

Ralph L. Kilts



Ralph Kilts passed away on July 14, 2016 at the age of 97. At the time he was the Rotary Club of Tullahoma's oldest living member.

Ralph was born on Sept. 19, 1918 to the late William Orval and Emma House Kilts. On July 26, 1940 he enlisted in the Army Air Corps as an aviation cadet at Fort Leavenworth Kansas. A World War II veteran, he flew P-38 fighters and served as a Squadron Commander in the South Pacific along with training other fighter pilots. He continued his service in the Air Force Reserves reaching the grade of Lt. Col.

Ralph was one of the most senior members of the Rotary Club of Tullahoma. His Club sponsor was the late Clifton Lewis, who was Club President in 1942-43. Elected President of the Rotary Club in 1983-84, he became a Paul Harris Fellow in 1986. His wife, Craigie, was awarded an honorary Paul Harris Fellow in 1987.

He received his advanced education from Missouri and Cal Tech. He was an Aeronautical Engineer and a manager at Altimill-Microcraft. He was a member of the American Legion. He enjoyed fishing and gardening.

Ralph is survived by his wife Craigie Powell Kilts along with one daughter Karen Leavesley of Tallahassee, FL and two sons, Ralph "Mike" (Deborah) Kilts of Bradville, TN and Robert Kilts of Cleveland, GA. Also surviving are eight grandchildren, six great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. He was also preceded in death by sisters Ethlyn Thompson, Magdaline Tunks and Josephine Simpkins.

Ralph's devotion to his family and service to his country epitomizes a person who placed "service before self" throughout his life. Ralph will be missed but not forgotten.