

Earl Cox



Cox, Earl,

Age 86, died in Louisville Tuesday, December 13, 2016. Born in Irvine, Kentucky March 25, 1930, he was the son of Bess (Benton) and Coleman Cox.

He grew up in Irvine, attended the University of Kentucky and served in the U. S. [Army](#) for two years. After returning home, Earl Ruby offered him a position as a sports writer at The Courier-Journal.

In many ways, Earl was the vanguard of his profession and he was a not-so-quiet warrior for equality. He was the first [reporter](#) in Louisville to cover athletes at all-black schools in the 1950s (over the objection of his editor), and he was one of only a few writers in the nation who covered women's college sports in the 1950s and 1960s. Until he started writing about them, these athletes were ignored. In the early 1970s, Earl hired the Courier's first female sports writer and he told her male colleagues that if they gave her any grief, he would fire THEM.

Earl's years began and ended with the Kentucky Derby and he was convinced that if the Courier Sports section looked good the day after Derby, he felt he had been a success that year.

After retiring from the Courier in the mid-80s, Earl began his second career as sports editor at The Voice-Tribune until his retirement in 2013. He was one of the most respected syndicated sports writers in Kentucky. At his peak, he was offered jobs with larger newspapers and national sports magazines, but he loved Kentucky too much to ever leave.

One of the things Earl enjoyed the most was being invited several consecutive years to speak at a Columbia University symposium to a group of other national sports writers. He was the founder and the first president of The Associated Press Sports Editors, a national association. He was a member of the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame and the Kentucky Athletic Hall of Fame. He was also a member of the Dawahares/Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame, and he was the only person inducted into all three. In addition, his colleagues elected him Kentucky Sportswriter of the Year many times.

Earl was humble about his professional accomplishments, but he always was very proud of his family. For 59 years, he was married to the former Carolyn Holliday who he first spied when he was nine-years-old and she was six, as she strolled down the street eating ice cream in downtown Irvine. Carolyn is a retired school [teacher](#) and the mother of Earl's three children, Sarah, Scott and Ellen.

To his children, Earl was the most incredible father in the world. When asked to play catch in the back yard for the millionth time, he said yesevery single time. He taught his children how to keep score in baseball, to cheer for the Big Red Machine, and to root for any team from Kentucky. He was his children's number one cheerleader, their coach, and their hero. His only vice was that he never missed an opportunity to let you know that Sarah was a doctor, Scott and Ellen were attorneys, and Ellen graduated from Harvard. His children apologize to all who tired of hearing about them.

Earl is survived by his wife, Carolyn, his daughter Sarah (Dwight Pridham), his son Scott (Lorie), his daughter Ellen Call (Jill Johnson) and his grandchildren Emma and Hallie Pridham, Coleman and Caroline Cox and Virginia and Sophia Call. He is also survived by three step grandchildren: Cameron Sousa, Kate Ashton and Alex Pridham. He leaves behind countless good friends who he cherished, including Guy Strong, Oscar Combs and Joe B. Hall. He was predeceased by his parents, his five sisters and his brother. Earl's family would like to thank Dr. Jane Cornett for her kindness as well as the staff of the Episcopal Church Home.

Please join the Cox family for a celebration of Earl's life Saturday, December 24, at Big Spring Country Club, 5901 Dutchmans Lane, Louisville 40205. The reception/visitation begins at 12 noon followed by a special tribute at 1:00 p.m.

Arrangements under the direction of Pearson's.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Salvation Army or a [charity of choice](#) .





Funeral Home

Pearson Funeral Home

149 Breckenridge Lane Louisville, KY 40207
(502) 896-0349

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