



## Mr. Reuben T. Miller

February 14, 1926 - August 30, 2021

Reuben T. Miller, 95, of Scottsboro, passed away on Monday, August 30, 2021.

A graveside service will be held at 1:00 p.m., Thursday, September 2 at Cedar Hill Cemetery with Stephen M. Kennamer officiating.

Reuben was born in Scottsboro, a descendant of pioneer Jackson County families.

He is survived by a niece, Marilyn Morris Reed, and several cousins.

He was preceded in death by his wife Mary Taft Miller, sisters, Sally M. Morris and Pearl M. Berry, and his parents, Reuben P. and Tennie Wallace Miller.

The following is shared memories from Reuben's niece, Marilyn:

"My daddy was an only child like me. My mama had a sister who remained childless, but claimed me as part hers. My mama also had a brother, seven years her junior, and he became my only uncle. Mama and my aunt called him "Bud". My Gran sometimes laughingly called him her little groundhog. I have always called him Reub. He might be my only uncle, but he is one you can carry around for a lifetime.

Reuben's story is a remarkable one, spanning the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He was born on Valentine's Day, 1926, the only son of a farm family. Their farm was near county park. He would live there for the first seven years of his life.

While still in infancy Reuben was stricken with polio. His left leg was permanently affected. But even as a child, Reuben began his lifelong legacy not only to endure but also to flourish.

Reuben was a happy child as well as a handsome little boy, sporting the almost black, wavy hair and deep blue eyes from the Miller side of the family, as well as an easy going demeanor and likable way which also came from his daddy's people, From his mother he inherited a strict sense of duty, honor and responsibility, as well as a love of learning. These qualities would stand him in good stead for all his life.

As he grew, the withered leg and hip failed to grow. When he was small, it made little difference. But by age five it began to catch up to him. So during first grade and for awhile after, it was his sister, Sally, who carried him. Over a mile to the bus stop on County Park Road and onto the school bus and into City School, Sally toted Reuben on her back. Kind Uncle George Phillips, the blacksmith, carefully constructed a tiny pair of crutches in his shop for his little nephew, and Sally and Reuben both were freed. Amazingly, he was able to outrun his classmates on his crutches! He would fling them forward and swing his body, covering the ground faster than those using only their legs. Reuben walked with his crutches, unaided, from then on, well into his ninety-second year.

After his father's untimely death when he was seven, Reuben, his mother and two sisters moved to Cedar Hill Drive to one of his grandmother Wallace's rent houses. Cousin Bub Wallace was just a few doors away. Bub and Reuben

were more than cousins; they were best friends also. I have a picture of the two happy boys, with Bub riding Reuben on the handlebars of his bicycle. It is significant to note that shortly after Reuben got his own bike.

Mr. Boyd Turner, principal of City School, had his own idea about the bicycle situation. Sending Reuben on an errand, Mr. Turner announced in assembly that the combined efforts of the school were required in bringing about a surprise for Reuben. The entire student body saved the wrappers from a certain type of notebook paper, which culminated in winning a bike for him which was presented to him at an assembly one day. Reuben rode that bike well into high school until it was stolen.

His mama expected Reuben to contribute to the household, feeling his handicap should never be an excuse. She felt lessons must be learned about responsibility to prepare him for life. This was accomplished in a totally unplanned scenario.

As a boy, Reuben begged a dime to see the picture show at the old Bocanita, where he would meet yet another kind soul who affected his life positively. "Aunt Tex" Snodgrass, who owned the theater, caught up with him and returned his dime. "Honey, you don't ever have to pay to see Aunt Tex's picture show!" she proclaimed. When Reuben told his mom about it, she was pleased but also insisted he must always offer to pay.

Mr. Petty, the projectionist, took Reuben under his wing during his teenage years. Reuben learned to operate the projector and worked part-time. A bonus was the friendship of the Pettys, who lived near his family. (Mrs. Petty got in to the show for free, and she would take sisters Sally and Pearl with her, seeing each movie twice!) He also traveled with a crew to show movies out in the county and thoroughly enjoyed the work, which fueled his life-long love affair

with movies. He also worked some for Robert Word at the Ritz. Reuben was contributing!

As Reuben entered adolescence, he knew that he must have training to get a job since he didn't have two good legs. With the help of the newly opened Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, sister Sally, who was working at the Maples company, sent Reuben first to Auburn, and later to Port Arthur, Texas, where he studied radio technology and acquired the skills to snag an excellent position on the Redstone Arsenal, where he would build transistors for the Saturn rocket.

Reuben settled in Huntsville in the late 40s, working for WBHP, as an announcer, account executive, and copywriter. Music was his other love besides movies, and he enjoyed his time there. My grandmother joined him in 1949, and kept house and cared for him during his years there. The radio station eventually gave way to a position at the Redstone Arsenal. Cousin Bub, who had first told Reuben about the radiology school in Texas, worked there also.

Reuben added another passion to his life through photography. He was amazingly good, and on at least two occasions made the cover of the Nashville Tennessean's Sunday magazine. All of the family had copies of the breathtaking shot of the setting sun breaking through the thunderclouds over Whitesburg Bridge.

My entire childhood is documented through Reuben's photographs. As much as that meant then, it is even more appreciated now, with all the family, save Reuben and me, long gone.

When Reuben got an early retirement from Redstone, he and my grandmother returned to Scottsboro in 1972, where he built them a new

house, just a mile from mine on Woodall Lane. He worked some for the Daily Sentinel, and dabbled in leatherwork and locksmithing. He also began setting many of his own memories down on paper. Some of his writings were published in the local historical association's quarterly newsletters, where they were well received. In reading my own writings I find that I do write almost exactly like Reuben, which suits me fine. I think it is safe to say I inherited my writing gene from him.

But something else was in store for Reuben. While having some clothing alterations done in Huntsville, Reuben had met a lovely lady named Mary, from Fayetteville, Tennessee. Mary was a widow and Reuben began making the pilgrimage to southern Tennessee every weekend. He jokingly called her his Tennessee hillbilly.

One Saturday, as Reuben dressed to leave, my grandmother asked where he was going. Reuben replied he was off to see Mary. Then my grandmother commanded, "Bring Mary here!" And that was all Reuben needed to hear.

Reuben and Mary were married in May of 1977, and she came to live in the house on Woodall Lane. They eventually opened Mary's Alterations in the Word Arcade. They loved bluegrass festivals, shopping at Unclaimed Baggage, trips to Gatlinburg and the occasional trip to Washington D.C., where Mary's only child, Janet, lived.

They had thirty-three wonderful years. We all loved Mary for making Reuben so happy. She was an artist with needle and thread, and an outstanding cook. Her lasagna and Mexican cornbread were delights, and her pound cakes were legendary.

We lost Mary in 2010, and life is very different without her. Reuben lives alone now, as do I. We are all that's left of our family save for Cousin Larry Ward in

Birmingham.

The little boy who they said wouldn't live to adulthood marked his ninety-fifth birthday this past February. We see each other whenever we can and speak on the phone. When I look at him I can see my grandmother. When he looks at me he sees his sister Sally. I love my Uncle Reuben dearly. His story from beginning to end is one of triumph.”

Arrangements Entrusted to Scottsboro Funeral Home

# Cemetery Details

## Cedar Hill Cemetery

210 South Cedar Hill Drive  
Scottsboro, AL 35768  
(256) 609-8166

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

SEP 2. 1:00 PM (cst)

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210 South Cedar Hill Drive  
Scottsboro, AL 35768  
(256) 609-8166

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Reuben T. Miller*

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October 05, 2023 at 01:26 AM



“ *Sorry for ur loss. Prayers. After reading what u wrote of ur uncle.  
Made we wish I had known him . Prayers*

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**Kaye Meeker** - August 31, 2021 at 10:34 PM