

Dr. William Ralph Vogler passed away on December 2, 2017, surrounded by his children and a very special friend. Dr. Vogler was born on July 2, 1929, to the late Ralph Sr. and Clara Vogler in Louisville, Kentucky. He claimed he did not know he was a junior until he attempted to enter the Navy and was required to provide documentation to verify his identity. His family moved to Wayland and Richmond, before ultimately settling in Paris, Kentucky. He earned his Eagle Scout badge and was the valedictorian of his high school; at graduation, he prepared a 15-minute speech. Of the experience, he smiled as he remembered how it "gave you a little power to feel everybody was listening, you know?" Earlier in his high school career, he realized he wanted to become a doctor following the passing of his grandmother. For the rest of his life, his passion for helping others through medical science would be eclipsed only by his passion for his family and friends. Denied enlistment in the Navy for poor vision, he graduated pre-med from Purdue University in three years and was accepted to medical school at Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois. It was in Chicago that he met his wife, the late Marilyn Lydia "Lynn" Rubio, on a blind double date. Lynn was not his date that night, but a chance meeting shortly thereafter sparked a romantic connection that would last the rest of their lives. Dr. Vogler fondly remembered discovering jazz clubs with Lynn and scraping by as a young couple in ragged apartments. The couple was married in 1952 and were parents by 1953. Continuing his medical career, Dr. Vogler was assigned to the National Cancer Institute after three months of residency. In 1955, he moved the family to Atlanta to take a public health assignment at Emory University. Heeding advice against entering private practice, he accepted a job in the hematology field at the Winship Cancer Institute, then under its first director, Dr. Eliot Scarborough. He spent the next 30 years in hematology, publishing over 200 papers during his distinguished career as a pioneer in cancer research. Through laboratory work, grant-writing, clinical trials, and patient treatment, he tirelessly devoted himself to the fight against cancer. He retired at 65 and spent the next ten years at the American Cancer Society before retiring for good. Dr. Vogler was immensely proud of the work he and his colleagues produced; he kept binders of his published papers and, in his later years, could still recount the experiments, results, future pathways to a treatment, and potential hopes for a cure throughout his work. He would have preferred his obituary to cite specific details and approaches he took in his life's work, but that (again, as he probably would have preferred), would have distracted from the remembrance of his human and emotional achievements. He was generous and kind, with a dry wit and an initially stoic disposition that belied the deep warmth of his personality. He loved to laugh (or, more accurately, flash his understated wry smile), share wine, food and stories, and travel the world with his wife. He cherished time with his children and grandchildren. Each holiday meal was forestalled by a requisite family photograph, a tradition meaning much more to him than could be represented in each individual image. His favorite hobby was painting, an art he studied, primarily under the Chatov brothers, for decades. His teachers focused on the female form, and he often laughed recounting the days when his daughter would routinely turn the nude paintings around to avoid embarrassment when her friends came to the house. Dr. Vogler will be remembered as a consistently strong, loving, and caring husband, father, grandpa, and friend. His generosity, patience, and his deep devotion to his beloved wife were inspirations to his family and will remain so for the generations to come. He was predeceased by his wife, Lynn, and his brother, Alan. He is survived by his daughter, Kathy Steinbruegge and her husband, Bob; sons, Gregory Vogler, and Brian Vogler and his wife, Kay; grandchildren, Robbie and Jamie Steinbruegge and Kendal Vogler. In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Alzheimer's Association at alz.org or a charity of your choice. A celebration of Dr. Ralph Vogler's life will be held at 3:00 pm, Saturday, December 9, 2017 at A. S. Turner & Sons Chapel, Decatur. Online condolences may be made at www.ASTurner.com.