

PINKSTON, Jr., John William John William (Bill) Pinkston, Jr. died April 30, 2017. He was preceded in death by his parents, John William Pinkston, Sr. and Fanny Lou Smith, and his brother, Robert. Bill was born in Valdosta, GA on August 11, 1924. He attended public schools in Valdosta, earning the rank of Eagle Scout while in high school. During World War II he served in the Army Corps of Engineers at Fort Belvoir, VA. He received his BBA degree from Emory University, where he also was a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. After two years at Western Electric, Bill joined the staff at Grady Memorial Hospital, where he began a lifetime career in hospital administration, first as Assistant Comptroller and later as Assistant Superintendent. In 1964 he was appointed Executive Director of Grady. He served in that position for twenty five years, retiring in 1989. When he began at Grady, Grady's patient population included polio patients in an Iron Lung Unit. During his tenure as Executive Director, Bill oversaw dramatic and far-reaching changes at Grady, including integration of the hospital, installation of air conditioning throughout the facility, implementation of Medicare and Medicaid, creation of a burn center, and outreach programs for drug treatment and AIDS patients. The late Dr. Edward C. Loughlin, former Chairman of the Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority, said at the time of Bill's retirement, "Bill Pinkston is Grady Hospital. This man is impeccable in his honesty and his work ethic. One of his greatest strengths has been a strong advocacy for the disadvantaged citizens of this city and state." Bill served in numerous leadership positions within various hospital administration organizations. He was past President of the Metropolitan Atlanta Hospital Council and the Georgia Hospital Association. He served on the Executive Committees of the Public Hospital Section of the American Hospital Association and the Council of Teaching Hospitals of the American Medical Association. Bill was the first layperson to receive the Award of Honor from the Emory University Medical Alumnae Association. He was a member of the Georgia Task Force on AIDS from 1987 to 1990. Bill's interests outside of public health care included a lifelong love of music, which began with piano lessons as a child. Throughout his high school and college years, he played the organ at various Valdosta churches and during his adult years continued to enjoy playing the piano for friends and family. His love of opera also began as a child, listening to the weekly radio broadcasts of the New York Metropolitan Opera Company. The Metropolitan Opera's annual visit to Atlanta was a particularly special time for him as an opportunity to both enjoy the performances and reunite with friends. Bill was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Atlanta Music Festival Association, the sponsoring organization for the Metropolitan Opera Spring visit to Atlanta. Bill was an Honorary Life Member of the Piedmont Driving Club. Bill was especially fortunate to find a new calling after his retirement from Grady. What began as time as a volunteer at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens grew into two separate terms as its Interim Director. He also served on the Board of Trustees of the Southeastern Flower Show. Bill will be remembered not only for his commitment to public health care but also for his devotion to family. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Jane Grant Pinkston whom he met while she was working at Grady; daughter Carol Grant Pinkston and husband Frank Robert Virnelli, Jr. of West Hartford, CT; son John William Pinkston, III and wife Julia Tindall Pinkston of Atlanta, GA; and his grandchildren Emily Pinkston, Grant Pinkston, and Trey Virnelli. The family would like to thank George Heberton and Donna Stovell for the companionship and care they provided Bill over the past decade. A Memorial Service will be held on Friday, May 12, 2017 at 11:00 am in the Dobbs Chapel at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, where Bill was a member and former Elder. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Caring Hands Fund, Presbyterian Homes of GA., PO Box 957267, Duluth, GA 30095. Published in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution on May 8, 2017