



Dr. Ralph E. Wileman Jr.

Dr. Ralph E. Wileman Jr., 92, passed away on Sunday January 7, 2024, at UNC Hospital in North Carolina.

Ralph was born on April 28, 1931 in Akron, Ohio to Ralph and Ruth Wileman.

In 1953, Ralph earned a Bachelors in Education from Otterbein University and went onto achieve a Masters in Education from Kent State University. He was a high school teacher in Winter Garden, Florida for two school years. Afterwards, Ralph moved to New York City and worked at Smith Scherr McDermott and then Lippincott & Margulies, as a graphic designer. In 1961, he became an Associate Professor at Fredonia College (NY), where he met his deceased ex-wife, Ann Keane Wileman. In 1967, he earned a PhD in Education at Columbia University in New York City. After teaching for one year at the University of Hawaii, he became an Associate Professor at the School of Education, UNC Chapel Hill in 1968. Ralph taught educational media, becoming Professor Emeritus after almost 30 years at UNC

Chapel Hill. He enjoyed being a Professor and was passionate about mentoring his students' careers.

In the later part of his teaching career, he consulted for IBM at their Palisades Executive Conference Center in New York. He published several books including Exercises in Visual Thinking, Visual Communicating, and co-authored A Structure for Population Education. Ralph also spent many summers in Africa and Asia consulting for the US Agency for International Development in educational methodology regarding family planning and public health.

While on a summer vacation in 1968, Ralph and his family discovered South Bristol, Maine and purchased a seasonal home. During his summers in Mane, he developed a passion for antiques and started gathering many collections. One of his collections, pre 20th century optical toys and illusionary devices, was donated to the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics in Durham, North Carolina.

In 1977, he was introduced to needlepoint as therapy for a hand injury. Ralph quickly completed six chair seats, a number of pillows and then went onto tackle staircase risers and framed wall hangings. At first, books and kits were his references, but he soon created his own original designs. One framed wall hanging was recently donated to the Royal School of Needlework in Hampton Court Palace, United Kingdom; and two were donated to the Museum für Gestaltung in Zürich, Switzerland.

Ralph had a passion for historical preservation and was a long-time member of the Chapel Hill Preservation Society (now Preservation Chapel Hill) including a term as its President. After retiring in 1996, he preserved Dunn Hill Farm, an 1860s tobacco farm on 140 acres, in Vernon Hill, Virginia. In addition to preserving the original homestead, he built a guest house and swimming pool. Dunn Hill Farm became a destination for friends and family.

Ralph is survived by his children, Laura Wileman Alves (Braintree, MA) and John Howard Wileman (Chapel Hill, NC); two grandchildren Henry Birdsall Wileman (Minneapolis, MN) and Michael Keane Wileman (Bethesda, MD); and two step grandchildren, Leah Alves Polcari and John Alves Jr. (Braintree, MA). Ralph was predeceased by his sisters Beverly June Barber (Brighton, MI), Shirley L. Shill (Brighton, MI), and his brother Norman Wileman (Canton, OH).

A celebration of life will be held on Thursday, January 18, 2024 from 2:00pm to 5:00pm at Walker's Funeral Home, 11680 US Highway 15 501 North, Chapel Hill, NC.