

# Obituaries



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“Along the way” was his favorite saying. As we go along our way, he will continue to love and guide us with the wisdom only he can offer.

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Mr. Buie was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend. He was a pastor and led churches in the Jackson, MS area including, Woodville Heights, First Baptist Church Byram, Westview Baptist, and Lone Pine Baptist. He was a missionary who spent 7 years as a missionary to Spain and was apart of leading mission efforts to Africa and Central America. He spent his life sharing God's love, traveling the world, building community, and serving others with a faithful and generous heart. He was best known for his "Chalk Talk" ministry.

Mr. Buie was also a gifted artist and woodcarver, he founded the Pearl River Woodcarver's Club over 40 years ago. He spent his life in service to others and made a lasting impact on every life he touched.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers, William C. "Sonny" Buie II and Robert Earl "Bob" Buie.

He is survived by his wife, Christine Griffith Buie, a son,

Greg Buie (Tammy), and two grandchildren, Vivian Hope Buie and Hannah Grace Buie,

This past week, his son and daughter-in-law were blessed with a special visit with him and a beautiful prayer he offered – something they will always hold close. His family is deeply comforted knowing he is now at peace, no longer suffering, and fully cared for in the presence of the Lord.

The family is grateful for the compassion and love shown by those who helped care for him, and for the many prayers already lifted on his behalf and for his family.

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He found joy in the Colorado mountains, history—both studying it and teaching it—along with fishing, hunting, and camping. Some of his happiest moments were spent traveling with his brother and making memories with his family. Above all, Gerald cherished his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, who were the pride of his heart. His legacy of faith, humility, and love will live on in the many lives he shaped.

Gerald is preceded by beloved daughter, Penny Ladner Holston; parents, Boyd and Hannah Ladner; siblings, J.C. Ladner, Reggie Ladner, and Rita Ann Seals. Left to cherish his memory is his wife of 66 years, Dorothy Ladner; daughter, Becky (Dwayne) Peterson; grandchildren, Sandra Peterson, Wally Peterson; great-grandchildren, Seth, Sage, Sawyer, Shailey, and Marlie; brother, Monty Ladner. Also left to cherish his memories are several nieces and nephews.



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Dr. Hill was born on March 30, 1942, in Belzoni, Mississippi, to Bill Gully Hill and Nova Zona Smith Hill. A lifelong learner and devoted educator, he earned a Bachelor of Science in Education and a Master of Education from Mississippi State University, and later earned both a Master of Divinity and a Doctor of Ministry from the Southern Baptist Center for Biblical Studies.

Wayne faithfully served as a Baptist pastor, educator, administrator, and self-employed tradesman throughout his life. He was a retired Baptist pastor, answering his final pastoral call at Beacon Street Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Mississippi. At the time of his passing, he was an active member of South Louisville Baptist Church.

A man of many talents, Wayne was known as a preacher, teacher, administrator, barber, mechanic, and mentor. He was a Mason and Shriner, a skilled tradesman, and a lifelong auto mechanic whose passion was auto restoration. Widely known as "the Bug Man," he was regarded by many as the best Volkswagen mechanic around. His joy was in work—his hobby was work—and he found great satisfaction in using his hands, his mind, and his faith to serve others.

Wayne shared the latter part of his life with his wife, Joyce R. Hill, whom he married on December 18, 1993. Their marriage was marked by companionship, faith, and mutual support.

He is survived by his wife, Joyce R. Hill; daughters Shellye Hill Snowden (Chris), Renee Hill Johns, and Belinda Rogers Swart (Ron); sons William A. "Will" Hill (Sarah) and Richard Rogers; and sisters Dorothy "Dot" Hames and Jewel H. Norderud.

He is also survived by his grandchildren: Michael T. Johns, Barley S. Johns (Kayla), Madison Snowden Elkins (Zach), Macie Snowden, Kellynn Hill, Trip Hill, Eva Hill, Steven Rogers (Kali), Austin Swart (Karleigh), Hunter Swart (Mallory), and Hayden Rogers; and great-grandchildren Bear, Everly, and Clara Elkins; Heidi, Ledger, Tatum, and Riggins Swart; and Jax and Kenzi Rogers.

Wayne was preceded in death by his parents; his first wife, Sandra Smith Hill, whom he was widowed from in 1992; his brothers William Timothy Hill (twin), Earl Hill, Sam Hill, and Junior Hill; his sisters Sarah Ivy Vigoletti and Margaret

McCord; and his infant son, Billy Wayne Hill.

Wayne was many things—a son, brother, husband, father, grandfather (“Pawpaw”), uncle, cousin, and friend—but above all, he was a servant. His life was marked by faith, hard work, curiosity, and a deep love for people. His legacy lives on through his family, his ministry, and the many lives he touched as a teacher, pastor, and friend.

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**Sammy Coker**, 77, passed away at the Baptist Memorial Hospital in New Albany on Thursday, January 15, 2026. He enjoyed being outdoors, hunting, riding his side by side and working in his garden. Sammy was a retired minister and pastored three churches, Beech Springs in Union County, Trinity in Baldwyn, and Chesterville in Lee County.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Jane Coker of Baldwyn; daughter, Samantha Barron (Michael) of Baldwyn; son, Paul Coker (Anna); brother, Danny Coker (Judy) of Ellistown; (6) grandchildren, Wade Barron and Bellamy, Chloe Barron, Sam Barron, Jake Coker, Webb Coker and Stella Coker; a host of nieces, nephews and other family and friends; his special little dog, “Prissy”.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Paul and Bessie Greer Coker; a sister and her husband, Janie Barnett (Lanois).

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Bro. Bill is survived by his wife of 65 years, Mrs. Jacky Turner Williamson of Randolph, MS; his sisters, Barbara Beene of Chesterfield, MO, and Nita Davidson of Pell City, AL; his son-in-law, Michael Waldrop (Laura) of Thaxton, MS; and his grandchildren, Whitten Zechariah Waldrop, Jackson Silas Waldrop, both of St. George, UT, and Zoe Belle Waldrop of Thaxton, MS.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Samuel Roosevelt and Lucille Chaney Williamson, his sister, Doris Perkins, and his daughter, Stephanie Hope Waldrop.



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In 1971, Johnny answered God's call to ministry, a decision that shaped the rest of his life. He became known not only for his kindness and service, but for his unwavering passion for winning souls for the Lord. He faithfully pastored Wynnburg Baptist Church, Hopewell Baptist Church, Ellistown Baptist Church, and Mt. Vernon Baptist Church. He also served as interim pastor for Reelfoot Baptist Church, West Corinth Baptist Church, Glendale Baptist Church, and Oak Hill Baptist Church.

Johnny served wherever he was needed—whether in the pulpit, in his community, or simply in the quiet, everyday ways that reveal a servant's heart. Though his physical abilities became limited in later years, his devotion to living a meaningful, Christ-centered life never faded.

Those left to honor Bro. Johnny's Memory include his wife of 74 years, Louise Walker; son, John R. "Jay" Walker (Teresa); daughters, Vicki Clark (John) and Carol Pinkston (Jim); grandchildren, Dr. Brad Gatlin (Crissy), Drew Walker (Vanessa), Jon Pinkston (Courtney), Jordan Pinkston (Shannon), Karen Burns (Bubba); 12 great grandchildren; 1 great great grandchild; other relatives and a host of friends. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sisters, Joyce Keith, and Bobbie Hankins.

His legacy lives on in the countless lives he touched, the

churches he shepherded, and the many hearts he helped guide toward the Lord. Those who knew him will remember not only the life he lived, but the love, faith, and purpose with which he lived it.

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James was born on February 10, 1927, to Clifton and Onie Breland in McDonald, MS. James continued the legacy of faith and service given to him by his parents. After graduating from Linwood High School, he pursued higher education at East Central Community College and Delta State University, culminating his studies at New Orleans Baptist Theological

Seminary. His commitment to learning and spiritual growth set a profound foundation for his subsequent decades of dedicated service.

A proud Army veteran of World War II, James embodied the virtues of courage and resilience. His military service shaped him into a man of integrity and compassion, traits that resonated throughout his lengthy career. After teaching math for one year at West High School in West, MS, he passionately served for 40 years as the Director of the Baptist Campus Ministry at Delta State University, where he influenced countless young lives, guiding them in their faith and education.

James was a proud member of First Baptist Church in Cleveland, MS. He had the opportunity to serve as interim pastor there, as well as in many other Baptist churches across the Delta, demonstrating his commitment to fostering spiritual growth within his community. He delivered many thought-provoking devotionals to church groups, and was known for his unwavering encouragement of others in their walk with God. He finished his ministry by serving as pastor of First Belleview Baptist in Shelby, MS. His legacy of faith and leadership will endure in the hearts of those he inspired. James found opportunities for service at Delta State University as a member of the 50 Year Golden Circle at the Alumni Association, and as an ambassador at Bologna Performing Arts Center. He was a recipient of the Henry Outlaw Alumni Service Award.

James was preceded in death by his father, Luther Clifton Breland; his mother, Onie Mae Rice Breland; his infant sister; and his wife of 60 years, Billie Wasson Breland.

James is survived by his cherished daughter, Brenda Carol Breland (Clyde Dwayne) Sims of Athens, AL; along with his beloved grandsons, Clifton David (Megan) Sims of Birmingham, AL and Brian Douglas (Kayla) Sims of Athens, AL; great-grandsons, Shepherd Yustin Sims and Wyatt Daniel Sims; great-

granddaughter, Breland Valery Sims; nieces, Gwenda Wasson Swain of Cerritos, CA and Mitzi Wasson (Greg) of Siloam Springs, AR; and nephew, Ellis Wasson, Jr. of Huntington Beach, CA; all of whom brought him immense joy.

James faithful life and the love he shared with his family and community leave a lasting impact that will be remembered fondly by all who knew him. His example will continue to inspire generations to follow a path of faith and service.