

"I'll Fly Away"

*Some glad morning when this life is o'er
I'll fly away
To a home on God's celestial shore
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)*

*I'll fly away, oh glory
I'll fly away (In the morning)
When I die, Hallelujah, by and by
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)*

*When the shadows of this life have gone
I'll fly away
Like a bird from prison bars has flown
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)*

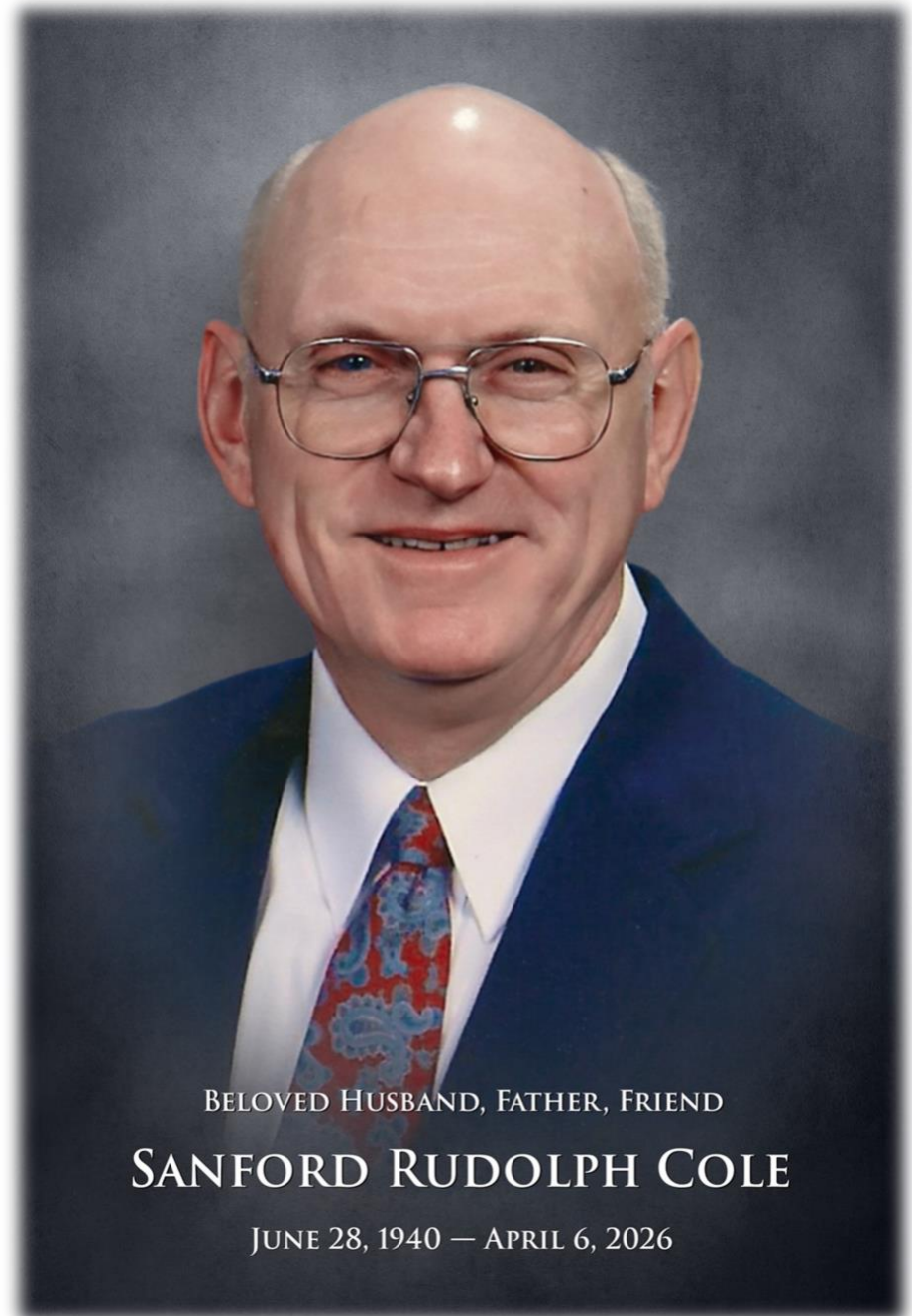
*I'll fly away, oh glory
I'll fly away (In the morning)
When I die, Hallelujah, by and by
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)*

*Just a few more weary days and then
I'll fly away
To a land where joy shall never end
I'll fly away (I'll fly away)*



Berry Funeral Home
& CREMATORY

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BELOVED HUSBAND, FATHER, FRIEND

SANFORD RUDOLPH COLE

JUNE 28, 1940 — APRIL 6, 2026

Obituary

A life is more than the years lived, and Sanford Cole proved that every day. He worked hard, loved his family, and never met a moment that couldn't use a good one-liner. He was the kind of man people remember, as real as they come. His life reflected his values: faith, kindness, hard work, humility, and love.

Sanford Rudolph Cole, age 85, of Elberton, Georgia, passed away on April 6, 2026, surrounded by the people who loved him. Born on June 28, 1940, in Hartwell, Georgia, he carried a deep appreciation for faith, a belief that everyone deserved respect, and solid values he lived out in service to others.

His life was marked by extraordinary resilience. He grew up hard, but he never let it harden him. As a teenager he worked night and day to support himself before marrying a beautiful wife and creating a loving home for their children. He built a career in the granite industry, becoming a master of the diamond saw and the person people called when a job was complicated. Many learned from his deep understanding of the craft.

At 19 he married the love of his life and never stopped saying how lucky he was that she chose him. He teased her about being "the cook," and she answered with the big Southern meals he loved. Through 66 years of marriage, their respect and playfulness stayed bright, a bond others admired and loved being around.

Despite limited formal schooling, he was one of the smartest men you could know. If it broke, he fixed it. If it needed building, he built it. He had a gift with wood and once made a dish hutch for his wife from nothing more than a sketch and a memory. He built a camper from scratch, and family weekends were spent at the lake. His gardening skills were unmatched, and every year he grew the juiciest tomatoes, beans, and squash that kept the freezer full.

Even after long days at work, he poured himself into his children's lives, serving as Scout Master for his son's troop and coaching his non-athletic daughter in softball. He led the youth group at church, taking kids on endless trips to Six Flags and sharing his faith with them. He proudly walked his daughter down the aisle after years of waiting for her to find "a man as good as her daddy."

He and his wife shared a love of travel, burning up the miles from the Grand Canyon to Alaska. Sanford carried his love of people on every trip, wearing his Georgia Bulldogs gear not just out of loyalty but because he knew it would spark a conversation. He loved talking to people, even complete strangers, and had a remarkable ability to find a connection with anyone.

Sanford lived out his faith daily. A lifelong Christian, he loved the Lord and showed it through service: teaching Sunday school, singing in the choir, serving on the church board, and rising early on Saturday mornings to help with food distribution. For years he was the go-to repairman for the church building and the parsonage.

He had a soft spot for the simple joys - his beloved dogs, Bobo and Susie, and cheering on the Georgia Bulldogs. Listening to Larry Munson call games on the radio was one of his favorite pastimes, and if the Bulldogs were playing, you could hear him cheering three counties over.

He was a proud member of the Sons of the American Revolution and took great pride in researching his genealogy. Through his dedication, he discovered that one of his relatives had served under George Washington, a connection to history that meant a great deal to him.

After a devastating accident late in life left him severely burned and ultimately cost him his leg, he endured struggles that would have ended a lesser man, still making caregivers and doctors laugh even while he was in pain. Despite a difficult childhood, he chose a life of grace, never bitterness. He was special, the kind of man people rely on, look up to, and carry with them long after he's gone. He lived out what he believed in the way he treated people, the way he gave of himself every single day, and the love he gave his family.

He is survived by his loving wife, Martha Lunsford Cole; son Sanford "Sandy" Cole of Elberton; daughter Terry and son-in-law Jeff Fairchild of Tucker; and brother Edward (Marion) Cole of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. He was preceded in death by his parents, Adolphus "Jack" Cole and Sara Starrett Cole, and siblings Evelyn Hilley and Francis Jean (Roger) Moore. He will be deeply missed not only by his family, friends, and caregivers but also by the countless individuals whose lives he touched, sometimes in brief encounters, but always in meaningful ways.

A funeral will be held at Berry Funeral Home on April 10, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. The service will be conducted by Rev. Kenny Martin. Burial will be in Concord United Methodist Church Cemetery.

Donations may be made to the Dewy Rose Baptist Church ramp ministry fund in Elberton or Hart County Animal Rescue in Hartwell.