



## Earl Norman Eldridge Jr.

September 16, 1933 - July 6, 2022

On Wednesday, July 06, 2022 Earl Norman Eldridge, Jr., loving husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, brother, uncle and friend, passed away at the age of 88.

Earl was born in rural Pennsylvania to Earl Sr and Areeta (Churchill) Eldridge, the sixth of seven boys. When he was 24 years old he became a Christian and attended New England Bible Institute. There he met his wife Cora (Morgan) and they were married in November, 1960. They went on to have five children.

Earl was an entrepreneur whose many businesses included sales and construction companies. His most important life work revolved around the Biblical mandate to care for “the least of these”. He founded several rescue missions to serve the homeless in New England. As a result of his work with this population he founded a Children’s Home, The Fold, which went on to help reach, heal, and strengthen over 1000 children and their families.

Earl’s love of life, sarcastic joking, rascalion wit and love for Jesus created bonds of deep friendship in all the places he and Cora lived, including Vermont, California, Hawaii, Baja California, and Arkansas. He always had active leadership roles teaching the Bible in the many churches they founded or attended. He was also active in Rotary Clubs around the country. Earl was known and loved for his straightforward and generous nature.

Earl was preceded in death by his father, Earl, and his mother, Areeta, and five of his six brothers. He is survived by his wife, Cora, and his children, Peter and wife Arlene Eldridge, Ruth Abbey, Becky Cable, Paul and wife Laurie Eldridge, and George Eldridge as well as 26 grandchildren (including 11 bonus grands who married into the family), 19 great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

A Loving Farewell in Honor of Earl Eldridge

By Dr. Fred & Sally Tomaselli

Earl went home to be with Jesus the morning of July 6, 2022. He was 88. I cannot say that

the news of Earl's "home going" was a surprise as his health had been failing. But it was received none-the-less with sorrow and prayers lifted up on behalf of his wife, Cora and family left behind. Although our contact had diminished in recent years to an occasional phone call and letter, our love, admiration and great respect for this faithful servant of Christ continued to grow.

An enormous legacy of fervent and practical faith has been left by Earl. I can attest to merely a small part in comparison to so much of what I have heard over our 55-year friendship. He consistently modeled the character of Christ's love in serving his family and the many others encountered in the business world as well as numerous church fellowships and ministries he served. He was an entrepreneur in the business world but more so in his work for God's Kingdom. Earl told me that after his conversion to Christ, he started a Rescue Mission in Vermont and in Maine. From these experiences, he would realize the vision for The Fold Ministry. He learned that most of the men and women he was seeking to help were enslaved to alcohol and drugs and invariably came from broken and dysfunctional homes.

Earl had a divine calling to reach, heal and strengthen "families" and together over the years, he and Cora served countless families, including my own. In 1967, they founded a faith ministry to provide a home to care for children, naming it The Fold. It was around this time when I met Earl. Our formal contact quickly evolved into a multifaceted relationship as spiritual counselor and mentor when I, personally, experienced loss and intense negative feelings of hopelessness. For me, apart from my salvation, our timely friendship was, perhaps, the most pivotal and life-changing. It was Earl and Cora's role-modeling that later inspired Sally and me to volunteer for a week or so as "house parents" at The Fold in the early 1970s. This short tenure was our introduction into 43 years of full-time ministry at The Fold.

The effect of this ministry is truly a legacy honoring Earl and Cora whom we know would humbly say, "To God be the glory!" Several years ago, we estimated that The Fold had formally ministered to over 1000 families and children. This does not include over 250 staff plus Board members whose lives have been impacted by The Fold (many continue serving in full-time ministry and/or missions around the world).

Only heaven will tell us how many of these lives, and others through them, have become "world-changers" for the glory of God. Although, no longer a residential ministry today, The Fold continues as Elevation Christian Academy under the leadership of a "Fold graduate", Dr. Scott Rancourt. This ministry continues serving troubled youth and their families by providing an education and counseling in a Christ-centered and successful academic

environment.

Earl was highly influential in the early years of Lyndon Bible Church which had also begun in 1967. He had a major part in helping to form the “By-laws” and governing structure of LBC which has continued to grow and impact our community for the glory of God. In fact, I think Earl might have been the first LBC elder.

We knew Earl to be a generous man. His attitude toward giving can be summed up by the following statement, “If you’ve got it and someone else needs it, why hold on to it!” His practice truly reflects Luke 6:38,

“Give, and it will be given to you: A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use will be the measure you receive.”

As with giving, Earl readily modeled open dependency upon the Lord and His Word. He often spontaneously turned to prayer while discussing a problem or brainstorming options before us at The Fold or in a church meeting. Earl would simply just start praying! This was true in his business practices as well. However, sometimes we would hear Earl’s “hallmark” exclamation, “Cotton picker!” that put smiles on our faces as he was processing the situation or challenge before him. But Earl would invariably turn our attention to Father in prayer.

One time when I was helping him install a swimming pool (one of his businesses) when we began facing numerous and frustrating obstacles; right there in the excavated ditch, we stopped and prayed and, yes, everything immediately began to improve. Another time, Earl seemed a bit more impulsive (mind you, he was a leader and “starter” and sometimes had little patience for procrastination). We had decided to install a new hot water boiler at the children’s home. I no sooner disconnected the fuel, electricity and piping from the old “steam boiler” being replaced, when Earl began swinging a sledge hammer on the unit. It was strategic in that he knew if it was dismantled by “sledge hammer”, we could not back out of our plan and would have to finish installing the new boiler (thankfully, it was summertime).

One of Earl’s favorite sermons told the story of Naaman and the “child-like” faith God requires of us for eternal salvation in Christ and His healing of our woundedness caused by life’s experiences (I heard him preach it a number of times). Earl lived out these truths in a practical and realistic way.

It would be unfortunate not to mention Earl's sense of humor as he would often single me out by emphasizing that I was an "I-talian". Fondly, I have a number of his old and overused jokes in memory. Even knowing what he was about to say, we seemed to laugh just the same—perhaps mostly over the pleasure it brought him. I often responded by telling Earl that I was sure he secretly wished he was an I-talian also. But these exchanges were always in fun of course, and respectfully and tastefully done.

Most salient of Earl's life and legacy is an expression that the Apostle Paul used of Timothy whom he was sending to minister to the Philippian church (Philippians 2:20). "For there is no one here like him who will readily demonstrate his deep concern for you." We humbly and gratefully offer this same accolade in Earl's honor. His deep concern and care for others truly has glorified God.

These memories and thoughts are merely a small part of the huge mosaic of Earl's life. He will be greatly missed! For now, Sally and I, along with so many others who knew and loved Earl, say, "Farewell, our brother and friend. We'll see you again and rejoice together in the presence of Jesus as we celebrate His grace and your legacy of love for His glory!"

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JUL 9. 11:00 AM (CT)

New Heights Church - Brick Ballroom  
119 S Broadway St  
Siloam Springs, AR 72761

# Tribute Wall



“ *The Gregory Family, Bill, Diana, Kami, Blaze purchased the Simply Lily for the family of Earl Norman Eldridge Jr..* ”



**The Gregory Family, Bill, Diana, Kami, Blaze** - July 09 at 03:01 AM



“ *Cherished Memories - All White was purchased for the family of Earl Norman Eldridge Jr..* ”



July 08 at 02:59 PM