



Jack Welland Thornton, Jr.

May 14, 1933 - May 05, 2017

Jack Welland Thornton, Jr., died peacefully on May 5, 2017, in Greenville, NC. A memorial service celebrating his faith and life will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Greenville on Tuesday, May 9, 2017 at 11 AM. The family will receive friends at a reception in the Parish Hall immediately following the service.

Born in Portland, Oregon, to Ruth Green Thornton and Jack Welland Thornton, Sr., he grew up in Portland; Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; and Chicago, where he graduated from Kate Starr Kellogg Elementary School and Morgan Park High School before attending Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. Enlisting in the Air Force, he was trained in the Russian language at the Army Language School, Presidio of Monterrey, California, and spent two years in Germany listening to Russian aircraft pilots. After four years in the Air Force, he enrolled in Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois, from which he graduated with a B.A. in economics. He received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Missouri and joined the faculty of East Carolina College in 1965.

A number of post-doctoral fellowships were awarded to him for summer study. In 1968, he was at NASA/Langley, helping to develop an educational satellite system, and in 1971 he studied economics at Vanderbilt. For training in computer information systems, he spent the summer of 1985 at the University of Minnesota and the summer of 1987 at Indiana University.

He retired from the School of Business at East Carolina University as professor emeritus in 1998 and continued to teach in phased retirement until 2001.

In addition to his teaching and research, he was involved in student life as faculty advisor to the Student Government Association, as advisor to Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity, and then as advisor for Tau Chapter of Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity for twenty-one years. He served as national vice-president and president of Phi Sigma Pi and was honored as recipient of the National Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008. In 2017, he received the service key for 40 years of service to Tau Chapter. He held honorary memberships in Omicron Delta Kappa and Gamma Beta Sigma.

For a number of years he worked as treasurer of the ECU Credit Union and also served as treasurer of the ECU Retired Faculty Association. He was on the Advisory Boards of New East Bank, Triangle Bank, RBC, and Centura.

A lifelong Episcopalian, he was a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and served in many capacities: Sunday school teacher, treasurer, member of St. Paul's Men, and faithful choir member. He was elected to the vestry for three terms, serving the church as junior warden and twice as senior warden.

Active in choral music from his time as member of a church boys' choir and high school and college choruses, he was active not only in St. Paul's Church choir, but was a long-time member of the local

barbershop group, now the Carolina Chord Connection, and enjoyed practices and performances with the group as well as performing with numerous quartets.

Surviving are his wife Mary Kathryn Duggan Thornton; his daughter Ann Thornton and her husband The Reverend Matt Heyd and their children Mary Marcella and Jack of New York City; his daughter Nancy Johnson and her husband Stephen Johnson and their children Greyson and Andrew of Beaufort, SC; his sister Ann Robinson of Llano, Texas; and two nephews and their families. He was predeceased by his parents and his brother Nicholas Edward Thornton.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to St. Paul's Episcopal Church Legacy Fund, 401 E. Fourth St., Greenville, NC, 27858.

Arrangements are by Wilkerson Funeral Home & Crematory.
Online condolences at www.wilkersonfuneralhome.com