

## Leon Hawkersmith

April 22, 1920 - December 21, 2020



Leon Hawkersmith, age 100, passed away Monday, December 21st at Franklin Manor in Winchester, TN. Leon was born on April 22, 1920 in Winchester, TN to William and Mary Irene Crawford Hawkersmith. Mr. Hawkersmith was a nurseryman who started his career at 6 years of age, working alongside his father at a local nursery after a full day at Catholic school. He worked several part time jobs during his school years to help support his family through The Great

Depression, and at age 21, enlisted in the Army Air Corps. On his 29th mission as a B-24 tail gunner in WW II, his plane was hit by flak and went down in the Austrian Alps. Leon safely parachuted from the plane but was captured by the Germans and held captive for over a year at the Stalag 17 POW camp. When Mr. Hawkersmith returned to Franklin County, he entered into the wholesale nursery business with his father and brother Louis (Hawkersmith and Sons Nursery.) His first marriage soon followed, producing two children, David and Linda. After losing his first wife Jean to cancer, he struggled as a single parent before meeting Sue Travis, his second wife. Together they raised the combined family, which included her two daughters, Linda and Melanie, followed by their daughter Mary. He owned and operated Riverside Nursery beside his home in Estill Springs, developed local real estate and served on the board of directors at the former First National Bank. Leon enjoyed golfing, gardening, and playing cards. He was a devoted parishioner of Good Shepherd Catholic Church and a member of the Knights of Columbus for over 70 years, including 65 years in the patriotic order of the 4th Degree. Leon was generous and caring, often

sharing the abundant crop from his large vegetable garden with friends, family and anyone who would visit. He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Boyd and Louis, sister Wilma Jean Hawkersmith Miller, first wife Dorothy Jean Powers Hawkersmith and second wife Sue Travis Hawkersmith. He is survived by daughter Linda Hawkersmith of Knoxville, son David (Valeria) Hawkersmith of Franklin, daughter Mary Ashley Hawkersmith of Murfreesboro, stepdaughters Linda Perkins Duckworth of Niceville, FL and Melanie Perkins (Richard) Foge of Murfreesboro. Surviving grandchildren include: Will Smith, Amanda Smith, Justin (Sandy) Duckworth, Lindsey Duckworth (Michael) Wagner, Lauren Brown, Evan Foge, Keegan Foge, Morgan Foge, Mia Hawkersmith and Zoe Hawkersmith. He is also survived by 4 great grandchildren and several nieces, nephews and cousins. Donations may be made to Good Shepherd Catholic Church or Disabled American Veterans. In consideration of public health due to the coronavirus, the family will not hold a public visitation or service. A private funeral mass will be celebrated on Thursday, December 31st at Good Shepherd Catholic Church followed by the interment at Franklin Memorial Park. A celebration of life is planned for next spring.

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