



Dr W Stuart Harris

October 4, 1933 - October 3, 2017

Dr. W. Stuart Harris, a well-known and much beloved historian, author, teacher and professional storyteller, passed away peacefully at his home in Lillian, AL on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, one day before his 84th birthday. Dr. Harris was born to William Guy and Frances Elizabeth (Stuart) Harris of Birmingham, AL on October 4, 1933. He was married to Barbara King Cooper of Mobile Alabama on August 24, 1956.

Dr. Harris graduated from the University of Alabama with a B.S. degree in Education in 1957. After serving in the Army for several years, he returned to the University of Alabama and completed his Masters degree in 1966 and his Doctorate degree in 1970.

Dr. Harris had a long and notable career as both a teacher and author. He began his career in the Mountain Brook school system and Birmingham University School. He moved to Marion, Alabama in 1967 as a History professor and (eventual) chairman of the History Department at Marion Military Institute. He was also a History professor at Judson College in Marion, Alabama. Dr. Harris had many honors and professional affiliations spanning his career, including the Colonial Wars Teacher Award, Teacher of the Year Award (multiple years), and acceptance for listing in the Outstanding Educators of America. He was a member of both the Alabama and Mississippi Historical Societies, Alabama Genealogical Society, and National Speleological Society. Dr. Harris was a well-known storyteller, and travelled the south performing his stories, most notably his ghost stories. His lifelong

hobbies included collecting and playing antique banjos, exploring ruins of long forgotten towns and villages, exploring charted and uncharted caves, locating and diving on steamboat wrecks in Alabama rivers, researching and writing about Alabama ghost stories, and conducting thousands of hours of research in libraries, private collections, courthouses and city halls. He was also active in Civil War Reenactments, and was cast as an extra in several wars scenes in the 1980s mini series, *The North and the South*.

Dr. Harris was the author of many books, including *A Short History of Marion, Perry County, Alabama; Its Homes and Its Buildings* (1970); *Things That Go Bump in the Night* (1970); *Dead Towns of Alabama* (1977); *Alabama Place Names* (1982); *A History of Alabama; a Secondary Course* (1986); *Perry County Heritage, Volume I & II* (1991); and *Haunted Southland Tales*, co-written with Cara Swann (2013.) He also self-published over 100 volumes of *Southern Historical Records*, and *Steamboat Wrecks of Alabama*. His widely acclaimed *Dead Towns of Alabama* became a standard reference work for Alabama historians, and *The Alabama Review* stated that his “diligence and insight have produced a work that will have lasting significance for all students of Alabamiana.”

Dr. Harris was predeceased by his parents, Guy and Frances Harris, and by his beloved eldest daughter, Barbara (Lee) Crocker. He is survived by his wife, Barbara Cooper Harris, and three children, William Stuart Harris, Jr (Bill), Cathy Harris Stockes, and Jenny Harris Malone. His sister Elizabeth Ann (Libby) Ward. He is also survived by seven grandchildren, Adam Gordon Crocker, Guy Stuart Harris, Joshua (Josh) Lee Crocker, Kyle Green Harris, Elizabeth Ann Lorino, Melanie Stuart Watson, and Mary Stuart Lorino; and three great grandchildren, Madelyn Anne Crocker, Addison Lee Crocker, and Annie Stuart Harris.

A private family service will be held at a later date.

Arrangements are by Cason Funeral Service in Foley Al

Tribute Wall

RA

“ A great man and teacher, who nurtured in me my love for history that continues to this day when he taught me at Marion Military Institute from 1978-1980. I think my final conversation with him was just before I graduated from Marion in May of 1980, when he congratulated me on gaining acceptance into George Washington University. Russell Allen, MMI Class of 1980.

Russell Allen - February 15, 2018 at 01:53 PM

JM

“ 3 files added to the album Harris Family



Jenny Malone - October 09, 2017 at 08:38 AM

JM

“ 3 files added to the album Harris Family pictures



Jenny Malone - October 09, 2017 at 08:36 AM

JM

“ 3 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Jenny Malone - October 09, 2017 at 08:34 AM

WM

“ *I had Dr. Harris as a professor at Marion Military Institute for more than one class (1983-1985). Absolutely one of my favorite teachers. His encyclopedic knowledge of Alabama and Civil War history was astounding. I recall his lectures to this day and frequently cite them. Rest in peace sir, your impact is profound and far reaching. Thank you.*

*Wynn Matthews
MMI Class of 1985*

Wynn Matthews - October 07, 2017 at 03:39 PM

BA

“ I had Dr Harris for 11th Grade History at MMI. I have always said that he was by far my favorite teacher throughout my entire educational experience. I looked forward to his class and the adventures that it held. In fact there was a group of us cadets who would make a bee line to his office prior to class to talk with him. These talks left a tremendous impact on me. I remember when my parents came up to MMI for a visit I could not wait to introduce them to Dr Harris.

Dr Harris touched so many people in such a positive way. I know personally his influence helped to mold me into what I am. He was a remarkable man.

My prayers and thoughts are with his family.

*Bob Adams
MMI High School Class of 1979
USMA 1983*

Bob Adams - October 06, 2017 at 11:11 AM

BM

“ 2 files added to the album New Album Name



Bob McCrary - October 05, 2017 at 09:08 PM

LT

Barbara, I am very sorry to learn of Stuart's death. I pray that you and your family are comforted by our Lord. May God bless you all.

Leon Trotter

Leon Trotter - October 09, 2017 at 11:57 AM