

Ben Haskew Battle, 83, professor emeritus of education at Western Carolina University, passed away the night of Wednesday, June 20, 2007, at Angel Medical Center in Franklin after fighting an illness.

He was born in Sylva on Nov. 24, 1923. After earning a bachelor's degree from Western Carolina University in 1947, he went on to earn his master's from Columbia University in 1948, and his doctorate from Peabody-Vanderbilt College in 1963. Battle also served in the U.S. Navy at Okinawa during WWII and was a member of Cullowhee United Methodist Church.

For 21 years, Battle was a professor of education and director of student teaching at Western Carolina University and was also the recipient of the WCU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1977. He helped to found WCU's international student teaching programs in Central and South America. Also during his teaching career, he held principalships at public schools in Chapel Hill and in Rowan County. He served as a consultant to public school systems throughout the state and was a member of the N.C. State Board of Education from 1977 to 1985, where he served on the committee of teacher education.

Battle is survived by his wife of 57 years, Merriel Horne Battle; his son, Ben H. Battle Jr., M.D., of Franklin; a sister, Maude Battle Johnson of Rochester, Minn.; and several nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Hugh Edmond and Ann Worley Battle; a brother, Hugh Edmond Battle Jr.; and a sister, Gay Battle White.

A funeral service was held Saturday, June 23, at 1 p .m., at Cullowhee United Methodist Church.

The family received friends before the service at 12:30 p.m., and following the service in the church's fellowship hall.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Western Carolina University Foundation for scholarships for education students, or to the Building Fund of the Cullowhee United Methodist Church.

Moody Funeral Home and Crematorium in Sylva was in charge of the arrangements.

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