenue S.E.  
Huntsville, AL 35801

## Memorial Service

NOV 2. 2:00 PM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville  
307 Gates Avenue S.E.  
Huntsville, AL 35801

# Tribute Wall

LS

“ So sorry I wasn't able to attend the service for Joe He was such a good neighbor and friend  
Lucy

Lucy Vest Slater - November 14, 2024 at 11:25 AM

DC

“ Losing Joe is a loss not only for the family but to all who knew him. A quality man in all aspects. I miss him

David Crozier - October 28, 2024 at 01:18 PM

JO

“ I met Joe years ago when my husband worked with Joe at Teledyne. I know he was such an intelligent and kind person. My husband and I appreciated his friendship. Condolences to his family.



Jane Oddo - October 26, 2024 at 07:13 AM