



## Mr. Henry E. Colton

January 16, 1921 - August 29, 2011

Henry Elliot Colton, Jr., aged 90, died on Monday, August 29, 2011 at Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community, following a brief illness.

He was born in Nashville, Tennessee, on January 16th, 1921, the son of Elizabeth Overton and Henry Elliot Colton.

Henry was a graduate of the Taft School in Watertown, CT in 1939, and of Yale University in 1942 with a degree in Industrial Engineering. As a graduate of UNC Law School in 1946, he earned a J.D., with honors.

During World War II Henry was commissioned a U.S. Navy pilot and participated in the invasion of Europe in 1945. In 1947 he and his family moved to Morganton, NC, where he became the first President of the Morganton Junior Chamber of Commerce.

In 1950 he entered the insurance business. In 1953 he and his family moved to Asheville where he founded what is now COLTON/GROOME and COMPANY. He was the first Chartered Life Underwriter to study and earn his CLU designation in Western North Carolina and was a Life Member of the Million Dollar Round Table. Also, Henry Colton was the National President of all New England Life Agents in the United States.

A life-long Episcopalian, he served as a Layreader under the late Bishop Henry and as Keyman and Vestryman at Trinity Church. He also attended the Unitarian Church. From 1969 to 1975 he served on the Asheville City Council.

Henry Colton was a long-time member of the Asheville Civitan Club, as well as The Royal Brigade of Guards.

A strong advocate of Hospice, Henry was a volunteer visiting hospice patients. He was also a regular volunteer reading tutor for children at the Ira Jones Elementary School. He also served as a volunteer mediator for the Buncombe Mediation Center.

An avid tennis player, he continued to beat most of his progeny well into his 80s. Henry was also a world traveler, and when not visiting his children or grandchildren overseas, he sought the company of local hosts through the Friendship Force, or newly found friends in youth hostels. Having traveled every continent, his heart remained in the mountains of western North Carolina where he knew the name of every trail, mountain, waterfall, and swimming hole, through a lifetime of hiking and camping.

He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Marie Watters Colton of Deerfield, who was the first woman elected Speaker Pro Tempore of the North Carolina House of Representatives. Henry is also survived by four children: Elizabeth O. Colton, Ph.d, of Cairo, Egypt, Marie Colton Pelzer of Asheville, Sarah Colton-Villeminot of Paris, France, and Walter S. Colton of Arlington, Texas. He has seven grandchildren: Laird Pelzer Kelischek, Jaquelin Pelzer, Elisabeth Villeminot-Vezan, Catherine Villeminot, Florence Villeminot, Stokes Colton, and his namesake, Henry Colton. He has two great-grandchildren: Pierre Villeminot-Vezan, and Colton Kelischek.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be sent to Mountain Area Hospice at P.O. Box 25338, Asheville, NC 28813.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, September 3, at 11:00 am at Trinity Episcopal Church, 60 Church Street, Asheville, 28801, with a reception to follow at the Church. The Reverend Carol Hubbard and The Reverend George Muir will officiate.

# Previous Events

## Service

SEP 3. 11:00 AM (ET)

Trinity Episcopal Church  
60 Church Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Henry E. Colton*

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October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *Dear Marie, my sympathy to you and your family. I began working in the Charlotte office of New England Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1953 and just wanted to let you know that it was such a blessing to have known Henry over the years. He was respected by everyone and was such a friendly, kind, patient, and pleasant gentleman. May you be comforted by your memories. Joey Davis Fortner*

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**Joey Davis Fortner** - September 16, 2011 at 09:20 AM



“ *Marie, So sorry for your loss.*

*Doug Clark, Duplin County*

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**Douglas Adron Clark** - September 13, 2011 at 05:34 PM



“ *Dear Marie, Liz and family,  
We are all better for having known Henry. May God wrap you in His loving arms and give you peace and comfort. Nancy Carr Sumner Porter*

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**Nancy Carr Sumner Porter** - September 05, 2011 at 09:44 PM

CB

“ Our condolences to the Colton family in the passing of Henry, a very fine man. I met him through his wife, Marie, with whom I served in the North Carolina House of Representatives, in Raleigh. May God bless and keep all of you always.

Charles and Jewell Beall  
Clyde, North Carolina

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**Charles M. Beall** - September 04, 2011 at 08:50 PM

RC

“ Well Henry, You left some big "footprints" so-to-speak, for the rest of us to follow. Thank you for your military service as well as for your service to the State and community. You done real good!! See you eventually.....maybe, Rich Comyns. Lt/Col USAF.

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**Richard B Comyns** - September 04, 2011 at 11:16 AM

SD

“ Dear Marie and family,  
My parents so wanted to attend Henry's funeral but will be unable to do so. They have such fond memories of Henry and my father especially has enjoyed his friendship over the years. He mentioned that Henry was on the rush committee at Yale University for St. Anthony's fraternity which my father became a member of thanks to Henry. My mother has loved knowing Henry and Marie over the years and always hearing about the children's adult adventures. Henry will be missed in the Gaylord's lives.

God bless and love from, Rob and Polly Gaylord, Sarah Gaylord Decker

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**Sarah Gaylord Decker** - September 03, 2011 at 09:11 AM

DB

“ Dear Marie,  
We want to express our deepest sympathy to you and your family in the loss of Henry. We have missed seeing you both. We trust the Lord to take care of you and we trust you will put your trust in Him also. We send you our love. Dr. Becker has heart problems now - has a pacemaker and has very little energy. He also has Parkinson's Disease that has slowed him down so much. Edna is suffering from 4 kidney stones right now and will have surgery on Tues. Sorry we will not be able to be at the service for Henry. Our prayers will be with you.  
Dr. David Becker and Edna

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David and Edna Becker - September 02, 2011 at 02:28 PM

JS

“ Dear Marie and family,  
  
May you be filled with beautiful memories and may those memories bring you peace.  
  
Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to each of you.  
  
Jerry and Wilma Sherrill

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Jerry and Wilma Sherrill - September 02, 2011 at 09:08 AM

JR

*Dear Marie,*

*I am so sorry to read of your loss of Henry. Sixty-eight years of marriage is indeed a blessing. I think of you frequently and hope our paths will cross at some point. I have always remembered you fondly from my St. Mary's days when I was alumnae director and your political activities in Raleigh. I wish peace for you in the coming days.*

*Jane Augustine Rabon  
2715 St. Mary's Street  
Raleigh, NC 27609*

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**Jane Augustine Rabon** - September 13, 2011 at 02:12 PM

KW

“*Dear Marie, Peirce and I send our love and sympathy at the loss of your precious Henry. Both of you were always such an inspiration to us, and we are so happy you had so many happy years together. Peirce looked up to Henry so much as Peirce built his business at the Charlotte agency, and we were just commenting on how things have changed since we used to attend those annual agency meetings together. Please know we are thinking of you and the rest of your family. Much Love Always, Kit and Peirce Ward*

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**Kit Ward** - September 01, 2011 at 07:09 PM

CG

“ Mr. and Mrs. Colton were always so good to me even though I use to run through their house with muddy snow covered boots and practice cheers in their backyard with my best friend Marie. Mr. Colton only hurt my feelings once when he told Marie and I we would never amount to much of anything. I don't know why he would say such a thing unless it was because we were trying to see who could stuff a whole moon pie in our mouth with out breaking it. Well Marie won the contest thus the nickname, "Maggie Moonpie". The Colton's taught me so many valuable lessons and yes Mr. Colton because of those lessons I did amount to something. I became a wonderful teacher of 36 years. Thank you. I love you Marie.

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**Carol Clark Goins** - September 01, 2011 at 03:29 PM

KB

“ Such a kind and gracious gentleman. Henry always welcomed the League of Women Voters Asheville to their home on Charlotte Street for our special occasions and was always there with words of wisdom and wit! Loved talking books with Henry. Marie and family thank you for sharing Henry with our community, and a new angel is now watchinig over you!



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**Kathleen Balogh** - September 01, 2011 at 09:03 AM

PR

“ Henry Colton is one of the best men I have ever known. Not only did he teach me so much in regards to insurance, but also taught me how to live as the best person I could be. He never cared how rich or poor you were, he treated you the same. I have so many fond memories of Henry as well as many stories that he told us about Marie, the children and grandchildren (never forget that he loved you all dearly). I'm sure that there will be a special jewel in his Heavenly crown for all the good deeds he did here on earth. I thank our Lord and Savior that He put Henry in my life. My thoughts and prayers go out to all of you as family and friends. Pat Ramsey-Atkins

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**Pat Ramsey-Atkins** - August 30, 2011 at 04:54 PM

CS

“ Henry always made a point to say hello to each and everyone of us when he came to the office on Orange Street. I looked forward to his smile, greetings, stories and wonderful humor. A wonderful gentleman has left this world and I am sure he is a welcomed addition in heaven.

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**Cathy Speijers** - August 30, 2011 at 03:41 PM

WI

I called him Uncle Henry. He was my godfather. He was also a hero. He never forgot my birthday. He always remembered me at Christmas with a whimsical gift and witty homemade card. Whenever he came to Raleigh he would check in with me and take me out to lunch. He was a wonderful storyteller but also a great listener. I consulted with him before I got married. I was so proud of him and beautiful Marie and the entire Colton clan. My heartfelt sympathy goes out to the family.

*Bill Leslie*

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**William A. Leslie III** - August 31, 2011 at 08:47 AM

AB

*Mr. Colton told me to come to their home when I told him they were taking my Mother to a rehab. hospital on our way to school at age 16. I had no where else to go. Thank you Colton family for sharing two high school years with me 1962-63...Allene Morgan Ball*

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**Allene Morgan Ball** - September 02, 2011 at 11:41 PM

AB

*I remember him sharing coming to Calif. and sitting in a S.F. building looking down at the Top of the Mark Hopkins Hotel...*

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**Allene Morgan Ball** - September 02, 2011 at 11:43 PM