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Eleanor "Nell" Faye Shull

Dec. 18, 1932 - May 24, 2026

Eleanor "Nell" Faye Shull, 93, of Morganton, NC, passed away Sunday, May 24, 2026.

Born in Burke County, NC on December 18, 1932, she was the daughter of the late Burgin Rhoney Shull and Jessie Hull Shull.

She graduated from Appalachian State Teachers College and began her career as an elementary and physical education teacher. She later went on to teach and coach high school basketball, becoming one of the first and finest female coaches of her time. In the early 1960s, she began working at Barium Springs Home for Children, where she served for many years as a recreation leader and teacher. Around that time, she made Statesville her home, where she would remain for more than 60 years.

Nell eventually returned to the public school classroom and gymnasium, dedicating many years to students as an extraordinary physical education teacher and coach before retiring from the public school system.

In 1989, Nell came out of retirement and joined Judy Sutton at Statesville Montessori School (SMS), where she taught fourth grade. She soon began teaching physical education classes as well, sharing the fundamentals of numerous sports with her students. Later, she became SMS's first Athletic Director, supporting countless student athletes, coaches, and school leaders. Nell was instrumental in creating the

student athletes, coaches, and school leaders. Nell was instrumental in creating the school's athletic program, which continues today.

In March of 2003, Statesville Montessori School honored Nell by naming the school gymnasium in her honor. A plaque was placed on the gym wall reading: "In recognition of her instruction and love given to the young people of SMS, this

gymnasium is dedicated in honor of Nell Shull. 'A Strong Body builds and a Strong Mind.'" Her brothers, church family, and many friends joined her for the dedication ceremony. Nell retired from her role as athletic director of SMS in 2018. Throughout her remarkable life and career, she touched the lives of countless people. She was a Sunshine Volunteer at Davis Regional Medical Center for over 10 years and rang bells for donations for the Salvation Army at Christmas, as long as she could.

Nell was a devout Christian and member of Forest Park Presbyterian Church in Statesville for over 60 years. She served as a deacon and elder multiple times, and she received the Presbyterian Women's Honorary Life Membership in 1984. Nell served as a Sunday school teacher and youth group leader for over 50 years each. For many years she accompanied the youth group to Camp Grier. Nell founded the Forest Park Day Camp, a three week faith-based summer camp that impacted thousands of Statesville/community children.

Those left to cherish her memory include a brother, Bobby Shull and wife, Marie, of York, PA; special nephew guardian, and caregiver, Greg Shull; and a number of nieces, nephews, and extended family.

In addition to her parents, Nell was preceded in death by two brothers, Merlin Shull and Jim Shull.

The family will receive friends from 10am until 11am, Saturday, June 6, 2026 at Forest Park Presbyterian Church in Statesville, NC. A celebration of Nell's life will willow at 11 am in the sanctuary at Forest Park Presbyterian Church with the Rev. Scott Jeffreys officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Forest Park Presbyterian Church, 1026 Davie Ave, Statesville, NC 28677.

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

arrangements.

Tribute Wall



Most of the family remember her as Aunt Nell. She's the only person we know who had a tether ball pole in her yard. Wherever there was any gathered, she was organizing a game. And there's pork bbq, cheer wine and Arnold palmers. I'm not sure she grew out of junior sizes in clothing, but she filled the room with her kindness and love. I am sure she's in Heaven, sitting in her recliner, petting her many beloved dogs. We're so glad to have shared our lives with you.

–Laura

I'll see you again, maybe you'll still have your whistle. Thanks for everything you ever thought me and all the love and stories.

–Anne M Soto

Nell was a remarkable person and a devout Christian. She was my mentor, as I too am a physical education teacher. I seem to have followed in her footsteps my entire career. We coached against each other, I worked her Day Camp for many years. She was lead teacher for elementary physical education for our school system and when she retired I took her place. When she retired from Statesville Montessori I took her place as physical education teacher and athletic director. I've had HUGE shoes to fill wherever I went but I had the best guidance anyone could have asked for. Nell impacted so many people in her lifetime and I will NEVER forget her and the lessons she passed on. Prayers for all of your

family

–Caroline Campbell

When I think of Nell Shull, the first word that comes to mind is, “Gratitude.”

Gratitude for all of the knowledge, experience and love that she shared with us and the generosity and patience to keep sharing even when I may not have been listening. I met Nell when I was a child and I had no idea that she was going to influence everything that I would think and everything that I would do for the rest of my life. I was one of the many children in the three week day camp at Forest Park Presbyterian Church. Nell introduced me to the US. Presidential Physical Fitness program and taught me how to challenge myself, and how to dig deep inside and find something more when I thought that I had no more to give. She made me believe that if I dedicated myself completely that I could accomplish anything, and it worked! She unlocked my self confidence and it would prove to be the greatest gift of my life. Among Nell’s many talents was that of story telling. Her voice was so calm, poignant and sincere. She could tell a story in a way that would take you away to the place and the people in those stories. Sometimes when she would finish a story and begin to pray, I would feel as if I had just woken from a dream. Sometimes I would feel unsure, for a moment, where I was and sometimes I would discover tears on my face. How lucky we all were to have Nell Shull in our lives. Through her stories she taught us about humility, respect for ourselves and others, loyalty and personal sacrifice, how to show love and appreciation and why. She gave us a guiding light that we could take with us anywhere. We didn’t know, at the time, that she was teaching survival skills. The memory of those stories would always be there for us whenever life would challenge, in the worst predicaments, in the darkest of times and also in the best of times. Nell had given us a gift that would keep on giving. She touched so many of our lives and she lives on in all of us.

–Todd K. Boulware, LtCol, USAF (Ret)





—Drew Dotson



Nell Shull's obituary speaks for itself! She was a Godly woman and loved her Lord and Savior. Nell was such an inspiration to our daughters and family over the years. May her beautiful legacy and precious memories live on forever in the lives of her family and friends. Comfort and peace in the coming days. Love and prayers, Rick and Landrea Rhyne Adrianne and Meredith

—Landrea and Rick Rhyne



Nell surely is sitting at the feet of Jesus. My heart hurts, yet I'm grateful to have had the privilege of being loved by her.

—Sylvia and Pressly Boyd



Nell was the reason our family joined Forest Park after meeting her and feeling her genuine love. Hearing the news of her passing tugs my heart and just privileged big time for that. Surely she is sitting at the feet of Jesus. Amen and Amen

—Sylvia and Pressly Boyd

I remember her well from her time at Barium Springs; great coach for us softball players. Her integrity was always in evidence, a great mentor for us.

—Vicki Bryant



—Matt Westherman

Ms Shull had a heart of gold for others. She played a huge role in my childhood and our family's life and was like a second mom to us. I've never met a more caring and loving soul. Behind that petite frame was an also a very competitive lady. And what fun she was to just be around. She was the hands and feet of Jesus as she cared for and served so many people. And of course she had a special place in her heart for young kids, mentoring them, teaching them and leading by example. She had an enormous impact on my children and wife in later years as well. Greatly missed but safely home now.

—Matt Weatherman

—Danny Jackins

What an amazing person. I never knew she was a basketball coach. Had to chuckle at the thought of her surrounded by the team. She was loved by many and has been missed.

—Patricia Moore

I'm a member of Forest Park Presbyterian Church and my children went to Bible school and Camp Grier. We all loved Nell and will miss her.

—Danny Jackins