



Duren Cheek

May 3, 2011

CHEEK, JR., Duren A., long-time Tennessean political reporter and former United Press International news executive, died Tuesday night (May 3, 2011) at Williamson Medical Center after a long illness. He was 73. Cheek was a 1959 University of Tennessee graduate named UT's Journalism Student of the Year. That same year, he joined UPI, where he worked 30 years, ultimately as Tennessee bureau chief and regional director for 27 states. Among the dozens of major international, national, and state stories Cheek covered during that time were the death of World War I hero Sgt. Alvin York, the trial of Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa, the death of Elvis Presley, and the ouster and trial of former Tennessee governor Ray Blanton. In *Down to the Wire*, a book that detailed UPI's fight for survival as an international news service, Cheek was asked why he dedicated his life to UPI and of the organization's competition with news wire rival Associated Press. "Beating the AP was the most fun you could have standing up," he wrote. "One minute you're typing in hog markets, and the next minute you're telling the world that Elvis is dead." Cheek joined *The Tennessean* as a political reporter in 1991 and was active in the Capitol Hill Press Corps until he retired in 2006. He helped found and participated in the Society of Professional Journalists' annual "Gridiron Show," a benefit media spoof of national, state and local political and business personalities. A fisherman and avid golfer, Cheek also helped start the Duffer's Open, an annual golf tournament to benefit the SPJ Middle Tennessee chapter's scholarship fund. A native of Mountain City, TN and son

of the late Claymon Duren Cheek and Clara Brookshire Cheek, he was preceded in death by his son, Anthony (Tony) Cheek. Surviving are his wife of 50 years, Beverly; daughter, Michelle; son, Jeffrey; and grandchildren, Jonathan and Lauren Cheek. The Memorial Service will be held Monday, May 9th at 5:30 p.m., at the Tennessee State Museum, Level B (Basement), 505 Deadrick Street, Nashville. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the charity of your choice. AUSTIN & BELL-Springfield, (615) 384-1000.

Tribute Wall

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“ So sorry to learn of Duren's passing. I have many fond memories of golfing with "DC" at Henry Horton back in the early 80s. He was always so much fun to be around. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

John D. Merritt - May 07, 2011 at 10:06 AM