

William Franklin Fife

Nov. 6, 1921 — March 28, 2008

RICHMOND, Va. — William Franklin “Frank” Fife, passed away at Memorial Regional Medical Center on March 28, 2008. He was born in Buffalo, W.Va. on Nov. 6, 1921, one of four children of Alfred C. Fife and Emily Grace Fife. He had been a resident of Richmond, Va., since 1976.

During his youth, Frank played high school football and baseball and then went on to play semi-pro baseball. Following his freshman year at Berea College, he entered the Army and served under George C. Patton as a combat engineer, ultimately rising to the rank of captain. After the war, he returned to Berea to continue what became a lifelong connection with that institution and earned a liberal arts degree. He then earned a master’s degree in industrial relations from the University of Wisconsin.

Frank began his business career with McKesson in Kansas City and Cleveland. He joined Owens & Minor in 1958, working closely with Gil Minor Jr. to expand the business beyond the borders of Virginia. Over the course of Frank’s 38 year career with Owens & Minor,

he held the titles and responsibilities of senior vice president, executive vice president, president, and chief operating officer. He was elected to the board of directors of Owens & Minor in 1962, a position he held until his retirement in 1996.

He married Frances Dawson of Logan, W.Va., prior to his army service and had three children during the marriage. While located in Wilson, he led the United Way campaigns, taught business courses at a local college, and Sunday school at the First Presbyterian Church. It was in Wilson that he developed a passion for the game of golf, a sport that he played the rest of his life. He was a very active member of The Country Club of Virginia. Frank touched the lives of hundreds of people with his kindness and firm guidance. He married Frances Horton Rosi in 2003 and embraced her four daughters as his own.

Frank is survived by his wife, Frances Rosi Fife; his children, Scott Fife of Ridgewood, N.J., Susan Occoquan of Cedar Grove, Cindy Davis of Charlotte, Bree Merrick Chrispins of Durham, Wynne Abrams of Westport, Conn., Deborah Russo of Medfield, Mass., and Margaret Bassett of Richmond, Va. In all, he has 12 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 2, at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 12291 River Road, Richmond, Va. Memorial donations may be made to Berea College, 101 Chestnut St., Berea, Ky. 40403.