



Obituary

Born: Friday, March 28, 1947

Died: Monday, August 31, 2020

[The Rev. John Randolph Elliott \(“Randy”\) was an extraordinary, ordinary man. Randy will be long remembered as a man of prayer with deep faith, warm spirit, unwavering integrity, rigorous self-discipline, large intellect, and contagious laughter most often heard with a big family that he loved and gave him great joy—a family eternally grateful for his presence in their lives. Indeed, he lived with eternity in his heart, and entered his heavenly home triumphant on Monday, August 31, 2020.](#)

Service Summary

- Service details not available -

Randy was born third of five children to Herschel Adams and Ruth (Ayers) Elliott in Wilmington, Delaware on March 28, 1947. His favorite childhood memories included neighborhood baseball, long games of monopoly, and summer afternoons listening to Phillies games on the car radio while parked in the driveway. His parents and a sister, Ruth (Elliott) Byrd, preceded him to glory. Two sisters, Mary Beth (Elliott) James of Cape May, New Jersey and Sharon (Elliott) Powell of Wilmington, Delaware, and his brother and best friend, Dr. Hershel (“Chip”) Elliott of State College, Pennsylvania survive him.

Randy’s teammates named him senior captain of the undefeated 1964 Brandywine High School football team. Injury cut short football hopes at Yale and he turned most of his attention to studies—he graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1969. His advisor commended Randy as “my first student that came to Yale wanting to enter the Ministry and left Yale still wanting to enter the Ministry.” Also capturing his hopes and attention during those college years was Esther Lee Van Sice. Esther and Randy married in May 1970 in Elkton, Maryland in a service officiated by her father, the Rev. Howard Van Sice.

Together they cared for Randy’s ailing father and mother before moving to Princeton, New Jersey, where Randy graduated Summa Cum Laude from Princeton Seminary in 1972. [While enjoying the stimulation of an Ivy League education, his observation of churches slipping through cultural accommodation galvanized Randy’s Christian orthodoxy, an unflinching faith in the inerrancy of Holy Scripture, and his personal zeal for Jesus Christ. That zeal, combined with dedication to daily prayer, remarkable personal discipline, and a keen intellect made him a Bible teacher of insight and excellence, filled with the Holy Spirit.](#)

Parkway Baptist Church in Willingboro, New Jersey called Rev. Elliott to the pulpit in 1973. Arriving as a family of two, he served seven years before moving to First Baptist Church in North East, Pennsylvania as a family of five. In North

East, Esther and Randy raised their three sons, John, Steve, and Nathan. Prestigious churches in great cities later attempted to hire him, but his answer was always “Here I have been called and here I will raise my family.” North East remained Randy and Esther’s home since 1980.

Randy faithfully served as the Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church of North East for 25 years. While touching the lives of thousands through ministries of pastoral care and counseling, he distinguished himself as a scholarly preacher and teacher of God’s Word. Weekly church attendance swelled five-fold and WCTL radio broadcasted his sermons weekly for over fifteen years. Yet his greatest satisfaction came through teaching small groups of men, teens, and college students the principles of Christian life and faith, a practice he continued well into “retirement,” which included preaching throughout the region and interim pastoral roles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Erie, Pennsylvania and Bethel Baptist Church in Jefferson, Ohio.

[Randy never stopped learning.](#) Well into retirement he continued Bible memorization and his study in Biblical Greek. His home library was “narrowed down” to approximately four thousand books on Christian discipleship, theology, apologetics, philosophy, biographies, current events, and American history. The day after his passing, a last addition to his library arrived—an audio course on Law and the US Constitution. Randy loved America. [Daily family prayers thanked God for our freedoms of speech and faith, and he earnestly prayed for the strength of persecuted Church leaders in the communist and Muslim world, including many personal friends by name, like Pastor John Cao held in a Chinese prison today.](#)

Randy’s favorite hymn was “Abide with Me.” While Randy lives eternally in the presence of the Lord, he lives on here in his three sons—John R. (and Wendy Hall) Elliott, Jr. of Philadelphia, Steven V. Elliott of North East, and the Rev. J. Nathan (and Susanna Ward) Elliott of Nicholasville, Kentucky. Three energetic boys were guided to manhood by Randy’s “family rules and essentials” positioned conveniently above the toilet in 1986 to encourage frequent reading:

Family Rules

1. Slop is out... excellence is in.

2. Work without complaint.

3. Work... then play.

4. Always be truthful.

5. Be kind... care when someone hurts.

6. Respect property... or plan on replacing it.

7. Be thankful.

8. Be respectful and polite.

Two Essentials

1. Honor God by obeying His commandments.

2. Build your family... make it special.

Today, John, Steve, and Nathan and their wives are raising Randy and Esther's ten grandchildren: Mara, Lorna, Winston, Kelsey, Levi, Sawyer, Brady, Shaelyn, Claire, and

Genevieve. Randy taught them his “17 words” repeated after prayers and before family dinners, “Heaven is my home, Jesus is my Lord, the Bible is my authority, excellence is my standard.”

The larger Elliott family extends far yet remains close. For sixty years, the Elliott’s have gathered every year at Big Ridge State Park (Tennessee) and more recently Fairystone State Park (Virginia). He proudly wore his orange and white family t-shirt, matching the University of Tennessee “T” on his hat. Every family member has been given a “number” following his grandparents, Colonel John Brownlow and Mary Ada (Ayers) Elliott, numbers one and two, respectively. Randy’s grandchildren proudly wear numbers 88, 90, 95, 99, 101, 102, 110, 130, 138, and 149. With joy and honor, the family will retire Randy’s number 13.

The family now establishes and invites your gifts to “The Rev. J. R. Elliott Global Ministers Fund” at Mt. Freedom Baptist Church in Wilmore, Kentucky to advance the studies and support the families of international pastors attending Asbury Theological Seminary (www.mountfreedom.org/give). Gifts may also be given to the Visiting Nurses of North East who cared for Randy so well.

Private funeral arrangements are being handled by

the William D. Elkin Funeral Home, 65 S Lake St., North

East. A public graveside service will be held at North East

Cemetery. Memorials may be made to The Rev. J. R.

Elliott Global Ministers Fund at Mt. Freedom Baptist Church

of Wilmore, KY. or the Community Nurses Association of

North East, 7 Park St., North East. Please send condolences

to elkinfh.com.

*I have fought the good fight, I finished the race, I have kept
the faith. (2 Timothy 4:7)*