

## Dr. Ralph J. Turner

March 15, 1939 - March 9, 2020

Dr. Ralph J. Turner, 80, of Huntington died at the Emogene Dolin Jones Hospice House on March 9, 2020, following a long battle with Parkinson's Disease. He was surrounded by Barbara, his wife of 58 years, and loving children and grandchildren. Ralph and Barbara met in the marching band at Marshall University. She played clarinet and he played trumpet. They were married Aug. 19, 1961, and have four children – Tamera (Gary Procop), Christopher (Erica), Amy (Jarvis Lang) and Matthew (Roxy), nine grandchildren (Kinsey, Haley, London, Aidan, Mila, Zachariah, Allia, Presley, Berlin) and two great grandchildren (Walker, Winnie). Ralph was a professor of journalism at Marshall University for 32 years and mentored thousands of students throughout his career. He was born in Huntington March 15, 1939, and was graduated from Huntington Vinson High School in 1957. He received bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism from Marshall and a Ph.D. in journalism and mass communications from Ohio University. He also studied graphic design at the Rochester (N.Y.) Institute of Technology. Ralph worked as a reporter at The Herald-Dispatch and the Charleston Gazette and editor of The Wayne County News, and also did writing, editing and design work for Marshall and numerous newspapers and companies. He taught at Ohio University and Florida A&M University, but he always cited Barbara, his children and their families as his pride and joy. Dr. Turner and his colleague and lifelong friend, Dr. George Arnold, were widely recognized as among Marshall's top professors. Ralph took incredible pride in the success of his

students and followed them throughout their careers. He will be fondly remembered for his classroom antics and love of bad puns and pranks. The family will receive friends on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 from 6:00-9:00 PM at Henson & Kitchen Mortuary, 6357 E. Pea Ridge Road, Huntington, WV 25705. Funeral services will be conducted on Thursday, March 12, 2020 at Pea Ridge United Methodist Church, Huntington at 11:00 AM. Burial will follow in Ridgelawn Memorial Park, Huntington and will be private for the family. In lieu of flowers, friends may donate to the Arnold-Turner Journalism Scholarship Fund at Marshall University. Online condolences and memories may be shared with the family by visiting [www.hensonandkitchen.com](http://www.hensonandkitchen.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Ridgelawn Memorial Park

5547 W. Pea Ridge Road  
Huntington, WV 25705

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 11. 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Henson and Kitchen Mortuary and Cremation Services  
1592 East Pea Ridge Road  
Huntington, WV 25705  
(304) 736-8986  
[fredkitchen@hensonmortuary.com](mailto:fredkitchen@hensonmortuary.com)  
<https://www.hensonandkitchen.com>

## Funeral Service

MAR 12. 11:00 AM (ET)

Pea Ridge United Methodist Church  
5747 East Pea Ridge Road  
Huntington, WV 25705  
<http://www.pearidgeumc.org>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Henson & Kitchen Mortuary created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. Ralph J. Turner*



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**Henson and Kitchen Mortuary and Cremation Services** - March 11, 2020 at 11:02 AM



“ *Dr. Ralph J. Turner*

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October 23, 2023 at 01:49 AM



“ *He was the best, and he encouraged me and all his students to do our best. His passion for accuracy and hustle helped me so much in my career, and he put me on the spot many times in an effort to make me a better journalist. I loved how unpredictable his classes were, and how he would pretend to be the neighbor at a fire scene, the fire chief and a witness for us to interview. He also took us on a trip to Ohio for the SPJ conference one year, and we got to have a reception at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. I'm so lucky that I was able to learn from him, and I know many, many others feel the same.*

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**Beth Henry-Vance** - March 15, 2020 at 09:18 AM

SB

“ *Personal Integrity. That’s what comes to my mind when I remember Ralph Turner. I do not know of anyone who had more integrity. Ralph’s life centered on his honesty and integrity. Ralph and I fought the good fight together on several issues at Marshall, including the battle over keeping the Parthenon as an independent student newspaper. Ralph provided immense personal and professional counsel to me during what was the most difficult political battle of my career. I owe him and his wife, Barbara, a special thanks. The words on the Memorial Fountain at Marshall say it best: “He will live on in the hearts of his family and friends forever.”*

*Steve Banks*

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**Steve Banks** - March 12, 2020 at 11:02 AM

DS

“ *So sorry to learn of Dr. Turner’s death. He was a truly good person and a terrific colleague. When I first came to Marshall a very long time ago he became a very kind and supportive friend. That has always meant a lot to me.*

*Donna Spindel*

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**Donna Spindel** - March 11, 2020 at 04:18 PM

GH

“ *My prayers and condolences to the family. Ralph was a wonderful professor and advisor. He taught me so much! --George Hohmann*

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**George Hohmann** - March 11, 2020 at 03:31 PM

CS

“ Dr. Turner and I butted heads a time or two but we always got back on track! I worked at MU in the Receiving Department so he would need packages, furniture, etc he was a fine person and I know his MU family as well has his wife ,children, & grands will miss him too!  
Sincerely. Carol Skaggs

carol Skaggs - March 11, 2020 at 11:07 AM



“ 168 files added to the album LifeTributes



Henson and Kitchen Mortuary and Cremation Services - March 11, 2020 at 10:48 AM

VT

“ My deepest sympathies during your time of loss, my thoughts/prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time. May the peace which comes from the memories of love shared comfort you now and in the days ahead.

Victoria Timbers - March 11, 2020 at 09:51 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Dr. Ralph J. Turner.*



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March 11, 2020 at 08:21 AM



“ *To say Dr. Ralph Turner was a major influence in my life would be an understatement. He was a tremendous teacher always going the extra mile for ALL of his students. Dr. T was the reason I got my very first job in journalism. He taught me so many things about life, journalism and doing the right thing, always. I have known him since I was 16 years old, so decades have gone by and I do not think a single day has ever past that I have not thought of him, either while teaching college journalism as a professor myself, or sitting down to write anything and thinking, is everything spelled correctly? Have I followed AP style? He will be forever missed by those of us who treasured his wise counsel and sage advice. We love you Dr. T, always.*

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**Betsy Alderman** - March 11, 2020 at 07:33 AM

BH

“ I remember my first class with Dr Turner vividly. He came in and abruptly said, “There’s a fire”. Half the class started to get up, the rest of us sat there stunned. A moment passed and he said “why does not one of you have a pencil in hand writing this down? THIS is the news, this is journalism! It’s happening NOW!” Whew. We got out our pencils... as he wrote Who What When and Where on the board. You who took a class from him know the rest. He was a grand teacher... the best.

*I’m sure he was loved and will be missed by his family... my condolences to them. He lived a good life, but no matter how long, it’s never long enough. Peace be with you.*

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**Bonnie Thuma Henn** - March 11, 2020 at 07:05 AM

MB

“ *Ralph was a wonderful neighbor. He was always kind. Such a loss.*

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**Marcia Booth** - March 11, 2020 at 04:56 AM



“ *I'm a news writer at Fox News in New York, and my years getting my master's in journalism at Marshall in the early '80's was tremendously significant for me back then, and having classes with Dr. Ralph definitely shaped my time in the things I've done in both news and even in urban ministry in New York City. Journalism was a great way to prepare for my next step in seminary, and in dealing with the varied cultures here, many with very broken lives. I would often think back to a great time of life for me then, and Dr. Ralph was a memory etched in my mind. Prayers for the family as they work through a difficult time, and I'm trusting that God opens up a treasure of wonderful memories of Dr. Ralph.*

*- John Peck / Fox News*

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**John Peck** - March 11, 2020 at 03:02 AM

BB

“ I sat here for a very long time thinking of what to write. And that’s because I could say so much. No other person in my life guided me and believed in me like Dr. Turner did. And there are literally thousands of people who can say the same thing about him. That is just so remarkable. How could one person make so many people feel so special? That was among his many gifts.

*If you were lucky enough to have Dr. Turner as a mentor and/or professor, then you know how special he was. And surely you remember him talking about that “fire in your belly.” He wasn’t done with you after graduation, either. Dr. Turner would follow your career for as long as you would let him. And it was smart to let him because he never stopped advising you. He once visited me after I made the leap from Charleston, WV to Louisville, KY. There were a couple MU alum at the same paper as me, and he was visiting an intern nearby, I think, so we were all lucky to see him. But for him to check in on me four or five years after graduating meant so much to me. Who else does that?*

*I recently won a design award and I was thinking about Dr. Turner giving me my first-ever design award, the Dallas Higbee Award For Outstanding Design. He told me that not everyone has to be a reporter and that my future was in design. And he was right. I’m still designing today.*

*I could go on and on, but I still remember how to write brief and to the point, also thanks to Dr. Turner. I lucked out and had him for The Parthenon reporting (301 I think) and editing/design (302). So I learned all sides of the newspaper from him. Dr. Arnold is the one who whipped my grammar into shape, though. But I can still see Dr. Turner’s green ink all over my copy, asking for more quotes or a better lede.*

*Thanks for editing me, believing in me and shaping me, Dr. Turner.*

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**Butch Barker** - March 11, 2020 at 02:15 AM

BB

“ I sat here for a very long time thinking of what to write. And that’s because I could say so much. No other person in my life guided me and believed in me like he did. And there are literally thousands of people who can say the same thing. That is so remarkable. How could one person make so many people feel so special? That was among his many gifts.

*If you were lucky enough to have Dr. Turner as a mentor, or as just a professor, then you know how special he was. And surely you remember him talking about that “fire in your belly.” He wasn’t done with you after graduation either. Dr. Turner would follow your career for as long as you would let him. He once visited me after I made the leap from Charleston, WV to Louisville, KY. There were a couple MU alum at the same paper as me, and he was visiting an intern nearby, I think, so we were all lucky to see him. But for him to check in on me four or five years after graduating meant so much to me. Who else does that? He is the reason I am who I am right now professionally.*

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**Butch Barker** - March 11, 2020 at 02:01 AM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Dr. Ralph J. Turner.*

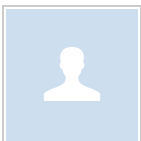


March 10, 2020 at 09:08 PM



“ *Dr. Turner is a legend in the J School. I was so lucky to have him as a professor during my time at Marshall. He was my favorite because he truly loved teaching and had an unparalleled passion for journalism. He wanted every student to succeed. His encouragement and guidance helped me through some times when I wasn't sure I would make it. He will always be remembered and loved, and will live on through his students. I'll never forget his "pica dance" and his sense of humor. Thank you to Dr. T's family for sharing him with so many students, including myself, who needed a professor to believe in us, push us and follow us through. He was an amazing person and we are all lucky to have known him.*

**Kim (Bagby) Price** - March 10, 2020 at 08:07 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Ralph J. Turner.*



March 10, 2020 at 08:03 PM

MM

“ A man of integrity, generosity, and compassion. As a green journalism student in the late 60s, I learned professional skills and life lessons from him that have stood me in good stead through the decades. His teaching legacy will be carried on through subsequent generations.

Mike Meador - March 10, 2020 at 06:05 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dr. Ralph J. Turner.



March 10, 2020 at 06:03 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Dr. Ralph J. Turner.



March 10, 2020 at 04:29 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Dr. Ralph J. Turner.



March 10, 2020 at 04:20 PM

FA

“ My first Journalism course he taught was I believe MCC 330/ Public Relations. He came in the first day of class at a run ringing a bell. He was illustrating what PR was. It was to get attention. That was one aspect. It was a great way to meet him and get the year started off on the right foot. Loved every class he taught. Amazing man. I kept in touch with him after leaving Marshall. Such a kind man. Loved to do yard work. Will miss his spirit. Rest In Peace sir. You were a great friend and a great teacher.

*Frank Addington*

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**frank addington** - March 10, 2020 at 03:16 PM

LM

“ I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Dr. Ralph Turner. He was always very kind during my time at Marshall University. Please accept my deepest condolences. Prayers for Matt and the rest of the family. Lisa Moten



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**Lisa Moten** - March 10, 2020 at 02:43 PM