

Frederick Johnston Houk Jr., 56, of Chapel Hill, died Sunday, Sept. 23, 2007, at his home on Terrell's Mountain in Chatham County, N.C.

Born in Lakeland, Fla., in 1951, Fred was the grandson of Guy and Lynn Houk of Franklin.

Fred graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's political science Honors Program in 1973, and obtained a joint degree from UNC Law School and Duke University's Public Policy Program in 1984.

Early on, he wrote on political issues for Rolling Stone Magazine and started the Chapel Hill Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Service. Later, he built environmental consciousness into his business, practicing his credo of doing well by doing good. He co-founded Counter Culture Coffee, the largest high-end specialty roaster in North Carolina, now sold in stores and restaurants up and down the East Coast. A birding enthusiast, he was the first commercial coffee provider to introduce shade-grown coffee. By selling coffee grown on shaded farms, the company helps to preserve the habitat of migratory songbirds.

Fred further pursued these interests by serving on the Environment Committee of the Specialty Coffee Association of America and providing assistance to the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. A true son of UNC, Fred was fiercely loyal to his alma mater.

Fred is survived by his wife of 30 years, Virginia Stewart Houk; his parents, Frederick Johnston Houk Sr. and Dorothy Forrester Houk of Maitland, Fla.; his brothers and sisters-in-law, Guy and Lauren Houk of Orlando, Fla., Jack and Dede Houk of Atlanta, Ga., and also Nancy and Tom Chewning of Richmond, Va.; and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held in Chapel Hill at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Fred's memory may be made to: Fred Houk Memorial, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 1120 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20036.

Griffin Funeral Services, Pittsboro, N.C., is in charge of the arrangements.

The Franklin Press, 2 October 2007