



## Johnny Ray Thornton

July 21, 1961 - April 24, 2026

Johnny Ray “Flash” Thornton, 64 of Cullman passed away Friday, April 24, 2026, at Princeton Baptist Hospital. He was born July 21, 1961, in Cullman, the son of Buford Thornton and Helen Coffman Thornton. Johnny graduated from Good Hope High School in 1979. He made a career in broadcasting sports events, alongside his extended family at WKUL. He also worked for about 15 years as the Sports Information Director at Wallace State Community College. He often reflected on those who paved the way or stood beside him in the booth, including Bill Shelton, his first mentor at The Cullman Times; Ron Mosley, Sr., who welcomed him into the radio family; and his respected peers Rich Jesse, Ken Burcham, Pete Kirby, Ron Mosley, Jr., Steven Sutter, the late Grant Smith and so many more.

He was inducted into the Cullman County Sports Hall of Fame in April 2009, “It was a touching moment of hard work that paid off in something I never expected. So many memories, I am very grateful for what I have accomplished in my professional life’, this was a statement he posted on his social media account.

To look at the man was to see a mentor. For 18 years, Johnny coached AAU girls’ basketball, guiding young athletes to over 150 wins. He wasn’t just teaching a sport, he was building a family on the court. From his time as a referee to his leadership at Wallace State, Johnny’s worth was always found

in how he could lift others up. Johnny lived by the motto: “Spanning the globe to give a constant variety of sports.” But for Johnny, the only “globe” that mattered was Cullman County. He wanted to make you feel the energy of the Friday night crowd because he wanted to be part of that energy with you. He spent his life making sure we all felt like champions.

He is survived by his twin sister: Bonnie Harper and her family, as well as his broadcasting family and the many friends he made along the way.

Graveside Service was 1:00 p.m. Tuesday April 28, 2026, at the Cullman City Cemetery with Pastor Steven Sutter officiating, Gober Funeral Chapel directing.

# Cemetery Details

## Cullman City Cemetery

821 Lessman Circle SW  
Cullman, AL 35055

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

APR 28. 1:00 PM (CT)

Cullman City Cemetery  
821 Lessman Circle SW  
Cullman, AL 35055

# Tribute Wall

TB

“ I had the pleasure of meeting and working with Johnny over the past few years on the NFHS network. May God bless his soul and may he rest in peace.

Tim Brown - April 28 at 12:24 AM

MC

“ I met Johnny around 40 years ago through the medium he loved, broadcasting. He was so kind, respectful and humble. Heartfelt prayers to his family and friends. ——Matt

Matt Coulter - April 27 at 09:33 PM



“ 9 files added to the album Memories Album



Gober Funeral Chapel - April 27 at 10:00 AM