



## Bert Hayes

October 1, 1931 - January 9, 2019

Dr. Bert Hayes was born on October 1, 1931 in Eagle Grove, Georgia; the eleventh of twelve children of Martha E. Olbon Hayes and William Albertus Hayes. He died peacefully at home in Gulf Shores, Alabama on January 9, 2019.

Bert is survived by former wife and caregiver Vickie Hayes; son Dr. John Hayes and wife Debbie; son Russell Hayes; daughter Martha Hayes Daniel; stepdaughter Amanda Owens and husband Jeff; grandchildren Chandler Hayes and wife Laura, Cayce Hayes, Leila Owens, Isabella Owens, and Harrison Owens; great-grandchildren Clover Hayes and Indigo Hayes.

A private family graveside service was held on Saturday, January 12. A memorial service and celebration of life for family and friends will be held at 2:00 pm on Saturday, January 26, 2019 at the First Presbyterian Church in Foley, Alabama.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to your favorite animal rescue or to The Haven in Fairhope, Alabama.

### Dr. Bert Hayes – Brief Biography

Born the eleventh of twelve children to Martha E. Olbon Hayes and William Albertus Hayes on October 1, 1931 in a sharecropper's shack in Eagle Grove, GA (located in the Georgia Piedmont), Bert was naturally inquisitive and the

influence of siblings, parents and the environment was the seed that began his quest to learn and to teach others. The family experienced hard times and often found it difficult to feed the family during and after the Great Depression, yet the fields, springs and creeks (the only “running” water) provided nourishment to the mind in his earliest years.

His older siblings naturally taught Bert everything they were learning in school before he even began grammar school in Royston, GA. Some of his early teachers were also key to whetting his curiosity about the world. Eventually, Bert’s father was able to purchase a farm in Franklin Springs, GA, allowing the family to put sharecropping behind them. Still, life was a struggle, but somehow, at age 16 and newly graduated from high school, Bert took his diploma in hand and walked/hitchhiked thirty-five miles to Toccoa Falls College to enroll. He took a job at Lake Louise, a conference hotel, the first of many, many jobs of all kinds between classes and in summers in order to pay his tuition.

He took advantage of every opportunity including working with a school in Pinar del Rio, Cuba, automotive work in Kenosha, WI and various positions all over the U.S. He studied anthropology and sociology in Pennsylvania, theology in Texas, and eventually earned his Ph.D. in Hebrew and Cognate Studies at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, OH and Jerusalem, Israel in 1963. He participated in field archeology in Israel with Dr. Nelson Glueck, and other notable academics and enjoyed visiting much of the world throughout his life.

While teaching at Indiana University, he received the fateful call from Athens College, a small Methodist Liberal Arts College (now Athens State University) located in Athens, AL and with family in tow, he began a career which spanned several decades. Professor of Humanities, he also served at different times as Dean of Students, where he worked closely with the fraternities and sororities on campus, later becoming President of the Southern Division of Delta Tau Delta. He served at one point as Dean of the Graduate School and retired, Professor Emeritus.

Republican in a State full of Democrats, he ran for Governor of Alabama in 1978. Defeated by fellow-republican Guy Hunt in the primary that year, Bert remained actively involved and enjoyed political discourse throughout his life. Though retired, he spent years serving Habitat for Humanity, Limestone Co. (AL) chapter, writing for the Gulf Coast Newspapers and serving friends and family in so many ways. Piloting his own plane for several years, he enjoyed aviation and though a civil aviation pilot, he loved spending time with the "Ancient Aviators," a group in Gulf Shores who were primarily retired military. He never, ever met a stranger nor forgot anyone and had friends around the world. A deep love for animals began when he made pets of the farm animals. He rescued the majority of his pets and worried about those not adopted to loving homes. In the most recent years of his life he was working on a book of special remembrances of his pets and those of others. Proud of his family and especially his grandchildren (who called him Pape!), he published biographies primarily to ensure that they would know and remember his experiences and always be open to their own opportunities. He was truly a Renaissance Man.

Arrangements are to Cason Funeral Service in Foley Alabama

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

JAN 12. 11:00 AM (CT)

Wynn Cemetery  
17100 County Road 73  
Summerdale, AL 36580

# Tribute Wall

BB

“ *Dr. Bert Hayes was instrumental in my then-husband, Cuthbert Mutsiwegota's education and general well being at Athens State back in the 1970s. From the first months I knew Cuthbert at Indiana University soon after that, he made it clear how important Bert and several others in Athens and Huntsville had been to his success and feeling of well being in Athens. As a Rhodesian foreign minority student, Cuthbert had plenty of adjustments to make, and he stressed then and for decades after what an important, positive role Bert had in that. I gathered Dr Hayes was a unique, very special individual. I only spoke to him once, by phone, in the early 2000s, but could sense his warmth and gentle nature for myself even under those circumstances. I've only just learned of Bert's passing; I know Cuthbert, in Zimbabwe, will be greatly saddened to learn of this. My condolences to the family of this dear, good man. - Brenda Bonine, Tucson, Arizona.*

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**Brenda Bonine** - July 29, 2019 at 09:55 PM

VH

*Thank you, Brenda, for your very kind words. I hope you and yours are doing well.*

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**Vickie Hayes** - December 05, 2019 at 01:04 PM

MD

“ *We are truly saddened to have just now heard of Bert's passing! He was not only a customer of ours for many, many years, but also considered a dear friend! His memory will live on with us in the autographed copies of his book as well as many photos we have on file stored in our archives. We are certain that his infinite wit and wisdom will continue to impact scores of people as he settles into his position as a new "Guardian Angel" above! The Printing Zone Family (Marv, Eydie, Matt & Becky)*

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**Matt Drouillard** - March 06, 2019 at 04:28 PM

VH

*Thank you, Matt. He loved you guys.*

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**Vickie Hayes** - April 27, 2019 at 05:57 PM

SB

“ *I met Bert in 1981 at the Wallace State Community College Aviation School Airport. I was a work study student there at the time. Bert encouraged me to attend Athens State after I graduated from Wallace State. I eventually came to Athens State and Bert became my all time favorite teacher, mentor and life time friend. Without Bert and Vicki's help and encouragement I wouldn't have graduated from Athens or have ever gone on to graduate school. They helped take care of my daughter Lauren so I could study or go to classes. We even lived with them for a short time. Bert is Lauren's Godfather. He taught her to drive the "Purple Grape" car on the airport runways in Gulf Shores. Bert is the reason I became a teacher and he is my motivation to help future generations see their potential for personal growth and success. We have some wonderful memories to hold dear when we think of Bert. We will miss him. RIP Share Cropper's Son. -*

*Stacey Hooper Brunner*

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**Stacey Brunner** - January 25, 2019 at 04:16 PM

RP

“ Back in the late 1950's -- my young wife Alta and I -- along with a very young son, were living in Cincinnati, Ohio -- close to one of the larger local Universities, where we were both working students at the time. Directly across the street from our apartment -- lived Bert Hayes with his young family. One bright sunny day while my wife was casually playing with our young son, Bert politely introduced himself, and thereafter began to greatly inspire and impress my young family. From then onward, we grew into a deep loving, caring relationship between our families and his, that has since endured well over half a century. And that one particular very special earlier initial encounter of Bert offering a friendly hello and a sincere outreach and desire to know more about others, has greatly encouraged and motivated our own family from Bert's noble example, to always remember a stranger is just a friend we haven't met yet, and has encouraged us to meet and love so many others as well. We shall long treasure and always remember the wonderful memories we have shared with Bert and his beautiful family, and thank him greatly for helping us to make our lives better and more meaningful -- because he was here. Rest in peace dear friend, and may God Bless always. Ralph & Alta Profitt

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**Ralph Profitt** - January 18, 2019 at 05:55 PM

MD

*And God Bless the Profitt family. Dad loved you all. Martha*

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**Martha Hayes Daniel** - January 18, 2019 at 11:50 PM

MD

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Martha Hayes Daniel** - January 16, 2019 at 06:47 PM



“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Amanda Owens - January 16, 2019 at 09:42 AM

MA

“ Bert was one of the most gentle, caring people I have ever known. We taught together at ASU. He was a good friend, full of kindness and gentle humor. My sincerest sympathy to his family.

Mark Anderson - January 15, 2019 at 10:22 PM

LD

“ Oh, I want to say something but I don't even know where to start! What a terrific human! My family and I send our deepest sympathy to Bert's family...I feel like he was a part of mine. When he met my daddy for the first time, they shook hands like long lost friends and forged a friendship stronger than granite! And no doubt, it was that way with everyone Bert reached out to connect with during his visit to this planet. He is absolutely the salt of the ancient earth, scattering his footsteps on faraway places and right into the very hearts of all who knew him. Bert, I'll be looking for you in the next dimension, friend! Say hello to Daddy for me! Love you always, Linda Daniel & family



Linda Daniel - January 15, 2019 at 04:46 PM





“ *Fruit Abounds was purchased for the family of Bert Hayes .*



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January 15, 2019 at 04:31 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



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**Linda Daniel** - January 15, 2019 at 04:03 PM



*Truly a gentleman and friend!  
Dave A. Weiner*

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**dave weiber** - January 18, 2019 at 12:53 PM



“ *I first met Dr. Hayes in the early 80s. He was one of the players in "The Cricket on the Hearth" at Athens State. A year later I was a student at Athens St., a "Library Lizard," and so I saw him pass through often and he always had a friendly word. One day he came through with a little girl, carrying her doll! I thought that was very kind of him. He enjoyed a good joke and shared the best of them. Several of us thought of him as "St. Bert." It wouldn't be until much later that I learned of his very interesting past, before Athens State. What a treasure! He will be remembered well. I'm glad his life touched mine, even briefly in the grand scheme of things.*

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**Donna Reagan** - January 15, 2019 at 03:27 PM



“ I attended Athens College between 1968 and 1972. Dr Bert was always there when you needed him the most. I am sure he would have provided me bail money if I asked. Thankfully I never had to ask. I always said to him and my fellow students 'Dr. Bert is the coolest dude on campus.' He corresponded with my son, air force, when he served in Afghanistan . I will miss him dearly. Charles Shollenberger class of 72.

Charles Shollenberger - January 15, 2019 at 10:02 AM

JH

Bert Hayes was a good, caring man. As dean he put up with a lot of stuff when I was there. He was very visible on campus and always made time for you if it was needed. He was well liked and never feared. He will be missed by many. Joe Helm class of 72

Joe Helm - January 15, 2019 at 04:15 PM

BH

“ Barbara J. Howe sent a virtual gift in memory of Bert Hayes



Barbara J. Howe - January 12, 2019 at 09:50 AM

RL

“ Date of picture-2/2017. Great picture of him. He will be missed. Love and Prayers to you all.



Rene Love - January 12, 2019 at 09:03 AM