



*Bobby Lawrence
Henderson*

March 29, 1933 - May 27, 2025

Longtime Morganton resident Bobby Lawrence Henderson, 92, died at his home on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 after a brief illness.

Bob was born on March 29, 1933, in Laurens County, S.C., to John Lawrence Henderson and Daisy Lyons Henderson Jennings. His large extended family in South Carolinas Upstate included many aunts, uncles and cousins on his mothers side and cherished grandparents, Big Daddy and Big Mama, on his fathers side.

He was a veteran of Naval Aviation during the Korean War and a graduate of Clemson University. He was a registered Professional Engineer. He was employed at the Engineering Center at Drexel Heritage Furnishings, retiring as director of engineering. He was a member of First Baptist Church, where he served for many years as a deacon and a Sunday School teacher.

Bob was devoted to his faith, to his love of reading and to Clemson football. Two other passions kindled early in life. He grew his first bale of cotton on two acres of an uncles farm, sweating over the crop behind a borrowed mule, at age 13. With the \$100 he earned, Bob bought his first car. A love of work and of motor vehicles consumed the rest of his life.

When he wasnt busy tinkering on his house, befriending new neighbors or volunteering his time to church-related causes, Bob was usually at work in his oil-stained basement garage. He rebuilt twice his beloved 1957 Dodge pickup, Lazarus, scavenging parts from 17 different vehicles. At 91, he was still on his back under the truck, making one last repair before handing it over to a new owner. He restored antique tractors and lawnmowers, turning rusting hulks into gleaming beauties, each with a

restored antique tractors and lawnmowers, turning rusting hulks into gleaming beauties, each with a name Sweet Thing was the last tractor he let go. Just as often, he worked on friends troubled cars.

Bob also loved animals, especially those that werent his. His neighbors toy poodle, Josie, perched in Bobs lap as he mowed the grass. A massive but sweet pit bull from up the street, Method Man, cuddled his wife Mary Jane when she was bedridden. In Bobs later years, Harry the neighborhood cat sauntered into his life and bonded tight. Over time, Bob engineered designs to assure Harrys comfort:

not one but three cat doors, two heated beds, a designated Harrys Corner on the back porch and, just in case of power failure, an emergency lighting system in the basement. When Bob settled into his recliner, Harry would stretch across his knobby knees for hours. Both purred.

In Morganton, Bob found the home he felt he never had as a child, when his family moved often and lived precariously. He made lifelong friends among the engineers, machinists and production workers at Drexel. Friends at First Baptist held him close until his last days.

His extraordinary neighbors on Crest Hill Drive were always there for him in his later years, helping him live safely alone at home. They faithfully delivered pots of soup or Sunday dinner chicken, gathered his mail, cut his grass and filled his bird feeders when Bob couldnt. More than a dozen turned out to celebrate his 90th birthday, gathering in the cul de sac outside his house in that Covid year. To those friends, Bobs family gives its eternal thanks.

His survivors include daughter Ann Henderson of Morganton; son Bruce Henderson and wife Lynn of Davidson; stepdaughter Jane Harper and husband Dan of Durham; and granddaughter Katie Harper of Mebane. He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Jane, and a son, Marc Henderson.

The family will receive friends from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, June 6, at First Baptist Church in Morganton. The memorial service will be held at 2 p.m., followed by a private family graveside service. Military honors will be provided by the US Navy.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Visitation

June 6, 2025
1 p.m. - 2 p.m.

First Baptist Church Morganton

Service

June 6, 2025

2 p.m.

First Baptist Church Morganton

Tribute Wall



Mr. Henderson was my Sunday school teacher. I had the utmost respect for him and his kindness. May peace be with the family and I'm truly sorry for your loss.

—David Freeman

I first knew Bob as "Mr. Henderson" since I had him as a Training Union teacher in the old First Baptist Church. In later years it was hard for me to call him "Bob" even after he insisted on it. He always encouraged us to do our best, to do a good job even when no one was looking. He was consistent. Consistent in attendance at church, consistent in being prepared to teach, consistent in being cheerful and kind—no matter what he was going through. Several years after my father died in '99, someone recommended Bob to my mother to fix a screen door that needed adjusting. He came over, went straight to work and repaired it easily. Then we had a time of catching up. She wanted to pay him but he adamantly refused—but of course with good humor. I am sure they are catching up once again in the Heavenly Kingdom. God bless you, Ann and Bruce.

—Eugenie (Braswell) Fein

Bob was a no nonsense follower of his Christ's teachings. No pretense, no blabber mouth no know it all behavior, no judgemental threats in his Sunday School lessons or elsewhere! Bob's influence has not died! Bob was the leader of the R.O Huffman Bible class First Baptist Church Morganton. Inspirational

educator of God's word!

—Edward Hardin

I had lost contact with Bruce but cherish my memories of him when he came to Laurens to visit his precious Mom , Miss Daisy!! He was such a gentleman. My sincere regrets to Ann, Bruce and all family!!

—Joyce Dennis

So sorry for your loss. Keeping you in my thoughts and prayers.

—Rene Tucker Neel

The Dan & Vivian Brewton family was incredibly lucky to have the Hendersons as a part of our lives. Bobby was a kind and wonderful friend to my parents. I smile when I think of all the special times they enjoyed together during their college years at Clemson. Special memories. I will be thinking of all of you during this difficult time. Diane Brewton

—Diane Brewton

I first got to know Bob as a teenager at First Baptist when we served on a stewardship committee together. Even though there was a 50-year age difference between us, Bob was always warm and kind to this young kid who felt somewhat intimidated by serving with all these adults. He always showed me respect and asked for my opinion in the meetings. Over the years, my parents and brother got to know him better and I was fortunate to go to restaurants with him and my parents after Mary Jane passed away. He had a particular affinity for seafood and I'll remember those trips in the car, learning some about his life, and breaking bread (or more like hushpuppies) with him over a shared meal. Bob, you will be missed but always hold a special place in my memories for your faith, kindness, wit, and wisdom.

—Ryan Bailey

God blessed us with this wonderful man as a neighbor. Words cannot begin to describe his influence on all who knew him. I know Pepper and Tybie will be happy to have you pet them once again. You shall be missed beyond words.

—Susan Fetner

I had the very special Privilege and let me stress PRIVILEGE of Having Mr Henderson as a Sunday school teacher in 1978,79 and 80. Let me stress there was no foolishness in this all boys class!!! He was such a great person! I learned so much from him! We had Sunday School lessons and very much more. He talked us about tithing, being an engineer, being involved and just being a good person! He talked about working on his truck and gave us a ride !! I believe he had just finished it recently. “Dean” was in our class. Mr. Henderson showed us compassion , empathy and just doing the right thing by having Dean in the class!! I have and always will treasure the lessons I learned and the friend I made in Bob Henderson. Trey Ward

—Hamilton Ward

Ann, my heart goes out to you and your family. Wish I could wrap my arms around you.

—Mary Frances White