



Byron Brightwell Nelson Jr.

December 2, 1934 - April 8, 2021

Byron Brightwell Nelson, Jr. of Union Grove, Alabama passed away on April 8, 2021. Byron was born on December 2, 1934 to Byron B. Nelson, Sr. and Frances Seay Nelson, who preceded him in death. He has one sister, Marie Nelson Fancher. Byron is survived by his wife of 56 years, Carolyn Liles Nelson; two children Anna Nelson Richardson (David), Amy Nelson Torbert (Mark), and two grandchildren Mary Frances Torbert and Mark Torbert, Jr. Byron attended Tallassee High School graduating in 1953. Receiving a Congressional appointment to the United States Naval Academy in 1954. A football injury his plebe year led to his transfer to Auburn University where he received a BS in Education in 1957 and was commissioned a 2nd Lt in the US Army. In 1959, he received a MS in Education from Auburn University. After leaving the Army, he taught in Wetumpka, Alabama and Montgomery, Alabama prior to attending Peabody College at Vanderbilt University on a Ford Foundation Fellowship where he earned an EdD in school administration. From 1963 to 1967 he was director of finance for the Richmond, Virginia schools and the following year he was a junior high school principal in Brevard County, Florida. Byron returned to Richmond as a high school principal before becoming assistant superintendent for business in 1969. He returned to Alabama in 1971 as superintendent of the Arab City Schools for 3 ½ years before serving as superintendent in Decatur, Alabama for 17 ½ years and in Homewood, Alabama for 6 years. In 1984 The Executive Educator magazine named Byron one of the 100 top executive educators in North America. In

1994 he was inducted into the Alabama Educational Leadership Hall of Fame. Byron was active with the Auburn University Alumni Association as well as the Auburn University School of Education. He was District Governor for Rotary International District 6860 in 1984-85 and member of the Arab Rotary Club. He received the Silver Beaver scouting award while serving on the Tennessee Valley Boy Scout Council. Byron was a member of the Arab First United Methodist Church.

A loving father and devoted husband, he enjoyed spending time with his family above all. Always willing to take time to spend with his grandchildren, Byron was truly interested in their daily lives while taking time to teach important lessons he thought they would gain benefit. He was an avid golfer and enjoyed hosting friends and family while walking the greens of his favorite courses as he entertained with his rich sense of humor. The sports section was the first and sometimes the only section of the newspaper read each day which speaks volumes of his outlook on life. A great conversationalist and sincere friend, father, grandfather and husband he will be truly missed.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in Byron's name to the Arab First United Methodist Church or the Rotary Foundation.

If making a contribution to the Rotary Foundation, checks can be made payable to Rotary Foundation and mailed to Arab Rotary Club at PO Box 87 Arab, AL 35016.

Memorial Service will be 2:00 p.m. Sunday, April 11, 2021, at the Arab First United Methodist Church.

Cemetery Details

Rose Hill Cemetery

College Street West
Fayetteville, TN 37334

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR 11. 2:00 PM (CT)

Arab First United Methodist Church
1058 North Main Street
Arab, AL 35016

Memorial Graveside Service

APR 24. 2:00 PM (CT)

Rose Hill Cemetery
College Street West
Fayetteville, TN 37334

Tribute Wall



“ *Byron Brightwell Nelson Jr.*

October 23, 2023 at 12:35 AM



“ *I lived across the street from the Nelsons until I was eight. Our mothers were cousins and my dad worked for the school. I am one of the few that that called him Buddy all his life My husband passed recently and Buddy called He was so caring and loving. Please accept my deepest sympathy*
Jean P Williams

jean williams - April 15, 2021 at 07:23 PM



“ *Dr. Nelson played a very important role in my life and without his help I would not have accomplished nearly as much. The day he named me principal at Austin High School was one of the most exciting days of my life. And for that I will forever be grateful. He was also a very dear friend. I'm so sorry for his loss and send best wishes to the family.*
Richard Pace
Austin High School
Principal - retired

RICHARD PACE - April 13, 2021 at 09:31 AM

MB

“ I was a BOE teacher at Austin High when I was offered the job as Uniserv Director for the Alabama Education Education for Decatur, Morgan Co and Hartselle district. School had started and I would need permission to get out of my contract. I went to talk to Dr Nelson as I was undecided about what to do as I loved my job and my coworkers Arthel Frith, KAthryn Lamon and Sue Milner. He told me if I wanted to try the AEA job that he would let me have my teaching job back after a year if I did not like working for AEA. He also said “once you experience the freedom away from a classroom you want come back.” Dr. Hubbert at AEA told me not to expect to be offered my teaching job back as no Supt would do that. But Dr Nelson honored that offer and the following May he called and offered me my job back at AHS. He also was right, I did not return back to classroom but continued to work for AEA. He gave me the best advice I ever received in doing the AEA job, “remember we will disagree a lot while you are working for AEA but remember that we each have a job to do and don’t take it personal.” That advice worked and we had a great working relationship. All the others AEA Uniserv directors were amazed and jealous of our working relationship. Wish I had told him that. Mary Lou Goodwin Boyle

Mary Lou Boyle - April 10, 2021 at 01:36 PM

CP

“ Byron was the best of brother's-in-law. When we would visit, he would meet us at the door with that little grin and a hug, even when it was difficult. He was the best of son's-in-law to Carolyn's and my parents. When they were no longer able to take care of their affairs, he was the one they chose to take it on. He took on the challenge with the same meticulous care and devotion he applied to all other activities of his life.

Byron will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

Charlotte Liles Pinkston

Charlotte Pinkston - April 10, 2021 at 12:03 PM

BT

“ Speaking for the Kentucky boys (that’s what Byron always called us) it was always the highlight of our annual golf trip to spend time with Carolyn and Byron. Whether at their house for a wonderful home cooked meal, or Byron joining us at the Lake House for our steak dinner and cards. Due to COVID we were unable to come the last two years, but we all talk about Carolyn and Byron when we get together. Prays for Carolyn and the girls, he will be missed by the boys from Bowling Green.

Ben Tomblinson - April 09, 2021 at 04:37 PM

CB

“ Linn and I are sorry to hear of Byron's passing. He was a terrific fellow and made everyone he met feel as important as he was. He will surely be missed by many. May God bless your entire family during this rough patch, and if we can be of assistance to you in any way, just let us know. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Carolyn Branon - April 09, 2021 at 01:45 PM

BH

“ From my earliest memories Byron was a faithful first cousin. We grew up in a family that enjoyed getting together. Many us left home to get an education at Auburn. When I arrived for college Byyron was completing his studies, but he helped me get started. We enjoyed the year we overlapped at Auburn. Throughout out caries in education we were blessed to serve outers. Byron took the lead and set admirable pace. All of us will miss Byron, but his spirit will live on in his family.

Bill and Sandra Hearn - April 09, 2021 at 01:43 PM