



# Charles Shoemaker Elton

JAN 19, 1931 - OCT 28, 2022



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**C**harles Elton took his last breath in Leesburg, Virginia, on Friday, October 28, 2022, with his family by his side. Throughout his life Charles touched the lives of so many with his kind heart and gentle soul.

Charles was born on January 19, 1931, in Roanoke, Virginia, to William and Elizabeth Elton. He grew up in Roanoke, graduated from Jefferson High School, and continued his education at Virginia Tech, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. While at Tech, Charles was part of the Corps of Cadets, an active member of the German Club, and a writer of the Musical Notes column for the The Virginia Tech student newspaper. His devotion to his beloved Hokies continued until the end.

Upon graduation, he entered the U.S. Army in an administrative role, spending several years stationed at a base in southwestern Germany. While overseas, he took advantage of vacation time and traveled throughout post World War II Europe, making many friends, and soaking up other cultures and customs, notably mastering the art of twirling pasta like a native Italian.

While in Germany, Charles met his future wife, Maribel Sutherland, who was working on the base as a school librarian. Legend has it that their first date was at a romantic Italian restaurant where they were serenaded by violins, a memory they both loved to share with family and friends over the years. Wed in April of 1959, they enjoyed 56 years of married life together, until Maribel passed away in 2015.

Charles and Maribel settled in Abingdon, while Charles continued his studies, earning a Master of Science degree from East Tennessee State University. From there he went on to teach mathematics at Virginia Highlands Community College. Once he retired, he had a series of 'Second Acts,' including hosting 'Love That Jazz,' with Ed Charles (his radio 'name') on WABN in the late 1980s, and teaching Jazz classics and Big Band courses at the College for Older Adults. Notably, his passion for music was his primary focus post- retirement; he shared this love throughout his later years, regularly hosting weekly singing groups at his independent living



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facility and, later, at his assisted living facility (both in Loudoun County, Virginia). While he loved to sing (Sinatra and Tony Bennett were favorites), sharing the joy of music and bringing people together through song gave him so much happiness.

He will be remembered by his family for all of the above, but also for entering life in the Kind Lane and for never veering from it, no matter what he encountered. He instilled in his family an appreciation of the spontaneous summer road trip, teaching us that sometimes it isn't the final destination that stays with you, but rather the places you see along the way. This curiosity about the world -- even if it is simply about a town a few miles away -- will stay with us forever. It has added such richness to our lives. His love of dogs and cats, and a life spent having them as beloved family members, is something his immediate family took to heart, and we can't imagine our lives without our much-loved pets.

He is survived by his daughter, Catherine Grossman, and grandson, Daniel Grossman, both of Leesburg, Virginia. A virtual life celebration is being planned for January 7, 2023, at 3:00pm.

For further details on the service and for a complete obituary please visit:

<https://virtualmemorialgatherings.com/memorial-services/charles-elton/>




## Events

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### Virtual Service

 **Saturday**, January 7, 2023

 3:00 PM ET

 **Virtual**  
VA



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** sent an Enchanted Cottage to the Elton family.



December 16 at 12:05 PM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Charles by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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