



Mary R. Wilcox

(December 9, 1931 – November 12, 2021)

James R. Wilcox

(January 20, 1931 – December 13, 2023)

Relationship to St. Andrew:

Mary and Jim were original members of the St. Andrew United Methodist Church after moving to West Lafayette. Mary especially enjoyed the fellowship of small groups within the church. She treasured the close friendships she developed as a member of two successive Koinonia groups and in the Dinners for Nine gathering as part of the church program. Mary was a lifelong member of the Methodist Church. She and Jim were guidance counselors of a Junior High youth group in the St. Anthony Park Methodist Church in St. Paul, MN. Later they led a high school Sunday School class in the Methodist Church while living in Long Beach, Mississippi.

Family:

Son: Steven Bradley Wilcox (Melissa)

Daughter: Barbara Jean Richards (Kenneth)

Granddaughter: Cassie Elise Wilcox

Above all Mary treasured her family. This was so evident when she held her new daughter, Barbara Jean, on the trip from Des Moines to their home in Ames, Iowa. Three years later it was again evident when she lifted her new son Steven Bradley from his cradle and held him in her arms for the first time.

Mary's extended family include her brother Harlan Roepke (deceased), his wife Judy and their two children, Janet and Douglas Roepke. The two families frequently spent Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter holidays together. Mary's sister, Elizabeth (Roepke) Seitz, her husband William (Bill) Seitz, and their daughter Jennifer lived in Alaska for many years. Mary had wonderful visits with them several times. When the Seitz family moved to Colorado, this provided more opportunities for shared time. On visits to Colorado, the two families often camped together in the mountains, spending their nights in a teepee.

Jim had a very special relationship with his granddaughter. Cassie states she learned many lessons about life from her grandfather, especially while spending time in Ely, MN.

Recognitions, Activities, Special Interests:

Mary:

Mary R. Wilcox was born December 9, 1931, in Toronto Canada to Martin Henry Roepke and Edith Juanita Roepke. The family returned to the U.S. in 1931. Mary spent her early years in St. Paul, MN where she attended Murray High School. She studied Occupational Therapy at the University of Minnesota and graduated with Distinction in 1954. She married James R. Wilcox, a lifelong friend, On June 25, 1955.

Mary enjoyed traveling and the new experiences this provided. She traveled in many European countries, in Finland and in Norway. During these travels she quickly developed a rapport that frequently became friendships with citizens of these countries. In a trip to Asia she was thrilled to ride an elephant down a jungle stream in Thailand.

After Mary and Jim retired, they bought a cottage on Bear Island Lake in northern Minnesota where for twenty years they spent summers from mid-May to mid-October. Mary greatly enjoyed entertaining family and long-time friends at the lake cottage. She was active in the Ely United Methodist Church, was a member of the Ely Library and the local P.E.O. chapter.

In later years Mary often commented on what a wonderful life she had lived and how blessed she and Jim had been throughout their sixty-six year marriage. Mary was deeply loved by her family and is greatly missed.

Jim:

James R. Wilcox was born January 30, 1931, in Minneapolis to Florence Bradley Wilcox and Arthur Noble Wilcox. He grew up in St. Paul, MN and attended Murray High School. He

graduated from Univ of MN and then spent two years in the U.S. Army. He earned MS degree from Univ of MN and Ph.D. from Iowa State before marrying Mary in 1955.

Jim's professional career was dedicated to the US Dept. of Agriculture, serving as a geneticist. He came to Purdue in 1966 where he transferred to Agricultural Research Service and concentrated on soybean research. He was recognized nationally and internationally for his research.

He was a very loyal Purdue sports fan, often ushering for football or basketball. He was a member of the Lafayette Kiwanis Club and an active visitor to the Ely Kiwanis Club in MN. Jim led an active life, often swimming, walking, and involved in strength exercise programs. He and Mary looked forward all year to spending their summer in their family cabin in Ely, MN.

Jim loved to be with other people and made friends wherever he went. He was a friendly face behind the coffee bar at St. Andrew. Mary and Jim spent their last few years in Westminster Village where she made many new friends.

Use of Funds:

For Mary:



A park bench was placed under a shade tree in a landscaped area near the picnic shelter and basketball goal.

For Jim:

Funds donated in memory of Jim were added to the St. Andrew Scholarship Fund. Awards are made annually to students pursuing college or trade school degrees.



Obituary for Mary:



Mary R. Wilcox

Dec. 9, 1931- Nov. 12, 2021

West Lafayette - Mary Amelia (Roepke) Wilcox was born December 9, 1931, in Toronto, Canada to Martin Henry Roepke and Edith Juanita Roepke. The family returned to the U.S. in 1934. Mary spent her formative years in St. Paul, Minnesota. She attended Murray High School in St. Anthony Park and worked part time in the local library. After high school Mary studied Occupational Therapy at the University of Minnesota. She graduated with distinction in 1954. Following graduation, she worked as a Registered Occupational Therapist at the University of Minnesota hospitals.

She married James R. Wilcox, a lifelong friend, on June 25, 1955. She continued working at the U of M hospitals while her husband completed his U. S. Army commitment and pursued graduate studies at the University. Mary and her husband

moved to Ames, Iowa, in 1959. Mary worked at the Ames Methodist Church and later at the Dairy Department at Iowa State University. Their daughter, Barbara Jean, was born while they lived in Ames. Mary and her husband moved to Gulfport, then to Long Beach, Mississippi in 1961. Mary quickly made close friends with many of their neighbors and was active in the Long Beach Methodist Church. While in Mississippi their son, Steven Bradley, was born. In 1966 the family moved to West Lafayette, Indiana. Mary worked part time as an Occupational Therapist at the Americana Nursing Home, now St. Mary's, and later at Home Hospital.

After Mary and her husband retired, they bought a cottage on Bear Island Lake in northern Minnesota where for twenty years they spent summers from mid-May to mid-October. Mary greatly enjoyed entertaining family and longtime friends at the lake cottage. She was active in the Ely United Methodist Church, was a member of the Ely Library, and was active in the local PEO chapter. She greatly appreciated the love and friendship of her PEO sisters in Minnesota. Mary enjoyed people and was very social. She enjoyed visiting with her extended family and with friends, and readily conversed with strangers she met. She was an active member of St. Andrew United Methodist Church, PEO chapter CW, and the American Literature Club in Indiana.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents, a brother, Harlan Hugh Roepke, a brother-in-law David N. Wilcox, his wife Phyllis (Bowe) Wilcox, sister-in-law Susan (Wilcox) Ault and her husband Gerald R. Ault. Mary is survived by her husband James, daughter Barbara Jean (Wilcox) Richards, husband Kenneth, her son Steven Bradley Wilcox, his wife Melissa (Fyffe) Wilcox, her granddaughter, Cassie Elise Wilcox, Cassie's mother, Theresa Wilcox, and her sister-in-law Judith (Bole) Roepke.

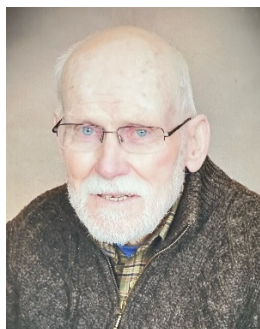
A Memorial Service will be held at St. Andrew United Methodist Church in West Lafayette at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 4, 2021. You may leave condolences and memories at www.soller-baker.com.

Posted online on November 27, 2021

Obituary for James:

James R. Wilcox

Jan. 20, 1931-Dec, 13, 2023



WEST LAFAYETTE - James Raymond Wilcox was born on January 20, 1931, in Minneapolis, Minnesota to Florence Bradley Wilcox and Arthur Noble Wilcox and grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota where he attended Murray High School. In 1953, he graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree, and then spent two years in the United States Army. James earned an MS degree from the University of Minnesota and a Ph.D. from Iowa State University. After completion of his service in the Army in 1955, James married Mary Amelia Roepke, and together they raised two children, Barbara Jean and Steven Bradley. Mary preceded him in death in 2021 after 66 years of marriage.

James' entire professional career was with the United States Department of Agriculture. He spent five years as a geneticist with the Forest Service at the Institute of Forest Genetics in Gulfport, Mississippi. There he conducted genetics research on cottonwood and sweetgum. In 1966 he and his family moved to West Lafayette, Indiana when he transferred to the Agricultural Research Service affiliated with the Purdue University Agronomy Department. There, he worked as a soybean research geneticist until his retirement in 2000. During this time, he conducted research and cooperated in the development of soybean cultivars with disease resistance and improved yield.

James also conducted research on quality characteristics of soybeans by creating strains with altered composition of soybean oil. Using his research, he created strains with improved digestibility of soybean meal. The results of his research were economically important on a global scale and remain so today.

James was recognized internationally for his research. He consulted and taught soybean breeding and genetics in several European and South American countries, Thailand, and China. He was elected Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy, of the Crop Science Society of America, and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1989, he received the International Prosoja Award at the World Soybean Research Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He published numerous research papers on soybean genetics and breeding methods and was editor of the monograph, "Soybeans: Improvement, Production and Uses", 2nd edition.

James was an avid follower of Purdue sports, attending both men's and women's sporting events for more than 50 years. James could often be found ushering fans to their seats at various sporting events. He was a member of the Lafayette Kiwanis Club and an active visitor to the Ely Kiwanis Club in Northern Minnesota. James was a member of St. Andrews United Methodist Church in West Lafayette, Indiana for more than 50 years.

James loved the outdoors and enjoyed hunting, fishing, backpacking, and camping across North America including many adventures with family members. He led an active life - swimming, walking, and participating in strength exercise programs. He was happiest participating in family and church activities, at gatherings during the holidays, and at the family cabin in Ely, Minnesota. He enjoyed time spent with close friends and readily made new friends wherever he was.

James was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Wilcox, parents, Aurthur and Florence Wilcox, older brother, David N. Wilcox, and younger sister, Susan A. (Wilcox) Ault. Jim is survived by his daughter, Barbara Jean (Wilcox) Richards, her husband Kenneth, son Steven Bradley Wilcox, his wife Melissa, granddaughter Cassie Elise Wilcox, Cassie's mother, Theresa (Koontz) Wilcox, sister-in-law Judith Roepke, and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at St. Andrew United Methodist Church in West Lafayette, IN at 2:00 pm on Saturday, January 6, 2024. You may leave condolences and memories at www.soller-baker.com.