



## William Fred Oakley Jr.

November 1, 1924 - October 2, 2011

HADLEY - William Fred Oakley Jr., 86, a Hadley resident for 19 years, died peacefully at home Sunday, Oct. 2, 2011, following a long illness. Fred was born Nov. 1, 1924, in Robertsonville (Martin County), N.C., to William Fred Oakley Sr. and Ernestine (Miller) Oakley. He grew up in Savannah, Ga., living for nine years at the Bethesda Home for Boys. He graduated from Savannah High School; attended Carson-Newman College in Jeffersonville, Tenn.; Duke University, Durham, N.C.; and Boston University, where he earned his bachelor of liberal arts degree in 1951. In high school he was on the Savannah High School football team, which won the state championship in 1942. He was named the Georgia All-State Center that year. He also played football at Duke University. He served in the U.S. Navy from July 1943 to June 1949, achieving the rank of lieutenant junior grade. During his service he served aboard the USS Philippine Sea (CV47) and the USS Providence (CL82). He married Blanche Turner in March 1947. They had three children, Cheryl, Deborah and Jordan. He married his second wife, Rosalee Faye Points, in 1964 in Jamaica Plain. Fred worked most of his adult life for New England Telephone, first in traffic operations, then in public relations. In addition to other duties, he managed the company's charitable contributions program and was responsible for managing the company's United Way fund drive from 1976 to 1986, when he retired. He received the Greater Boston United Way Leadership Award. In 1984 he traveled to Washington, D.C., to accept for New England Telephone the President's Award for the company's

Summer Jobs for Youth Program. For several years he represented New England Telephone on the board of directors for the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, during which time he was instrumental in inaugurating Project STEP, which enabled minority youngsters to learn to play musical instruments, taught by professional teachers at Boston University. He attended and was active in numerous capacities at Central Congregational Church in Jamaica Plain, Needham Congregational Church, Wellesley Village Church and the First Congregational Church of Hadley. Retirement brought new activities. He served as trustee, member of the membership committee and chair of the social action committee at Wellesley Congregational Church. When he moved to Hadley in 1992, he served as chair of the Board of Properties at the First Church of Hadley. The Hadley church presented him with a golden paint brush. Another award, the Golden Oakley Award, was created in 2009, and is given at each annual meeting to a designated person "for their uncommon dedication to the church building and the community it shelters." He served as president, treasurer, and trustee of the National Association for Gravestone Studies, headquartered first in Needham, then Worcester, and currently Greenfield. In 1997 the association named an award after Fred and his wife, Rosalee, known as the Oakley Certificate of Merit, which has since been given to many individuals and groups for their work in gravestone conservation. He often chaired the national conferences of the association, most recently in his hometown of Savannah in 2002, and in Amherst in 2008. At their annual conference in 2011 in Waterville, Maine, Fred was presented the Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award, the most prestigious award the organization bestows. He enjoyed spending many hours helping to build houses with Habitat for Humanity in Boston, Northampton, Amherst, and Orange. He received their Golden Hammer Award and the Service Award for his work over the years. In 2002 he was appointed to the Hadley Cemetery Committee and was twice named Hadley Volunteer of the Year for his gravestone conservation work. He led a number of conservation workshops in the Hadley cemeteries and nearby communities to train others in the best

methods to conserve their burial grounds. He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Rosalee; two daughters, Cheryl Oakley of Portland, Maine, and Deborah Oakley of Northampton; his son-in-law, Hobie Iselin of Northampton; his sister, Margaret Schwier of Buford, Ga.; his niece, Leslie Buchanan and her husband, Daniel; and nephew Robert Schwier and his wife, Pamela. His son, Jordan, his parents, Fred Sr. and Ernestine, and his stepfather, Woodfin Oliver, predeceased him. A memorial service will be held at the First Congregational Church of Hadley at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 22, followed by a reception. His cremains will be buried in the Old Hadley Cemetery at a time convenient for family members only. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the First Congregational Church of Hadley, 102 Middle St., Hadley, MA 01035; the Association for Gravestone Studies, Greenfield Corporate Center, 101 Munson St., Suite 108, Greenfield, MA 01301; or the Bethesda Alumni, P.O. Box 14187, Savannah, GA 31416. New England Funeral & Cremation Center, LLC 25 Mill Street, Springfield, MA 01108 is assisting the family. For expressions of sympathy please visit [www.nefcc.net](http://www.nefcc.net)

"Count that day lost whose low descending sun views from thy hand no worthy action done."

# Tribute Wall

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“ With heartfelt sympathy to the Oakley family.  
The Staff at  
New England Funeral & Cremation Center, LLC

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**Darlene Willey Sliwa** - February 14, 2023 at 10:32 AM

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“ Fred will be missed. He will live on in the hearts, minds, and works  
of all gravestone studies.

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**Melvin Mason** - February 14, 2023 at 10:32 AM