



## Gene Starnes

August 26, 1941 - January 29, 2024

Francis Eugene Starnes, Jr. (known as Gene to all he knew) passed away at Trinity Place at 9:30 p.m. Monday, January 29, at the age of 82.

Gene is predeceased by his parents, Francis E. Starnes and Ruth Peeler Starnes.

He is survived by two sisters, Patricia Starnes Bramlett (husband Chris Bramlett) and Judith Starnes Brasington (husband Dalton Brasington), niece Susan Bramlett Epps of Johnson City, TN, nephew Lewis Parker Bramlett (wife Beth Burns Bramlett) of Kennesaw, GA, nephew John Francis Bramlett (wife Antoinette Amorim Bramlett) of Stony Brook, NY and four great nephews ( John Parker Epps, Christopher James Epps, Andrew James Bramlett and Daniel Christopher Bramlett).

Gene was born in Albemarle, NC, on August 26, 1941. He graduated from Albemarle High School in 1960 and Lenoir Rhyne College in 1964. Following graduation from Lenoir Rhyne, Gene joined his father at Starnes Jewelers. Following his father's death in 1976, Gene became owner and President of Starnes, Inc., the oldest family-owned retail business in Stanly County. Starnes had been opened by his grandfather in 1898 after moving to Albemarle from Union County.

Over the years, Gene built an outstanding career in the jewelry business and served at the local and state levels. He received numerous awards and citations for his service.

In 1976, the Distributive Education Clubs of America awarded Gene, their

Outstanding Service Award for his “untiring efforts on behalf of the youth in the community.”

In 1978, Gene was elected president of the North Carolina Guild of the American Gem Society and also Director of the North Carolina Retail Jewelers Association.

At the state level, Gene served for several years on the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Merchants Association.

In 1989, he was named Stanly County Business Person of the Year by the Phi Beta Lambda chapter at Stanly Community College.

Also, in 1989, Gene served as President of the Lexington, NC, area Merchants Association. At the time, he owned Parker Miller Jewelers, located in Lexington.

In 1991, Historic Preservation of NC, Inc. presented him with the Gertrude S. Carroway Award of Merit for outstanding achievement in the field of historic preservation in the State of North Carolina.

In 1991, The Albemarle – Stanly County Historic Preservation Commission presented him with the Preservation Award for the preservation of the Old Opera House located on the second floor of the Starnes building. In 1995, the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources Division of Archives and History put the Opera House on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2007, Gene was designated Fellow of the American Gem Society in recognition of his service to the Society, his profession, and his community.

In 2009, Gene was named Main Street Champion by the North Carolina Main Street Center.

In addition to honors in the Jewelry business, Gene served a number of years on the Board of Directors of M & J Finance Company in Shelby, NC.

Gene was a true patriot and served his country in the Air National Guard (1964-1970). He was also a fifty-year Rotarian and past President of Albemarle Rotary.

Gene was an avid traveler, having visited numerous countries in his efforts to educate himself in the global gemstone business. On one of his travels, he

circumnavigated the globe.

In March of 2022, he was honored by the Albemarle City Council when he was presented with a resolution referencing his service and a Key to the City.

One of the highlights of his career occurred in February 2023 when he was named Citizen of the Year for Stanly County.

Over the years, Gene has regularly contributed to Pfeiffer University, as evidenced by his name being attached to the Center for Advanced Clinical Simulation Education at Pfeiffer's Center for Health Sciences.

He was a lifelong member of Central United Methodist Church and was a member of the Good News Class for the last thirty years.

A celebration of Gene Starnes' life will be held at noon on Saturday, February 10, at Central United Methodist Church, followed by a celebratory meal in the Church fellowship center.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations be made to Pfeiffer University (48380 US-52, Misenheimer, NC 28109) or Central United Methodist Church (172 N 2nd St, Albemarle, NC 28001).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

FEB **10**. 12:00 PM (ET)

Central United Methodist Church  
172 N 2nd St  
Albemarle, NC 28001

# Tribute Wall



“ *Stanly Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Gene Starnes*



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**Stanly Funeral Home** - February 07, 2024 at 10:52 AM

MC

“ *Gene was our friend and guided two young people with the proper wedding plans. RIP Gene*

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**mary and ken campbell** - August 24, 2024 at 08:10 PM

MM

“ *Sending thoughts and prayers for the family. - From Jerry Morris and Family*

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**Michael Morris** - February 03, 2024 at 09:25 AM

PT

“ *Peggy Thorpe lit a candle in memory of Gene Starnes*



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**peggy thorpe** - February 02, 2024 at 02:17 PM

BB

“ Gene was a True friend in every sense of the word. Enjoyed our travels together many years ago

Bob Bowers - January 31, 2024 at 06:11 PM

BJ

“ Gene was a wonderful civic leader, businessman and friend. He worked to make Albemarle and Stanly County better places. His significant contributions continue and provide a strong foundation for future success.

Bain Jones - January 31, 2024 at 01:16 PM

D2

“ I am stunned to hear of Gene's passing. For me, he was a foundational friend for my education and life work. He was an extremely intelligent person with courage to be himself and an honest, true, businessman.

Don Carrick. (919) 217-6948 - January 31, 2024 at 01:57 AM

EH

Russ and I were in a small dinner club with Gene. We shared lots of good times and memories. He was a very caring and selfless person . A great community man who remembered special life events of others and honored them with a note or gift as he did us so many times. We will miss him

Russ and Elaine Hollins

Elaine Hollins - February 04, 2024 at 10:16 AM

MH

Gene was a true gentleman and a very kind and selfless person. He was a good friend of Maxine Harwood's brother Lindsay. In later years we enjoyed lunches and dinners with him and Ann Taylor. We always had a good laugh together. Such a good and interesting man and loss to the Albemarle community.

Maxine H Harwood - February 04, 2024 at 11:58 AM

DH

*Sorry for this loss I knew Gene through business operations and he was always so very nice Prayers for the family. Doris S Huneycutt*

**Doris S Huneycutt** - February 07, 2024 at 06:17 PM