

Eulogy - James Benjamin Etheredge (10/28/2004)

We are here to celebrate the life, and mourn the passing, of James Benjamin Etheredge.

James Etheredge was born on April 13, 1912 in Town Creek, Alabama. He was delivered by his grandfather, Benjamin Thomas Etheredge, the town's doctor.

When he was a young teenager, Jim's family - including his parents and his two sisters, Hazel and Blanche - moved to Detroit. He was proud to be salutatorian of his high school graduating class and told his classmates in his address: "We shall find a path or make one!" Jim worked to put himself through college, helped to support his family, and received a Masters Degree in Chemical Engineering from Wayne State University. He met and married Ruth Noyes. He enlisted in the Navy during World War II, and he and Ruth moved to the Washington, DC area where their two sons, twin boys, Lynn and Lloyd, were born in 1946.

James and Ruth Etheredge were Founding Members of the Hughes United Methodist Church and lived on the corner of Dayton Street and Plyers Mill Road before moving to Bethesda. Friendships with other church members and neighbors, that grew in these years, stayed with them the rest of their lives.

Jim Etheredge was a good man, who cared about his family and dealt fairly with other people.

Jim Etheredge's extraordinary life of 92 years brought him from a childhood home in rural Alabama - without electricity or plumbing at the beginning of the automobile age - to the age of space exploration and routine jet travel. And through the Great Depression and world war. Before his retirement, he directed motion picture production at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration during the years of our first ventures into space and the first landing on the

moon and his work earned honors for professional excellence. (He could explain even the most technical subjects in simple, direct English.) In retirement, he spent many happy years as a volunteer guide at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington; and he and Ruth traveled to 17 countries.

In retirement, Jim also researched and published a geneology of the Etheredge family. He began with the earliest Church records in England, dating from 1376, and he identified the first Etheredge in North America, who came from England to the Virginia Colony in 1647.

In his later years, Jim Etheredge was blessed by a close family and friends. He and Ruth celebrated 66 years of marriage before she passed away three years ago. His sons were a part of his life. He was able to remain living in his own home, and he was blessed by the care and friendship of good people - of Mary Baker (Jim and Ruth's housekeeper for many years); and of his health aides Maria Achurra, Tabitha Nyatome, and Silmara Toledo who shared with him the simple pleasures he continued to enjoy - drives in the country, a restaurant "where you can look out," and a good chocolate dessert. He always had a twinkle of pleasure in his eye for visits from friends and relatives.

Delivered by Rev. George Ennis