



## Mr. John W. Hill

October 6, 1924 - April 29, 2022

John W. Hill, age 97, formerly of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, passed away after a short illness surrounded by his family on Friday, April 29, 2022 in Roswell, Georgia. His beloved wife of 64 years, Nettie Frances Hanks Hill preceded him in death in 2014.

He was born in Lepanto, Arkansas in 1924 and was preceded in death by his parents John Walter Hill, Sr. and Arlie Jones Hill, and by his brothers William G. Hill and Jerome B. Hill and his sister, Laverne Hill Hunt.

He is survived by his daughters Sandy Hill Whitten of Sarasota, Florida and Jane Hill of Roswell, Georgia. John had lived with his daughter Jane in Georgia since October 2019. He was a loving GeePop to granddaughter Gabrielle Rogers of Costa Mesa, California. He is also survived by his sister-in-law Nancy Hanks Springfield.

Survivors also include a special group of nieces and nephews, Melana and Steve Monroe, Bill Hill, Amy and Jayson Bethea, Jon and Jennifer Hill, Jeb and Debbie Hill, Michael and Jan Sternberg, Steve and Lorrie Sternberg, Paul and Liz Sternberg, Terrie Sternberg, Margaret and Robert Smalley, Diane Springfield Domeij, Beth Ann Springfield and Billy Jackson Springfield, and numerous great nieces and nephews.

The family would like to thank John's loving nurse and caregivers, Lori Huyghebaert, Sara Hester, Sarah Elaigwu, Prestina Willis and Vametra Gadson. They were his safety net during the pandemic keeping him comfortable and entertained in our covid "bunker".

John would often joke that in his small home town of Lepanto he was valedictorian of his high school class, “but there were only 13 of us”. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from the University of Arkansas in 1948, graduating at the top of his engineering class. His college years were interrupted by World War II and when he discovered that an earlier ear injury would keep him out of the service, he chose to use his engineering skills at a rocket factory in Arkansas as his contribution to the war effort.

When the war ended he went back to school and upon graduation in 1948, started work for Union Carbide’s Nuclear Division in Oak Ridge. He was on a team that developed and ran a water-cooled, enriched fuel reactor in the early days of generating electricity with reactors. He was honored to be part of the team that participated in the first “Atoms for Peace” in Geneva Switzerland in the summer of 1955. For this international conference sponsored by President Dwight Eisenhower, the team created, transported and installed a small demonstration nuclear reactor as a key part of the American exhibit. We treasure a photo of John describing the reactor’s functionality to President Eisenhower when he visited the exhibit during the conference.

He held positions at both the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) Reactor Division and the Union Carbide/Martin Marietta Engineering Division focused on reactor system development, construction and quality assurance, centrifuge project engineering and site management, and Nuclear Desalinization testing and pilot plant development.

After 38 years, he decided to take early retirement in 1986 and began many years of reading, gardening and traveling with Nettie. Their magnificent garden was the site of many garden tours over the years. His niece Terrie Sternberg asked him recently “Uncle John, what advice would you give someone who wants to live to 97?” His response “Exercise!”. Every day there was something to do outside and he rarely missed a day. He loved to plan their trips down to the smallest detail. They visited New Zealand, Hawaii, Great Britain and many countries in Europe, always finding the most beautiful

gardens to tour and photograph to get ideas for the yard at home. He was active in the community serving on the Oak Ridge Board of Education, Anderson County Court, Anderson County Courthouse Commission, the county Community Action Committee, and the Oak Ridge Tax Equalization Board.

He served as chairman of the Knoxville-Oak Ridge section of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and as a state director of the Tennessee Professional Engineers. In 1977 he was presented an award for outstanding service by the Oak Ridge chapter of the Tennessee Professional Engineers. A Memorial Service will be held on May 21, 2022 at the First United Methodist Church at 1350 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Visitation will be at 1:00 pm in the church parlor with a service at 2:00 pm in the sanctuary. After the service, friends and family are invited to a reception in the church Fellowship Hall. A private family ceremony will be held in the church Memorial Garden.

Friends can visit [northsidechapel.com](http://northsidechapel.com) to view the online obituary and leave a special memory of John.

The family asks that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in John's name to the First United Methodist Church of Oak Ridge or St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, TN ([stjude.org](http://stjude.org)).

# Cemetery Details

## **Cremation - Northside Chapel Crematory**

12050 Crabapple Road  
Roswell, GA

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. John W. Hill*

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October 08, 2022 at 11:37 AM