

On Friday, December 9, 2022, Mrs. Brenda Grooms Lee Wright, 78, went to be with her Lord and Savior with her family gathered around her bedside.

Funeral services were held on Tuesday, December 13, 2022, at Mt. Beulah Baptist Church with Rev. Randy Storz officiating.

Interment followed in Anson Memorial Park.

The family greeted friends one hour prior to the service at the church.

Brenda was born September 15, 1944, in Anson County, and was a daughter of the late R.T. Grooms and the late Beulah Hubbard Grooms. She was a 1963 graduate of Anson High School, and was retired from BB&T with 25 years of service. She was also instrumental in starting Lee Oil Company with her former husband.

She had a deep and abiding faith in God and was a longtime member of Mt. Beulah Baptist Church where she sang in the choir. Prior to moving her membership back to Mt. Beulah, she was a member of Wightman United Methodist Church in the Burnsville Community, where she raised her family. She was an active member at Wightman for many years.

Those left to cherish her memory are her husband of 27 years, Lee Wright; her children, Greg Lee (Beth) of Polkton and Tonya Huneycutt (Teddy) of Marshville; her grandchildren, Ashton Lee and Jordan Lee, both of Polkton, Leah Huneycutt of Indian Trail and Brooke Helms (Quinton) and Hailee Huneycutt, all of Marshville; her stepsons, Wayne Wright (Lisa) of Rockingham, Kevin Wright (Martha) of Buchanan, VA and Tim Wright (Gerry) of Nashville, TN; her step-grandchildren, Andrew Wright of Rockingham, Ian Wright, Ella Wright and Isiah Wright, all of Buchanan, VA; her sisters, Annie Clark of Fletcher and Frances Davis (Graham) of Ocean Isle Beach; her brother-in-law, Charlie Chewning of Raleigh; and her nieces and nephews and their families.

Brenda dearly loved her family and was very proud of her grandchildren. She was always concerned for all those she loved. She shared a close relationship with her sisters and their families.

She loved Christmas and decorating for the holiday. While a sad time for those who love her, it is fitting to celebrate her life, during the most wonderful time of the year.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Mt. Beulah Baptist Church, 3373 Country Club Rd., Wadesboro, NC 28170.

The arrangements are in care of Leavitt Funeral Home and online condolences may be made at www.leavittfh.com.

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SPCC Named a 2023 Top 10 Finalist for Prestigious Bellwether Award

South Piedmont Community College is among a small number of community colleges nationwide recently recognized as a 2023 Bellwether Award finalist. Receiving a top 10 finalist placement in both the “workforce development” and “instructional programs and services” categories this year, this competitive recognition shows that SPCC continues to provide exemplary programs.

The Bellwether Award, considered one of the most elite awards given to community colleges, focuses on cutting-edge, trendsetting programs worthy of replication. Community colleges showing innovation and excellence are considered for the award and undergo a rigorous, two-round selection process. The final round of review, taking place in February 2023, will result in one winner in each category.

This is the second year in a row that the college has been nominated for this award. This year, South Piedmont is recognized as a top 10 choice in the Workforce Development category for their “Filling the Pipeline” program in partnership with Columbus-McKinnon. This learn-and-earn model of education aims to help meet labor shortages and provide access to in-demand, high-wage jobs in Anson County, NC.

The college was also recognized as a top 10 finalist in the Instructional and Program Services category for its “Learning Reimagined” program. This program is dedicated to increasing access, removing barriers and providing flexibility to meet the diverse needs of community college students.

For the second year in a row, South Piedmont will advance onto the final stage of review and present its projects to the Community College Futures Assembly in San Antonio, sponsored by the Alamo Colleges District, in February 2023.

“To be recognized again as a Bellwether Award finalist is a proud testament to the dedication we put into our programs and how we invest in and serve the students in our community,” Dr. Maria Pharr, SPCC President said. “It is this hard work and commitment to quality and service-oriented programming that have made our innovations award-winning. We are honored to be considered along with this elite group of community colleges this year and we look forward to presenting among them at the 2023 Community College Futures Assembly.”

Holiday Travel Tips for Families Facing Alzheimer’s

Holiday travel can be hectic for just about everyone who does it, but it can be especially challenging for the 180,000 North Carolina residents living with Alzheimer’s. Even short trips to visit family and friends during the holidays can be stressful for people with Alzheimer’s and other dementia. While not all living with Alzheimer’s are able to travel, people living with early- and mid-stage Alzheimer’s often do want to attend family gatherings and holiday celebrations. Careful and thoughtful planning can help ensure safety, comfort and holiday enjoyment for everyone involved.

When planning your holiday destination, consider these tips from the Alzheimer’s Association to provide for a more calming travel experience for someone living with Alzheimer’s:

- Evaluate best mode of travel: Based on needs, abilities, safety and preferences, decide what would provide the most comfort and the least anxiety. If the destination requires air travel, the Alzheimer’s Association provides these tips at alz.org/travel.
- Pick a practical destination: Consider everyone’s needs and desires as you plan your trip and discuss the plan with the person living with dementia. Elaborate sightseeing trips or complicated tours may cause anxiety and confusion. And it is always important to consider destinations that have easy access to emergency health services and pharmacies.
- Simplify your travel itinerary: Try not to overload the person with a lot of directions or too much information.
- Carry with you an itinerary that includes details about each destination. Give copies to family members or friends you will be visiting or to emergency contacts at home.
- Travel during the time of day that is best for the person. For example, if he or she becomes tired or more agitated in the late afternoon, avoid traveling at this time.
- Allow plenty of time for rest and don’t over-schedule.
- Keep travel necessities close: If traveling by air, keep necessary medications, up-to-date medical information, a list of emergency contacts and photocopies of important documents in your carry-on baggage. For longer car trips, make sure water and snacks are available.
- Brief your host: If you are staying with family or friends, make sure everyone knows what to expect. If you will be staying in a hotel, consider informing the staff ahead of time of your specific needs so they can be prepared to assist you.
- Be prepared: Environmental changes or new locations can cause anxiety and agitation in people with Alzheimer’s. These events can also trigger wandering. Monitor your loved one closely for signs of stress or confusion. Keep them close to you in crowded, unfamiliar places.

“The holidays should be a fun and relaxing time for friends and family, including people living with dementia,” said Katherine L. Lambert, CEO of the Alzheimer’s Association, Western Carolina Chapter. “By keeping your loved one’s needs top of mind for all travel decisions can allow for less stress and confusion and provide a joyous time for all.”

More travel tips can be found by visiting the Alzheimer’s Association website at alz.org/help-support/resources/holidays.

The Alzheimer’s Association’s Chapters in North Carolina offering free education programs and support groups to help all North Carolina caregivers and their families on topics like navigating the holidays. For a complete list or to register for upcoming programs, visit act.alz.org/ncmonthlyprograms.

To learn more about Alzheimer’s disease, support for families and people living with the disease and information on the Alzheimer’s Association – Western Carolina Chapter, visit alz.org/northcarolina or call the Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900. The helpline provides reliable information and support to all those who need assistance, toll-free anytime, even holidays.

During Open Enrollment the NC Navigator Consortium Has Already Helped More than 20,000 North Carolinians

December 15, 2022, is the last day to enroll for coverage that starts January 1, 2023.

HealthCare.gov Open Enrollment ends January 15, 2023.

Since the 2023 Open Enrollment period began Nov. 1, 2022, the NC Navigator Consortium has helped more than 20,000 North Carolinians by educating them about health insurance, showing them their coverage options and enrolling them in affordable policies. This large number is the result of ramped up awareness campaigns, outreach efforts and a return to in-person enrollment events to spread the word about available enhanced tax credits and subsidies and the end of the family glitch. More information is available at the newly redesigned NCNavigator.net.

For those enrolling in coverage on the Health Insurance Marketplace at HealthCare.gov, there are two important upcoming deadlines:

Dec. 15, 2022, is the last day to enroll or update coverage that starts Jan. 1, 2023. While this deadline is important for current Marketplace enrollees who should review new plans and prices, it is critical for Bright HealthCare policy holders whose policies are set to end Dec. 31, 2022.

Jan. 15, 2023, is the last day of Open Enrollment. After this date, new policies will only be available to those with qualifying life events or who make 100-150% of the Federal Poverty Level. Policies secured between Dec. 16, 2022, and Jan. 15, 2023, will start Feb. 1, 2023.

“The biggest mistake consumers make during Open Enrollment is missing the deadline or waiting until the last minute,” said Mark Van Arnham, director of the NC Navigator Consortium. “Enrolling or renewing policies on HealthCare.gov can take time, so we urge people to reach out to our health insurance Navigators for free help as soon as possible.”

The NC Navigator Consortium’s federally qualified health insurance Navigators are available for free appointments (by phone, in person or virtually) to provide local help to consumers needing to apply for or update their Marketplace coverage. The NC Navigator Consortium connects consumers to qualified health plans that provide essential health benefits and preventive care, in addition to mental health care, ER care and maternity coverage, not limited by caps or pre-existing conditions. Appointments may be scheduled by calling 1-855-733-3711 or online at NCNavigator.net.

The NC Navigator Consortium is the only federally funded Navigator entity in the state that serves all 100 counties across North Carolina, and it is supported in part by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Learn more at NCNavigator.net, and follow on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Members of the Consortium are Access East, Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Cumberland HealthNET, HealthCare Access, HealthNet Gaston, Kintegra Health, NC FIELD and Pisgah Legal Services. The Consortium is led by Legal Aid of North Carolina.

Legal Aid of North Carolina is a statewide, nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services in civil matters to low-income people in order to ensure equal access to justice and to remove legal barriers to economic opportunity. Learn more at legallaidnc.org and follow on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Obesity Information from the Health Department

Obesity is a complex disease involving an excessive amount of body fat. Obesity isn’t just a cosmetic concern. It’s a medical problem that increases the risk of other diseases and health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and certain cancers.

There are many reasons why some people have difficulty losing weight. Usually, obesity results from inherited, physiological, and environmental factors, combined with diet, physical activity, and exercise choices.

The good news is that even modest weight loss can improve or prevent the health problems associated with obesity. A healthier diet increased physical activity and behavior changes can help you lose weight. Prescription medications and weight-loss procedures are additional options for treating obesity according to mayo clinic.

Tips to prevent obesity

- Limiting unhealthy foods (refined grains and sweets, potatoes, red meat, processed meat) and beverages (sugary drinks)
- Increasing physical activity
- Limiting television time, screen time, and other “sit time”
- Improving sleep
- Reducing stress

State's Workplace Injury and Illness Rate Historically Low

New figures released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor, show the nonfatal workplace injury and illness rate for North Carolina’s private industry remains at a historic low for 2021 with a rate of 2.2 cases per 100 full-time workers. This is significantly lower than the national rate of 2.7.

These data are estimates from the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII) compiled by the BLS. The rate accounts for growth and contraction in total hours worked in industry, which is an important factor in a state like North Carolina that has experienced significant growth.

“I am proud to see the state of North Carolina’s injury and illness rate is significantly lower than the national rate,” Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson said. “As we have made our way through this pandemic, I want to commend the employers and employees for their hard work and dedication to workplace safety and health. I will continue to do everything I can as Labor Commissioner to push the importance of safety and health at the workplace and get these injury and illness rates lowered.”

The 2021 rate for North Carolina’s local government sector increased from 3.5 cases per 100 full-time employees to 3.9. In North Carolina, the rate for private industry construction did not significantly change between 2020 and 2021. The rate for private industry manufacturing was increased from 2.5 cases per 100 full-time employees to 2.8. The rate for private sector skilled nursing facilities significantly declined in 2021 to 8.0 cases per 100 full-time employees. This represents a significant decline from the 2020 rate of 14.7 cases per 100 full-time employees.

As a State-Plan state, North Carolina’s Occupational Safety and Health Division will continue its focus on hazardous industries, such as construction and manufacturing, through its special emphasis programs, by providing free safety training and education, conducting free safety and health consultative visits, and establishing partnerships and alliances with industries.

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