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Morgan County Today

Psalm 100:3

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Volume 11 Number 51

Tuesday, December 23, 2025

More Than A Newspaper.

75¢



“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”.

- Isaiah 9:6





*Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas
from all the Staff and Employees at
Plateau Electric Cooperative.*



Morgan County Today
Your Community. Your News.

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**Ms. Avery Pearl
Pet Columnist**

Pet Perspective with Ms. Avery Pearl

Merry Christmas!!!

On behalf of Morgan County Today, Ms Ivory, Mimi, Pappy, and me:

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

We wish you wuff, snuggles, a day filled with lots of giggles and joy. Cherish these moments making memories with the people that God has blessed your life with.

P.S. I hope that Pappy sneaks me some of the yummy ham and turkey. Shh. Don't tell Mimi.

For more of my Pet Perspective like and follow me on Facebook at Ms Avery Pearl.



WEEKLY WEATHER

**CITIZENS
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Wed 24	60°/51°	
Thu 25	63°/53°	
Fri 26	64°/45°	
Sat 27	54°/36°	
Sun 28	48°/34°	
Mon 29	47°/33°	

Tennessee 811
Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

— In Loving Memory —

Jimmy Lee Stewart, 74



Jimmy Lee Stewart
January 7, 1951 – December 1, 2025

Jimmy Lee Stewart, born January 7, 1951, in Sunbright, Tennessee passed away December 1, 2025. He grew up in the Sunbright area before marrying and moving to Atlanta, Georgia where he started a family and

lived for many years. He and his family then moved to Cookeville, Tennessee where he spent the remainder of his life. He was a life-long painter and owned his own business. He loved politics and his community and was a former county commissioner in Cookeville, Tennessee. He was a member of Sycamore Church of Christ. He enjoyed sports whether it was the Tennessee Volunteers or local basketball teams as they played for state championships, fishing, planting his garden, and above all drinking a cup of coffee (year-round and cup after cup) sitting around with friends and loved ones telling a good story.

He is preceded in death by his parents John C. Stewart and

Madelyn Human Stewart and his oldest son, James Stewart of Gainsboro, Tennessee.

He is survived by his son, Michael Stewart, and his daughter, Amy Stewart Harris, both of Cookeville, TN; grandchildren Courtney LaFever (Okilbek), of Gainsboro, TN, David Stewart (Harmony) of East Knoxville, TN, Alli Beth Roberts of Cookeville, TN, and Parker Roberts of Cookeville, TN; great-grandchildren Harper Autumn LaFever of Gainsboro, TN and Sadie Mae Stewart of East Knoxville, TN; sister Martha Jane "Janie" Stewart Galloway of Hixson, TN, brother John D. "JD" Stewart of Utah, Cathy Atkinson Hill mother of his children, grandmother of his grandchildren

and great-grandchildren, and friend; and several nephews, niece, and extended family and friends whom he loved dearly.

The family will receive friends Saturday, December 6, 2025 from 4 – 6 p.m. (CST) at Sycamore Church of Christ in Cookeville, TN with Brother Kevin Daugherty officiating. Interment will be on Sunday, December 7, 2025 at 3 p.m. (EST) at the family cemetery at Pleasant Ridge.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Jimmy Lee Stewart.

Psalm 86:4-5

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Kathie Freytag, 68



Kathie Freytag, age 68 of Wartburg died peacefully on Wednesday, December 3rd, 2025, at home surround by family.

She is preceded in death by her son Brandon Freytag; parents Oliver and Evia Byrge; brother Leslie (Clara) Byrge; father/mother-in-law David (Faye) Freytag.

She is survived by her husband of 43 years, Wesley Freytag; son Justin (Samantha) Freytag; grandsons, Coleman, Oliver, Kaden, Gabriel and Gunner Freytag, Andrew Gilley; granddaughters, Annie Freytag,

Emma Canela, Ellie and Ember Gilley, grandchildren's mothers, Jenny Burja and Hillary Freytag, sister, Brenda (Gary) Adkisson, along with many nieces, nephews, friends, family and neighbors.

The family will receive friends on Friday, December 5th, 2025, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at Schubert Funeral Home, Wartburg. Funeral Services will be Saturday, December 6th, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. with Pastor Roy Langley officiating. Interment will follow at Union Cemetery in the Joyner Community.

Son, Justin Freytag, Grandsons, Coleman, Oliver, Kaden Freytag, Andrew Gilley, Special adopted grandson, Joseph Childs will be serving as Pall Bearers

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Kathie Freytag.

Georgia Mae Coffman, 96



Georgia Mae Coffman, age 96, of Wartburg Tennessee passed away peacefully at home on Sunday, December 7, 2025. She was a lifelong member of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

She is preceded in death by her husband Hige Coffman; parents George and Edla Heidel; sister Vera Sexton; brother Herbert Heidel; niece Donna Sexton McCray and nephew Wade Sexton.

She is survived by her sister Elsie Murphy; nieces Sharon Brightwell and Marie Sexton;

nephew Gary Sexton and a host of great and great-great nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends Saturday, December 13, 2025 from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church with the funeral to follow at 10:00 a.m. with Pastor David Graves officiating. Interment will be at Morgan Memorial Gardens in Wartburg.

The family would like to thank the University of Tennessee Hospital and University of Tennessee Hospice for their wonderful care and support.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. Paul Lutheran Church.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Georgia Mae Coffman.



— In Loving Memory —

Fulton Wayne Freels, 25



Fulton Wayne Freels, age 25, of Sunbright, passed away peacefully at his home on December 8, 2025.

Fulton was welcomed into heaven by his beloved fiancée, Nevaeh Ballard, and his grandparents, Omer and Bonnie Freels, who preceded him in death.

He leaves behind his father, Tony Freels; his mother, Teresa Wray, and husband Shane; his sister, Breanna Kilgore, and husband John; his brother, Kurtis Silcox; his cherished niece, Lilian Williams, and nephew,

Roger Kilgore; and his grandfather, Roger Silcox. Fulton is also survived by a host of extended family members and friends who will forever remember his kind heart, quiet strength, and the love he shared with those around him.

The family will receive friends Sunday December 14, 2025 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg with the funeral to follow at 3:00, Bro. Terry Potter officiating.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made to Schubert Funeral Home.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Fulton Wayne Freels.

Betty Lou Chaney, 72



Betty Lou Chaney, age 72, was born on July 6, 1953, and departed this life peacefully at her home on Friday morning, December 12, 2025, surrounded by the love of her family.

She was preceded in death by her father, Bill Moore; her beloved son, Billy Jack Chaney; and her sister, Peggy Sue Chaney.

Betty Lou was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother whose life was rooted in family, faith, and love. She was married for 57 years to her lifelong companion, Troy Jackson Chaney Jr., and together they built a family filled with deep bonds and lasting memories.

She is survived by her husband, Troy Jackson Chaney Jr.; her son, Leroy Andrew Chaney and wife Blake; her daughters,

Matilda Marie Chaney and Cassie Rena Phillips and husband Mark; and her mother, Joy Moore-Davis. She is also survived by her sisters, Barb Beck and husband Steve, and Gail Hunter and husband Steve.

Betty Lou leaves behind a legacy of love through her ten grandchildren: Michael, Ma'Shele, BJ (Courtney), Myranda (Cody), Scottie, Bubba, Lou (Ethan), Ariel, Cylas, and Andrea; and seven great-grandchildren: Pamela, Dharius, Kaysen, Rhett, Jaylon, Kallie, and Marleigh Mae.

The family will receive friends Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home from 12:00-2:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 2:00 p.m. Interment will follow in the New Petros Cemetery in Petros.

Betty Lou will be remembered for her gentle spirit, unwavering devotion to her family, and the warmth she shared so freely with all who knew her.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Betty Chaney.

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.

The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

- Lamentations 3:24



Felix Esco Ooten, 88



Felix Esco Ooten, age 88, of Kingston passed into eternal rest on Thursday Morning, December 11, 2025, at the Lantern at Morning Pointe in Lenoir City, TN.

Felix was born on April 9, 1937, in Oakdale, TN., to Vera Viola Hamby Ooten and Clarence Ooten. He worked all his life starting at a young age delivering newspapers. He worked at the YMCA in Oakdale and

then worked on the railroad until he was laid off. He attended Tennessee Tech in Cookeville for a year before going to work at Tennessee Eastman in Kingsport. He attended East Tennessee State University for one quarter before getting a job at the Y-12 Plant in Oak Ridge, TN. While working full time at Y-12 and raising a family, he continued his education at the University of Tennessee where he received his bachelors degree in Accounting. He was employed by Union Carbide/Martin Marietta in Accounting and Computer Sciences until his retirement in 1994.

Felix's retirement included working in the yard or around the house. He was always doing something. He enjoyed traveling. He had been to all 50 states, 9 Canadian provinces,

and several Western European countries. He was an active member of Redeemer Lutheran Church for over 50 years where he held a number of different positions.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his first wife, Loretta Potter Ooten, his daughter, Karen Renae Ooten, and his second wife, Frances Franklin Ooten.

Felix is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Connie Ooten-Hopkins and Jerry Hopkins and his granddaughter Elizabeth Hopkins of Knoxville, TN. He is also survived by his brothers and their wives Major and Joyce Ooten of Pensacola, FL., Homer and Yvonne Ooten of Tallahassee, FL., Garland and Marilyn of Douglasville, GA., and Ronnie and Judy Ooten of Knoxville, TN. Felix is also survived by several

cousins, nieces, nephews and a host of other friends.

The family will receive friends on Monday, December 15, 2025, from 4 to 6 pm at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1658 Roane State Highway, Harri-man, TN. The funeral will follow at 6pm with Rev. Michael Miller officiating.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to Redeemer Lutheran Church in memory of Felix.

Honorary pallbearers are Major Ooten, Homer Ooten, Garland Ooten, Ronnie Ooten, Mike Ooten, and Jerry Hopkins.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Felix Esco Ooten.

— In Loving Memory —

Billy J. Hurst, 97

United State Navy Veteran, United States Army Veteran, Combat Wounded Korean War Veteran



Mr. Billy J. Hurst, age 97, of Deer Lodge, TN, passed away on Tuesday morning, December 9, 2025. Born on September 11, 1928, he lived a long and meaningful life marked by devotion to family, service to country, and pride in his work.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 51 years,

Margurite; his parents, Dave and Lucy Scott Hurst; brothers Marvin, Ben Jay, Jack, Shalar, Herman, Addison, and Ernie; and sisters Dorene, Irene, Thelma, Ova, and infant Clara.

Billy is survived by special nieces and nephews and their families: Danny Adkins and wife Patty of Monroe, MI; Shelly Holloway and husband Bobby of Spring City, TN; Ann Jones and husband Michael of Deer Lodge; Mike Hurst and wife Judy of Lancing, TN; and special stepson Paul Carnahan and wife Mari of Bradenton, FL. He is also survived by many other cherished family members and friends.

A proud veteran, Billy served honorably in both the U.S. Navy

from 1945–1946 and, later, in the U.S. Army during the Korean War from 1950–1952. During his service, he was wounded in the upper leg and spent six months recovering at a Fort Campbell hospital, which brought his military career to a close.

Following his time in the service, Billy brought the same dedication to his civilian life. He worked for 30 years at Cadillac Motor Co. in Detroit, MI, where he served as a Quality Control Technician. He took great pride in his work and retired in March 1981, after which he and his wife, Marge, enjoyed many years together in Bradenton, FL. After her passing in April 2005, Billy returned home to Deer Lodge, TN, where he lived until his own passing.

The family will receive friends on Sunday, December 14, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg, with the funeral service beginning at 3:00 p.m. Burial will follow at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Deer Lodge, TN. Bro. Michael Jones officiating, and music will be provided by Bobby and Grayson Holloway and Blake McCartt.

In lieu of flowers the family requests that donations be made to the American Legion Post 149 in his honor.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Billy J. Hurst.

Rita Faye Swint, 74



Rita Faye Swint, born March 9, 1951 in Gobey, Tennessee, passed away quietly in her home in Wartburg on December 14, 2025.

She was the beloved daughter of the late Pleas and Maxine Hall. Rita was a devoted and loving daughter, grandmother, nanny, mother, and wife. She had a beautiful soul and was a nurturer and caretaker by nature. To know her was to love her. She kept a beautiful home that was and will remain an oasis to many.

She was a member of Mossy Grove Baptist Church.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Pleas and Maxine Hall and sister Betty Ann Freels.

She is survived by husband of 54 years, Roy Everett Swint, son Justin Swint and wife Nicole, grandchildren Lawson and Lillie Swint, sister Janice Freels and husband Dennis, special niece Lisa Freels, and special great niece Bailey Carter, along with a host of other nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

The family will receive friends Thursday, December 18, 2025 from 4pm-7pm at Schubert's Funeral Home in Wartburg with funeral to follow with Pastor Jim Disney officiating. Graveside will be held at Mossy Grove Baptist Church Cemetery on Friday, December 19, 2025 at 11am.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Rita Faye Swint.

Patricia Lyons, 65



Patricia Lyons, age 65, passed away peacefully at her home in Wartburg on Saturday December 13, 2025. She loved serving on the Morgan County Fair Association and at the Senior Center in Wartburg.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Odie and Irene Garrett; sisters, Mary Catherine and Eva June Weatherford; and brother Wayne Garrett.

She is survived by her husband of 32 years, Billy Lyons; children Anthony (Jessica) Burchfield, Derek (Noelle) Birchfield, and Brandy (Nick) DeMarinis; brother, James Lee Garrett;

grandchildren: Dalton Russell, Madison Burchfield, Melody Burchfield (Gabe) Bunch, Jacob Burchfield, Ethan Burchfield, Kierian DeMarinis, Caleb Potter, and Reann Mashburn; great-grandchildren: Weston, ElleMae, Kaliyah, Kohen, Blake-Lee, and Bowen; and special friend Cydni Burchfield.

The family will receive friends on Tuesday December 16 from 5-7:00 pm with the funeral to immediately follow, Bro TJ Aytes officiating. Graveside service will be held on Wednesday at 11:00 am, Morgan Memorial Garden

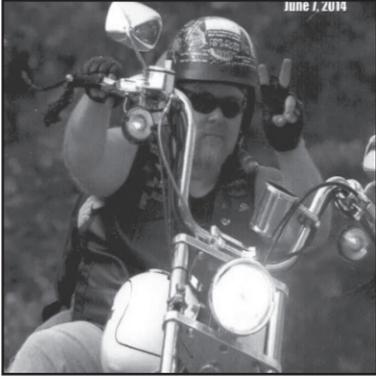
Special thank you to Reann, Melody, and Brandi for all of their help, and to Covenant Hospice for the excellent care.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Patricia Lyons.



— In Loving Memory —

Larry Kenneth Parris Sr.



Larry will also be missed by his favorite running buddies, grandsons Marverick Gene Parris and Mason Kenneth Parris. He could often be seen out with "Mav" and "Moo".

Nobody enjoyed the outdoors more than Larry. He thought there should just be one season...WARM.

Larry Kenneth Parris, Sr. Passed away on November 21, 2025, at his home surrounded by his family.

There are many who will remember seeing him out on his Harley every chance he got.

Waiting for him in Heaven are his parents Vida Jean Wilson Parris can Cecil Edward Parris. Mother-in-law Betty Seabolt and adored granddaughter Dakota Grace Crady. Good friend Dustin Cooper.

A Jack of All Trades, Larry worked construction all his life. Willing to help out a friend or even a stranger every now and then.

He leaves behind the love of his life and high school sweetheart, Lora Seabolt Parris. Together they have three children: Larry Kenneth Parris Jr. (Kenny), Amanda Lynn Parris and Amelia Rochelle Parris.

Heaven is one Biker richer and those left behind are much poorer for it.

Keep it between the Clouds and Enjoy the Ride.

Brother: Garry Cecil Parris and Sister: Mary Jeannie Parris Freeman.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Larry Kenneth Parris, Sr.

Roberta Mehlhorn, 82



Roberta is preceded in death by her parents Foy and Hattie Tilson, twin brother Gerald Wayne, sisters Ruby Pass and Charlotte Boshears, and niece Pam Shaver.

In addition to her husband Philip, she is survived by her daughters Lynn (Peter) Giuffre of Naugatuck, CT and Lisa (Mike) Pierce of Wartburg, sister Shelby Burgess of Dunlap, TN, grandsons Brian and Brandon Lester of the Joyner Community and Eric Giuffre of Naugatuck, CT along with many nieces, nephews, friends, and neighbors.

Roberta Mehlhorn, age 82 of the Joyner Community died peacefully on Wednesday, November 26, 2025, at Life Care of Morgan County. Philip, her loving and devoted husband of 64 years who never left her side.

She was a lifelong member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. She was among the first employees hired at Tennford Weaving in Wartburg until the plant's closing. She then worked with the K-25 Clean-up Project until her retirement. When Roberta wasn't assisting her husband at the family's produce stand, she visited many parts of the United States with her sisters. She will be remembered fondly for her wonderful cooking -- especially her Chicken & Dumplings.

The family will receive friends on Sunday, November 30, 2025, from 1:00-3:00pm. Funeral Services will immediately follow with Pastor David Graves officiating. Interment will be at Morgan Memorial Gardens in Wartburg. Nephews Matthew, Michael, and Joey Mehlhorn, Barry, Mikel and Robbie Burgess, and Joseph Boshears, Jr. will be serving as Pall Bearers.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Roberta Mehlhorn.

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.

Donna Terese Strutton Curl, 68



ter-in-law, Michelle "Shellie" Curl; along with several aunts and uncles.

She is survived by her loving husband of 42 years, Glenn Allen Curl, Sr.; 6 children: Glenn Curl, Jr., Steven Curl, Michael (Autumn) Curl, Amanda (boyfriend Matt) Lemons, Elizabeth "Beth" (Mathew) Luppo, Thomas (Amber) Curl; 4 grandsons Andrew, Johnathon, Caden, and Matthew; 6 granddaughters Paisley, Maddy, Makenzie, Aubrey, Bella, and Alexis; brother Peter Strutton; sister Cathy (Ron) Pierson of Michigan; "adopted" children: Blake (Summer) Turner, Crystal (Jon) Ogle, Will Heath, Felix Colwell, Eddie Polchlopek, Sarah (Bubba) Lemons, and David (Vantisha) Weaver; special

friends: April and Alan Jones, Pat Jones, Don Daugherty, Veronica Vincent; former son-in-law Darren Lemons and so many other extended family and friends.

Donna was born in Chicago, Illinois on April 26, 1957 to Willard Strutton and Rose Carone Strutton. Donna met her husband in 1982 and were married on January 12, 1983. Donna and Glenn moved to Tennessee to be close to her 6 children, and she was a mother to anyone who she was around. She was the kindest woman to everyone that knew her.

She will be greatly missed by her husband, children, and friends. A special thank you to Life Care Center of Morgan County for

their care over the last several months.

The family will receive friends Friday, December 12, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home from 5:00-7:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 7:00 p.m. with Bro. Frank Kirby and Bro. Mike Hammonds.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Donna Terese Strutton Curl.



— In Loving Memory —

Vickie Lynn Adkins, 53



was this foundation that shaped her character and her profound reliance on God. Trusting in Jesus as her Savior, April 2007, her life was a testament to her deep and personal relationship with Jesus, providing her with the strength to overcome any challenge and the grace to love unconditionally.

hugs, cherished stories, and the knowledge that they were deeply loved and cherished.

Vickie will be remembered for her gentle spirit, her generous heart, and the warmth of her smile that lit up every room she entered. She had a unique ability to make everyone feel seen and valued without uttering a word. Her presence will be profoundly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her. Her life was a beautiful example of how one can rise above circumstance and create a life rich in love, faith, and Grace.

ed husband, Jerry Adkins; her children, Keisha Daugherty and Husband Dustin, Preston Adkins and wife Abigail. Her precious grandchildren: Joseph, Olivia, Addilyn, Tucker, and Noah. 5 brothers: John and wife Tammy, Jason and wife Danielle, Jeff and wife Angel, Jerry and wife Angie, & James and wife Aleisha. Special Friends: Chris and Emma Troyer. Also many other loving family members, church family, and friends.

Vickie Lynn Adkins, age 53, of Deer Lodge went home to be with the Lord on December 17, 2025. A loving wife, mother, and grandmother who exemplified strength, love, and unwavering faith.

Vickie dedicated her life to her family, a commitment she cherished above all else. She was the beloved high-school sweetheart and wife of 35 years to Jerry Adkins. Their marriage, a beacon of enduring companionship built on love. As a loving mother to Keisha and Preston, she poured every ounce of her being into ensuring they felt cherished, supported, and guided by a moral compass rooted in faith and love. Her role as a grandmother to six grandchildren was her greatest joy, and she leaves behind a legacy of warm

She is preceded in death by her mother Trudy Berry and husband Frankie; Father Willis Brown; mother and father-in-law J.L. And Dorothy Adkins; grandson Dalton Vann Daugherty; Nephew Isaac Human.

The family will receive friends Saturday, December 20, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home from 5:00-8:00 p.m. Funeral services will be Sunday, at 11:00 a.m. with Pastor, and loving son Bro. Preston Adkins officiating. Interment will follow in the Mt. Hope Cemetery in Deer Lodge.

She is survived by her devot-

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Vickie Lynn Adkins.



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 <p>Was: \$46,299 BEST PRICE: \$11,299 15 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE 4X4 LAREDO, BACKUP CAM, #R7020A</p>	 <p>Was: \$48,662 BEST PRICE: \$13,662 16 JEEP CHEROKEE LIMITED 4X4 BACKUP CAMERA, #R7422B</p>	 <p>Was: \$48,774 BEST PRICE: \$13,774 19 FORD ESCAPE S ENTERTAINMENT CENTER, #R7227A</p>	 <p>Was: \$49,990 BEST PRICE: \$14,990 08 NISSAN 350Z ENTHUSIAST 6SP MANUAL 3.5L V6, 132K, #R7319M</p>	 <p>Was: \$49,992 BEST PRICE: \$14,992 14 TOYOTA SIENNA "3RD ROW" SUNROOF, 147K, #R7762A</p>
 <p>Was: \$20,722 BEST PRICE: \$15,722 15 JEEP WRANGLER SAHARA 4X4, REMOTE START, V6, #R7522B</p>	 <p>Was: \$20,883 BEST PRICE: \$15,883 15 HONDA CR-V TOURING EDT SUNROOF, 34MPG, LTHR, #R7684A</p>	 <p>Was: \$21,557 BEST PRICE: \$16,557 21 JEEP CHEROKEE LATITUDE REAR VIEW CAM #R7683A</p>	 <p>Was: \$21,663 BEST PRICE: \$16,663 19 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5 S IN-CAR WIFI, REMOTE START, #R7560A</p>	 <p>Was: \$21,774 BEST PRICE: \$16,774 21 TOYOTA COROLLA SE 40MPG!! IN-CAR WIFI, #N009714M</p>
 <p>Was: \$24,990 BEST PRICE: \$16,990 20 KIA SPORTAGE S AWD HEATED LTHR, SUNROOF, #D7825M</p>	 <p>Was: \$22,000 BEST PRICE: \$17,000 24 NISSAN VERSA S 9,834 MILES, 40MPG, #N914941A</p>	 <p>Was: \$23,000 BEST PRICE: \$17,000 23 VOLKSWAGEN TAOS S TURBO NICE! #N354189A</p>	 <p>Was: \$23,388 BEST PRICE: \$17,388 24 NISSAN VERSA S 15,786 MILES #N926113A</p>	 <p>Was: \$23,388 BEST PRICE: \$17,388 19 GMC TERRAIN SLT NAVIGATION #R7307A</p>
 <p>Was: \$22,555 BEST PRICE: \$17,555 14 JEEP WRANGLER SPORT ONLY 84K MI, 4WD #R7376A</p>	 <p>Was: \$22,577 BEST PRICE: \$17,557 25 NISSAN ROGUE SPORT S 38,685 MILES #R7375A</p>	 <p>Was: \$22,777 BEST PRICE: \$17,777 23 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5 SV 75K MILES #N344555A</p>	 <p>Was: \$23,199 BEST PRICE: \$18,199 18 JEEP WRANGLER SAHARA 4X4 #R6794B</p>	 <p>Was: \$23,992 BEST PRICE: \$18,992 25 NISSAN SENTRA S ONLY 9.91K MILES #N252529A</p>
 <p>Was: \$24,000 BEST PRICE: \$19,000 24 NISSAN SENTRA S 16K MILES #N382162A</p>	 <p>Was: \$24,000 BEST PRICE: \$19,000 20 NISSAN ROGUE SV NAVIGATION, #R7566A</p>	 <p>Was: \$24,533 BEST PRICE: \$19,533 21 NISSAN ROGUE S 35MPG, BACKUP CAM, #R7771A</p>	 <p>Was: \$24,777 BEST PRICE: \$19,777 23 NISSAN KICKS SV BACKUP CAMERA, #R7499A</p>	 <p>Was: \$24,777 BEST PRICE: \$19,777 24 NISSAN KICKS SR 36MPG, REMOTE START, #N543142A</p>
 <p>Was: \$24,855 BEST PRICE: \$19,855 21 NISSAN SENTRA SR SUNROOF, HEATED SEATS, #R7381A</p>	 <p>Was: \$25,555 BEST PRICE: \$20,555 21 NISSAN ROGUE SPORT S AWD #N444884A</p>	 <p>Was: \$25,772 BEST PRICE: \$20,772 24 FORD ESCAPE ACTIVE REAR V. CAM. #NA53908A</p>	 <p>Was: \$25,773 BEST PRICE: \$20,773 22 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5 SV 37MPG, REMOTE START, #R7536A</p>	 <p>Was: \$25,866 BEST PRICE: \$20,866 23 NISSAN SENTRA SV 31K MI, SUNROOF #R7211A</p>
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Historically Speaking

Bob Benjamin Part One

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Benita Albert brings us another exciting story about someone who graduated from Oak Ridge schools and has an amazing career. Bob Benjamin's story starts with his arrival in Oak Ridge and quickly demonstrates his eager involvement in school activities. It is a refreshing story, for sure. Historically Speaking column readers will take pride in his reflections on our schools and teachers.

As a young girl in the 1950s, I would frequently stargaze in the wide Missouri night sky above our family farm. I remember pondering how many twinkling lights I could see and marveling at the great distance between us, incomprehensible numbers for my basic arithmetic skills at the time.

By the 1970s, I was a teacher of Calculus at Oak Ridge High School (ORHS), sharing infinite limit concepts with eager and brilliant students. And I remembered my young, star-counting days. In 1950, astronomers had estimated the number of stars as approximately 100 billion. In subsequent decades, the star count grew via advances in technology such as radio astronomy, more powerful optical telescopes, and space travel. The count now ranges between 100 to 400 billion, varying estimations based on parameters such as luminosity, mass, and size.

Now in the 2020s, I have discovered that a former student of mine has "reached for the stars" in his career, not just metaphorically, but also literally. Bob Benjamin is an ORHS Class of 1983 alumnus who has tirelessly worked to figure out what the Milky Way looks like. In a February 2024 Scientific American article, "Our Turbulent Galaxy," Bob is quoted: "The work isn't easy, because we're inside the galaxy and we can't see it from the outside, but astronomers have ingenious workarounds."

Part Two of Bob's story will reveal more of the exciting work in which he is involved as an astrophysicist and consultant for NASA. This Part One feature will reach back into his Oak Ridge roots and follow his educational path to astronomical discoveries.

John and Betty Benjamin arrived in Oak Ridge with sons, Bob and Jeff, in the fall of 1976. John began work at the Hollifield Heavy Ion Research Facility at the Oak Ridge National Lab. Bob described his father's work as maintaining the ion source and vacuum systems for the new particle accelerator. Bob and Jeff enrolled in Willow Brook Elementary in the sixth and fifth grades, respectively. The family became active in St. Stephen's Episcopal Church where John helped as a leader for Boy Scout Troop 128 and Betty was active as a church volunteer.

Bob recalled that the Ford/Carter Presidential election campaign was underway in the fall 1976, and he speculated that his support for Ford was perhaps due to his parents' Midwest origins. He said that presidential choice put him at the minority table during mock elections at his new school. Bob's younger years were spent in Long Island, New York, and in Connecticut, but he found there were many other 'transplanted northerner' classmates in Oak Ridge. He fondly remembers learning about Tennessee folk culture via Foxfire books and taking a school-sponsored overnight trip to the Smoky Mountains and visiting Cades Cove.

During his first year at Robertsville Junior High, Bob grew twelve inches. He wrote, "One advantage of that rapid growth spurt was that I

suddenly had the longer legs for running, and I started track and cross-country in eighth grade at the urging of my best friend. In ninth grade I finished the Smoky Mountain Marathon on a snowy winter day. I was the first-place (and only!) participant in my age group. After that event, Coaches Lynn Burkey and Keys Fillhauer interviewed me on a community access TV show, which makes for hilarious (and still embarrassing) viewing."



Bob Benjamin when he was in Oak Ridge High School

that my ninth-grade math class was only five students. That class was memorable just because of its size and the freedom we had."

Bob described his ORHS years as action packed both in and outside of the classroom. The first year, his sophomore year, was special for the boys' cross country team's state championship in the fall. He wrote, "I was only junior varsity, but it was still fun. This was rapidly eclipsed by the achievements of the football team's state championship. As a reward, there was a community drive to send the football team to the Orange Bowl that winter. The football players got their own bus, but the cross-country team also got to tag along in a van. With Coach McNamee, I continued to run track and cross-country always hovering at the boundary between the junior varsity and varsity until I broke through my senior year in cross-country."

Later, in his undergraduate years at Carleton College, Bob continued to run track and cross-country in their NCAA Division III league. He reported, "I finally had a breakout moment where I set a personal best in the 1500m and qualified for conference finals."

Asked to recall his ORHS classes, Bob was full of praise for his teachers. French class with Sylvia Countess left a lasting impression, in particular, memorizing "La Marseillaise" which he says he still can sing. He wrote, "I know the rules for writing the perfect essay, even if I break them from time to time, thanks to English teachers Ann Johnson and Carol Yoakley." His sense of humor comes out in memories from science classes with teachers Eddie Anderson and Jackie Jacoby. He mused, "I recall using my highly fashionable calculator wristwatch with stylus to work out physics problems." And he praised teachers, Gene Pickel and John Shedd, saying, "They both excelled in making history come alive in very different ways."

Bob continued, "Apart from classes and sports, Model United Nations and the associated trips to Washington D.C. were also a great experience for me. I still have a fondness for the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space."

"Although all these ORHS classes enriched my life and color my thinking to this day, the math classes turned out to be pivotal, particularly Calculus in my junior and senior years. When the teacher, Benita Albert, was absent during my senior year, she would ask me to run tutorial sessions for my peers who were taking Calculus. I discovered that I liked teaching. Although at that point, I didn't know what I wanted to do in life—so many options! I discovered that I enjoyed both learning and teaching math that last

year in high school. And when I graduated, Mrs. Albert made me promise that I would take a math class my first semester. Things snowballed from there."

When Bob enrolled in Carleton College, he left his academic options open as to a major field of study. He wrote, "Up until the end of my sophomore year, I was equivocating between math/physics and political science/international relations, taking the required classes in both areas. But after a political science summer program in Geneva, Switzerland, where I wrote my term paper on CERN (the European physics laboratory), I settled on math/physics. I graduated magna cum laude with a double major in math and physics with 'distinction' in both majors. You had to do a summary research paper for each area. I did my paper on pulsars(physics) and Fast Fourier Transforms (math). Both of those ended up being useful in my future career."

I asked Bob why he chose to pursue an undergraduate mathematics major.

He answered, "I chose math as a major because I liked each math class more than the previous one. I remember writing letters back to Mrs. Albert about my math class experiences. It helped that all my math professors were colorful characters, as well as being committed to teaching; I was never bored. But I also felt that the most fun part of math was being able to apply it to real-world applications. Once I was introduced to the cool parts of physics-like special relativity and quantum mechanics-I was hooked. And then I took a single astrophysics class with Prof. Joel Weisberg that really captured my imagination; the idea that you could write down mathematical descriptions that could explain how stars, galaxies, and even the whole universe worked was mind-blowing."

"The summer before my senior year at Carleton, I did a campus summer project on geo-hydrology with math professor Loren Haskins while contemplating my future. I spent that entire summer vacillating between whether I should go to graduate school in physics or in astronomy/astrophysics. I wasn't sure what grad school was all about, but I knew that I wanted to learn more. One August morning, I woke up and just decided: astronomy. After four years of Minnesota winters-and with a tinge of homesickness for Tennessee-I decided to go to graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin."

The summer before grad school found Bob back home in Oak Ridge and completing an internship at ORNL working in geo-hydrology with Dr. Laura Toran. He left Oak Ridge in August of 1987, unaware of how another 'star' would intervene in his move to Austin. Bob said he set out for grad school in his '74 Dodge Dart which was loaded full of all his possessions. A planned overnight stop in Memphis was thwarted by the tenth anniversary observance of the death of Elvis Presley. He said, "Every hotel for miles in all directions was booked. I had to drive well into the night, and deep into Arkansas, to finally find a place to stay."

Bob made it to Austin the next day, and he began a 7-year program in grad school, ultimately completing a PhD in astronomy in 1994. Post-doctoral studies furthered his research interests in the inter-stellar gas of the Milky Way, the fuel source for the next generation of stars.

Part Two of this story will take us to the stars, to the ever changing and evolving Milky Way Galaxy with Bob Benjamin as our guide.

Thank you, Benita, for bringing us this insight into a student who obviously enjoyed his time in Oak Ridge schools. Reading about how he felt about the teachers was a compliment to the entire school's educational system.

Wartburg Youth Club Cheerleaders Clean Sweep in 2025 TVAA Cheer Competition



Crickets: Saylor Hawn, Lainey Jobe, Eloise LaPine
EllieAnna Susak, Jordan Underwood
Coaches: Tiffany Hawn, Heather Susak &
Jamie Underwood



Hoppers: Caroline Armes, Hadley Aytes, Sadie Barnett, Avie Beasley
Sadie Cross, Henleigh Diden, Khloe Hughes, Sadie Hughes, Mia Iler
Avalynn Leopper, Aleah Thomas, Laikynn Treadway, Jaycee Underwood
Coaches: Jessica Armes & Kelsey Aytes



Cutters: Brynlee Bunch, Chloe Daniels
Aria Davis, Mila Fritts
Alivia Gibson, Dakota Green
Paige Hamby, Sydney Hamby
Ariana Hawn, Lyla Landrum
Emily Melhorn, Addilynn Phillips
Kinsley Samsel, Paisley Shepherd
Brinlee Strand, Anna Vanwittenburg
Langston West, Chloe Williams
Daisy Williamson, Harper Wilson
Olivia Wilson, & Lana Wray

Coaches: Milicent Fritts, Taylor Hamby &
Elizabeth Keathley

The Wartburg Youth Club cheerleaders brought out the brooms Saturday, November 8, at Roane State for a clean sweep in the 2025 TVAA Cheer Competition.

After a tie-breaker performance, the Wartburg Cricket cheerleaders brought home the big trophy, finishing 1st place! They set the tone for the day and performed very well, cheering like seasoned pros!

The Hopper cheer squad brought the energy as they cheered and danced themselves to another 1st place finish! They were on point and came away with a big trophy!

The Cutter cheer squad assumed the pressure of the day after watching the younger Bulldog cheer squads perform! They did not disappoint! They performed a complex routine to near perfection, securing the clean sweep for the Bulldogs and taking home the 1st place trophy!

We are blessed with the best community around! Our fans came out & supported our cheer squads all season long & competition was no different! Until next year...
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Acts 26



Melvin Howard

(Acts 26:1-3) Paul's opening remarks: following Agrippa's opening statement, Paul is granted permission to speak. He expresses his happiness at being able to make this "defense." He commends the king in that he is an "expert" in legal and ethical matters pertaining to the Hebrew people. He thus begs the ruler to listen patiently and analytically as he explains his history and his involvement in this controversial situation.

(Acts 26:4-8) background and charge: the apostle sketches his history. His past life was too well-known to need elaboration--an assertion he would not have made were it not so (22:3; Gal. 1:14). He had a distinguished resume. He was known as a Pharisee, the "straitest" sect of Judaism. In fact, he is not on trial for going against Hebrew law and tradition, but due to the reality that he clung to the "hope of the promise made by God unto our fathers" (v.6)--which hope the tribes of Israel continued to embrace. And what exactly was that? There were disputers in that very audience (the plural "you" (v.8) who contended it was "incredible" (unbelievable) that the dead would ever be raised.

(Acts 26:9-11) Paul, the persecutor of Christianity: the apostle will make the point that he had not been a lifelong supporter of Christian faith. Indeed, he had labored under the strong moral conviction that he ought to vigorously oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth (the Lord's entire doctrinal platform). He persecuted the saints in Jerusalem, having many of them thrown into prisons by the official authority he had obtained. ("Saints" were not the celebrated dead, as Catholicism maintains). When Christians were put to death, Paul had "voted" against them. The term does not conclusively establish that Paul had been a member of the Sanhedrin; it may merely signify endorsement. It does show the apostle's moral culpability. When Christians came into synagogues to teach, Paul would abuse them on site and persecute them, attempting to make them blaspheme the faith. He pursued them unto foreign cities (this is broader than Damascus (9:1).

(Acts 26:12-18) the Damascus experience: the apostle now recounts the case of his conversion (9:1; 22:5). (a) He tells of the great light that shone about him, brighter than the sun at noon. (b) He and his companions fell to the ground, and Jesus spoke, asking why Saul continued to persecute him. (c) Christ identified himself and stated that his appearance was to appoint Saul as his minister. (d) He implied that Saul would be persecuted but that the Lord would deliver him from both Jew and Gentile adversaries. (e) His mission would be to proclaim the illuminating message of Christ whereby remission of sins might be obtained. (f) Those obedient, by exercising faith in Christ, would be set aside (sanctified) ((Eph. 5:26) for service and have the hope of an eternal "inheritance".

(Acts 26:19-20) Paul's response to the Lord's call: the apostle affirms that he was not "disobedient" (unpersuaded and unyielding) to the Lord who spoke to him in that vision. He proclaimed the Savior's gospel, first in Damascus (9:20-22) and then in Jerusalem (9:28-29). His influence was felt throughout Judaea and even into Gentile territory. He proclaimed repentance and turning to God. Repentance reflected a change of heart and life; "turning" was accomplished when he was immersed (2:38; 3:19; 22:16). A life corresponding to repentance was then expected (v. 20).

(Acts 26:21-23) reaction of the Jews: the motive behind Jewish persecution was neither supported by fact nor was it sincere; it was fueled by doctrinal hate. This was the reason they seized him in the temple (21:28-29) and repeatedly attempted to kill him. But God, through his mysterious work of providence, delivered his faithful disciple (21:31). He thus stood fast and taught both the "small and great" (as perceived by society), proclaiming only what the Old Testament had declared (v. 22).

The phraseology here is interesting. Paul says that Jesus "first by the resurrection of the dead should..." The text literally suggests that Christ, as the first person resurrected out of the dead (plural--dead ones), should proclaim light, both to the people (Jews) and to the Gentiles. These facts come to the forefront: (a) Jesus was raised from among the dead. (b) He was the first so raised (raised permanently, not to die again (Rom. 6:9). (c) Others (implied by "first") also would

be raised ultimately (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). (d) The resurrected Christ, in some fashion (indirectly), would provide illumination for all mankind. Earlier, the apostle affirmed that Jesus had commissioned him to "open the eyes" of both "the people" and "the Gentiles" that they might "turn from darkness to light" (v. 17-18). Paul clearly was claiming he was an instrument of the Lord to accomplish that.

(Acts 26:24-29) the response to Paul's defense: as Paul continued his defense, he was interrupted by an outcry from Festus. "Paul, your great learning is driving you crazy!" He acknowledged the apostle's brilliance; he just despised his message. When one cannot handle evidence, emotions frequently erupt. And he could not deal with Paul's "words of truth and soberness" (v. 25). Courteous even when under fire, the apostle fires back to the "most excellent" procurator. The king (Agrippa) knows very well of these things, for they were not done in secret. The facts are available and checkable for anyone honest enough to search for truth, as Luck did in his investigation (Lk. 1:1-4).

The apostle then launched a direct inquiry toward the ruler: "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?" The king is listening to Paul's case, and yet the apostle is interrogating the "judge". The tables are turned! Surely Agrippa, as a ruler who supervised the Jewish temple and appointed the high priests, would believe the Old Testament prophets. He was hardly in a position to say, "No, I don't believe them." Before the king could respond, Paul supplies the answer: "I know that you believe." "Know" is a strong term, signifying a "clear... mental perception." It is scarcely legitimate to contend that Paul here pays a compliment he knows is not true.

Agrippa's response is subject to much controversy and diversity in translation. Is the answer a question or an affirmative? It is uttered sincerely or sarcastically? Some expositors view it as a cynical quip. Perhaps the best way to get a grip on the meaning of Agrippa's words, as reflected above, is to determine how Paul viewed them. He replied: "I would to God, whether with little or much persuasion, not just you, but all those who are listening this day, might become such as I am (a Christian), with the exception of these chains." The apostle put a favorable interpretation on the king's words. I find it hard to express a view that contradicts him!

(Acts 26:30-32) the disposition of the case: the dignitaries arose and left the room. When in private, they discussed the case. Not one word of criticism surfaces. They were not disposed to accept the gospel (so far as the record reveals), but they were fair-minded. Agrippa II was not of the same bloody spirit as his ancestors. The group kept saying: "This man is not practicing anything worthy of death or bonds." Agrippa commented to Festus: "This man might have been set loose, had he not appealed to Caesar." The grammar suggests that, potentially, the apostle might have enjoyed permanent freedom had he not entered his appeal to "the supreme court." But as it is, the case must go forward to Caesar.

Some have wondered why there are three records of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts, consuming so much space when combined. There is ample reason for such. (a) The conversion of Paul is one of the most significant events of Christian history. Aside from the death and resurrection of Christ himself, nothing eclipses this event in importance. (b) Each of the three accounts (chapters 9, 22, and 26) has its own point of emphasis. Chapter nine is Luke's historical record--based upon his investigation--and his transcription under the guidance of the Spirit of God. Chapter twenty-two is Paul's passionate defense of his conversion to a people whom he loves almost as much as his own soul (Rom. 9:1-3). Chapter twenty-six is a defense of his ministry before two legal authorities, both of whom acknowledged him to be innocent of all charges made against him. These three chapters are a sweet trio of crucial testimony on behalf of the integrity of Paul's ministry and, ultimately, the credibility of Christianity.

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