Rev. Robert Matthew Olton, 97, of Charlottesville, passed away on Wednesday, July 5, 2006, at his home. Rev. Olton was born July 30, 1908, in Greene, New York, where his father was rector of the Episcopal Church. From there, the family moved to Towanda, Pennsylvania, before going to Newark, New Jersey, where his father was rector of St. James Episcopal Church for twenty-seven years.

He graduated from Haverford College, Phi Beta Kappa, in 1930 and from the Episcopal Theological Seminary, cum laude, in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1933. His first parish was at the Church of the Advent in Bloomfield, New Jersey. In 1936, he moved to Dover, New Jersey, to serve as rector of St. John's Episcopal Church and St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey.

In 1938, he joined the U.S. Naval Reserve and was called to active duty in January 1941. He served as a Navy chaplain in the First Marine Regiment, participating in the Guadalcanal campaign, and saw further action on the Island of New Britain. Afterwards, he was stationed at the Naval Training Stations in Sampson, New York, and Great Lakes, Illinois, and at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland. He was separated from the service in December 1945 with the rank of commander.

From January 1946 until December 1965, he was rector of All Saints Church in Richmond, Virginia. In 1965, he became rector of Grace Church in Cismont, Virginia, where he remained until his retirement in 1968. He served in the active ministry for a total of thirty years.

In 1969, after receiving a Master's Degree in Guidance Counseling from the University of Virginia, he worked in that capacity at King George County High School and Rock Hill Academy of Charlottesville, Virginia. He also served as supply minister for Buck Mountain Episcopal Church, Church of the Good Shepherd of the Hills Episcopal Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Ivy, and St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church of Ivy until 1990.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Minnie H. Teipel; his son, Dr. David S. Olton; his parents, Rev. and Mrs. Percy T. Olton; his brothers, Percy and Charles; and his sister, Dorothy Saunders. He is survived by his wife, Katherine R. Street Olton; his daughter, Judith Mueller; his son, Dr. Robert M. Olton Jr.; two granddaughters, Liza and Miranda Mueller; four stepchildren, David Street, Stephen Street, Katherine Nucci, and Melinda Robbins; and 12 stepgrandchildren.

A funeral service at St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church of Ivy will be conducted at 11 a.m. Tuesday, July 11, 2006, with the Rev. Kathleen Sturgis officiating. Burial will follow in the churchyard with military honors. A memorial service will be conducted at St. Paul's Memorial Episcopal Church at 4 p.m. Tuesday, July 11, 2006, with the Rev. Alan Mead and the Rev. Paula
Kettlewell officiating. The family will greet friends in the parish hall of St. Paul's Memorial Church after the service. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial contributions be made to Hospice of the Piedmont, 2200 Old Ivy Road, Suite 2, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903; St. Paul's Memorial Episcopal Church, 1700 University Avenue, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903; or St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 351, Ivy, Virginia 22945. Hill and Wood Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Friends may sign the register book at www.hillandwood.com.

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