



Raymond Randall "Randy" Preddy, 71, of Waco, died at his home Saturday, Dec. 17, 2011, after a sudden illness. Funeral services are scheduled 1:30 p.m. Wednesday at Presbyterian Church, with the Rev. Jimmie Johnson & the the Rev. David Prentice-Hyers officiating.

Born in Texarkana, Ark., to the late Raymond Watson Preddy and Dorothy Long Preddy, Mr. Preddy grew up in Little Rock, Ark., but often visited Waco where his grandparents lived. He graduated from Little Rock Central High School in 1957, and worked as a cub reporter at the Arkansas Gazette before college. He attended Northwestern University, where he was a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity and a cheerleader. He earned bachelors and masters degrees from Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism, then graduated from Officer Candidate School, earning his commission in the U.S Navy.

He served for three years on active duty, first as a crew member aboard USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) and later for the Commander in Chief Atlantic Fleet, serving as a Navy public affairs officer. He would go on to serve for 22 years in the Reserves, with his last billet as Commanding Officer of the Navy Office of Information Southwest, headquartered in Dallas. He retired at the rank of captain in 1985.

After completing active duty, he married the love of his life, Sarah Mitchell, and embarked on his journalism career, serving first at the Louisville Courier-Journal in Louisville, Ky., then moving on to the Dayton Daily News in Dayton, Ohio, a Cox Enterprises newspaper. He served in several roles for the Daily News, moving into management as metro editor, when he was chosen to become the publisher of the Waco Tribune-Herald, which had recently been purchased by Cox. Mr. Preddy served as publisher of the Tribune-Herald from 1978 to 1996, receiving the Pat Taggart Newspaper Leader of the Year award in 1994 from the Texas Daily Newspaper Association for the Tribune-Herald's coverage of the Branch Davidians to include the Tribune-Herald's series "The Sinful Messiah", which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Journalism in 1994.

After leaving the Tribune-Herald, Mr. Preddy turned his passion for journalism into teaching journalism, joining the faculty at Baylor University, teaching several different courses for more than a decade. He also continued his service to First Presbyterian Church, most recently serving as clerk of session and as a member of the Pastor Nominating Committee. He also served on numerous committees for Grace Presbytery, the governing body of 185 Presbyterian churches in north and northeast Texas, to include serving as Presbytery Moderator in 2005.

He loved Waco and also loved serving in numerous community organizations such as the Waco Rotary Club, Baylor/Waco Foundation, Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce, Waco Business League, and the Central Texas Literacy Coalition. It was in partnership with the Literacy Coalition that the Tribune-Herald started "A Storybook Christmas" in 1991, an ongoing effort to provide new books for needy children. Since its inception, "A Storybook Christmas" has placed more than 328,000 new books in the hands of children ages three to nine who do not have books of their own at home.

Mr. Preddy is survived by his wife of 46 years, Sarah Mitchell Preddy; children, Lewis and Tiffany; daughter-in-law, Rose Marie K. Preddy; son-in-law, Jack Morton; and grandchildren, Abraham, Sara, Stephen, and Henry. Survivors also include sister-in-law, Virginia Frank Jones and her husband, Egbert Jones; niece, Dr. Elizabeth Frank; nephews, Mitchell Frank and his wife, Leslie, and their children James, Andrew, Grace, and Natalie, Roddy Frank and his wife, Sarah, and the late Monroe Frank.