



Thomas Joseph Lyerly

May 30, 1928 - March 23, 2018

Mr. Thomas Joseph “Joe” Lyerly, 89, of Granite Quarry, NC passed away Friday, March 23, 2018 at Novant Health Rowan Medical Center.

Born May 30, 1928 in Rowan County, NC to the late William Herbert Lyerly and Mattie McCombs Lyerly, he attended Frank B. John School until 1938. After the family moved to Granite Quarry, he attended and graduated from Granite Quarry High School in May 1945. Following high school graduation, he attended Catawba College and graduated from that institution with a Pre-Medical Degree in 1950.

Joe began his teaching career in August 1950 as a 7th grade teacher at Faith Elementary School. He taught at Faith for one month, at which time he was drafted by the Army and served two years as Senior Medical Aid Man 101st Infantry Medical Company.

Upon his discharge from the Army, Joe returned to Granite Quarry and accepted a teaching position at Faith Elementary School. He then accepted a position at Landis High School and taught Biology and Chemistry in 1956. In late summer of 1956, he began teaching Biology and Chemistry at Boyden High School until the end of the 1965 school year. At this time, he accepted the Assistant Principal’s job at East Rowan High School. Upon a successful tenure as Assistant Principal, he became the Principal of East Rowan High School. He remained in that position for eight years. He then became Co-director for Resource Students for the Rowan County Schools for a period of one year. He was based at North Rowan High School during this time in his

career. He accepted the Principalship at West Rowan High School and was at West for a period of eleven years.

From 1984-2001, Joe served as Assistant Principal at Granite Quarry Elementary School and at Faith Elementary School.

Joe was awarded an AB Degree in Science & Teaching (1945), M.A. Degree in Administration and Biology from Appalachian State University (1956) and ED. Specialist Degree from Appalachian State University (1977).

Thomas Joseph Lyerly's professional educational career covered over five decades. During this time, he provided leadership and guidance to an infinite number of students and professional educators. He loved his contacts with students and teachers and considered them his friends.

He was a life-long faithful member of the First United Church of Christ in Salisbury and has served on the Church Council, Primary Sunday School teacher, Youth Director among others. He was a member of the church's choir for more than 50 years and for many years sang with the Rowan-Salisbury Choral Society. He has also served the Granite Quarry Civitan Club in various capacities and was a charter member of Granite Quarry Jaycees. He belonged to the American Legion Post 448.

In recent years he has made his home at Oak Park Retirement Center and considers the residents there to be his very dear friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, William H. Lyerly; sisters, Kathryn Lyerly Cope, Rachael Lyerly Benson, Alice Jean Lyerly; brother-in-law, Vernon Benson and P.J. Cope; nieces, Carolyn Cope Leonard and Robin Benson Callahan.

Survivors include brother, James E. Lyerly and wife Bettie, nieces, Bonnie Benson Shaw, whom he considered a daughter, along with Candy Medinger, Kathy Isenhour, Tracey Hutchins, Karen Keen, Lauri Gasell; nephews, PJ "Sonny" Cope, Randy Benson and Jay Lyerly; along with several great and great-great nieces and nephews. He enjoyed his friendship with his cousins, Brenda M Maready and James McCombs.

Funeral service will be held at 2PM Sunday, March 25 at First United Church of Christ, conducted by Rev. Carol Hallman, resident pastor. The family will receive friends in the Fellowship Hall from 12-1:45PM. Burial will take place at Rowan Memorial Park following the service.

Memorials may be made to First United Church of Christ, 207 West Horah St., Salisbury, NC 28144.

Summersett Funeral Home is serving the Lyerly family. Online condolences may be made at www.summersettfuneralhome.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 25. 12:00 PM - 1:45 PM (ET)

First United Church of Christ
207 W. Horah St.
Salisbury, NC 28144

Service

MAR 25. 2:00 PM (ET)

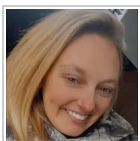
First United Church of Christ
207 W. Horah St.
Salisbury, NC 28144

Tribute Wall

MY

“ Joe always shared a kind word and a bright smile with everyone. He was a wonderful person and a great educator and will be missed by many. Prayers for his family to find comfort and peace in the coming days.

Martha Yost Yates-Bolmon - March 25, 2018 at 04:21 PM



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Caylan Yeatts - March 24, 2018 at 02:21 PM

SJ

“ Joe was a family friend. One of my memories is watching the moon walk at his beach house! He was a fine man and such a gentleman!

Sandra Barringer Johnson - March 24, 2018 at 10:29 AM

NC

“ The best chemistry teacher ever!

Nancy Wharton Caperton - March 24, 2018 at 09:02 AM

SY

“ Bonnie, so sorry to hear of Joe's passing. I have such fond memories of him and know what a special friend he was to Mom.

Sherry Lieurance Young - March 23, 2018 at 09:12 PM

JM

Because of Mr. Lyerly, I became an Educator.

John Morgan - March 25, 2018 at 10:40 AM

DK

Mr. Lyerly was one of the very best teachers I ever had. I didn't think I was going to be able to 'get' chemistry. But then he suggested I get a tutor. Well, that did it. I decided I'd show him I didn't need a tutor. I worked like crazy to prove to him how smart I was. And I will say, and say humbly, I showed him. That experience changed my conception of myself and increased my confidence that I could grasp anything. Thank you, Joe Lyerly. RIP. I also remember how cool he seemed driving that pink Olds (1959?).

Dottie Kirk - March 25, 2018 at 12:43 PM