

*Ernest "Ernie" Wilson
Morgan*

Dec. 8, 1944 - Jan. 1, 2025

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Ernest "Ernie" Wilson Morgan, a beloved science teacher and passionate space and flying enthusiast. Ernie left this world on Wednesday, January 1, 2025, leaving behind a legacy of knowledge, inspiration, and a love for discovery that touched the lives of countless students and colleagues.

Born in Valdese, NC on December 8th, 1944, Ernie had a lifelong passion for science, aviation and exploring that began at an early age. He spent his early years of education in Department of Defense Educational System in Morocco, Germany, and Spain. Ernie received his pilot license and drove on a scooter from Morocco up through Eastern Europe when he was 16 years of age. He graduated High School in Morocco and earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from Appalachian State University, he embarked on a rewarding career as a teacher at Morganton Junior High School for 20 years, where he shared his love of science with his students. He spent most of his teaching years teaching his favorites, Seventh and Ninth Grade Physical Science and Chemistry. He had an impact on molding the minds of young teens and mentored them to work hard in continuing their education after they finished school. Ernie and his friend Herb Stevens started the EEE Program (known as the North Carolina Outward Bound School) to teach children how to enjoy the

outdoors and important wilderness survival skills. In 1984, Ernie was one of the two selected to be North Carolina's representative of Teacher in Space Project (TISP) which was a NASA program announced by Ronald Reagan designed to inspire students and spur interest in mathematics, science, and space exploration. The project would carry teachers into space as a non-astronaut civilian. Ernie returned to the classrooms and shared his experience with his students and his children to continue the interest of science for generations.

Ernie was a true adventurer and entrepreneur. He founded Table Rock Spring Water Co in Morganton NC. The company started by selling a few bottles of mountain spring water from his mother's sink to becoming a successful bottled water company. He spent many years delivering water and managing customer relationships with distributors. Ernie spent his retirement traveling to Eastern Europe and exploring his passion of flying ultralight paragliders and gliders. He was a member of Lower Creek Airport Aviation Club since 1994, where he taught other paragliding enthusiasts in 2012 how to fly at minimal costs to keep the love of aviation alive. He was known for his engaging lessons, comical enthusiasm, and unwavering dedication to flying. He was a wonderful father and grandfather, who loved his family deeply.

Ernie was preceded in death by his father Ernest Milford Morgan; a wonderful father, survived by his mother, Louise Powell Morgan; two daughters, Yasmina Morgan Nicholas (Matthew Nicholas) and Phyllis Ann Morgan Clendenen, and grandchildren Hayden Ralph Nicholas, Isabelle Morgan Clendenen and Knox Alexander Clendenen.

The family will receive friends from 12 to 1 p.m., Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at Sossoman Funeral Home. The funeral will be held at 1 p.m. in the Colonial Chapel of the funeral home.

He will be deeply missed by his students, colleagues, and everyone whose life he touched. In honor of his memory, the family requests that donations be made to Christa McAuliffe Charter School (mcauliffecharter.org/donate).

"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to

eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery each day." – Albert Einstein

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

Tribute Wall

Fly high brother

–Dennis Smith

Going to miss you brother

–Dennis Smith



–Dennis Smith

Most fun, exciting and adventurous six years of my life. Being with Ernie I learned something new everyday. He will always be in my heart. When the wind is calm I see him flying! Forever my friend. Love Jackie

–Jackie Alford

I've had the opportunity to study with some great teachers/professors as a graduate of Davidson College and USC School of Law. I've always told people that Ernie Morgan was the best teacher of all time! I had him as a teacher in 7th and 9th grade. Was in his class when the announcement came over the intercom that President Reagan had been shot. Some of my classmates did not appreciate

that person really had been there. Some of my classmates did not appreciate the tragedy of the situation but Ernie made sure that they did. A neighboring teacher had a serious discipline problem with a student and came to ask Ernie for help. There were a few dented lockers in the hall but Ernie took care of business. Ernie took a group of students on an overnight camping field trip to the mountains. Will never forget that he showed us how to start a fire with a bow.

Also went to Biltmore (not the big house) for lunch one day. Showed us how to rock climb and we didn't have helmets. That's something that no teacher can do today or in the future but it was great! I wasn't a great student in junior high but I was in Ernie's classes. One of the best things he did was telling us we weren't going to dissect preserved frogs. Ernie went to Breeden's and brought back freshly dispatched chickens. We dissected them and then he had us fry them in small pans on bunsen burners and eat them. Pretty awesome that he was such a great teacher and competed on a high level in hang gliding competition. I remember hearing in the early 90's that he had quit teaching and was selling spring water. Who would try to sell water? Ernie did and was successful. Was way far out in front of the times! Every teacher should aspire to do what he did, RIP!

—Alex Turner

I had the privilege of having Mr. Morgan as a Teacher at MJHS. He was a wonderful teacher made learning exciting. My condolences to the family. Ginger Ross Whisnant

—Ginger. Ross Whisnant



I had the pleasure of having Mr Morgan as one of my residents to clean for. He was a gem and will truly be missed.

—Angie C Sisk





Ernie was a excellent teacher condolences to the family RIP

–Jimmy Powell

Ernie was so engaging and a caring friend. He was always fun to be around, and made the conversations so interesting. Enjoyed seeing him hang gliding. He was so free. Fly free in Heaven, Ernie. Rip

–Babs



I remember Mr. Morgan as being one of my son Jonathan's favorite teachers. As a matter of fact, he took me to meet him. He made such an impression on my young man. Could have been one of the reasons that he joined the military and decided to serve his country. Well done Mr. Morgan may you SIHP. And to the family, we offer our deepest condolences and prayers and prayers of peace..

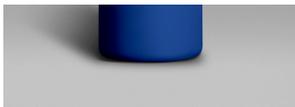
–Ruth Roseboro

Mr. Morgan always made learning feel like an adventure, much like he lived life. Those of us who had him as students were truly blessed to share his singular wit and wisdom (we also learned a thing or two). In the short 45 minutes he would share with us each day he made our lives much more full and rich. At the time we were all just waiting for the bell to ring, but as we grow older we understand and apply the lessons he taught. Question, Curiosity, and Adventure, it's what makes life worth living. Thank You Mr. Morgan!!!

–Rob Walker



–Rebecca Marler LPN



To my Aunt Louise, Yasmine and Phyllis and your families. I'm so sorry that I can't be with you to celebrate the life of such an outstanding man and a wonderful cousin. But I pray God's peace and comfort during this season of your lives. Love to all, Cheryl Ann

–Cheryl Robinson Kirby



Mr. Morgan was a unique and interesting person and anyone that was in his class at MJHS knows what a great person he is! He is one you would characterize as intelligent, successful, responsible, caring, loyal and trustworthy! Such a great role model. Rest In Peace Mr. Morgan! Thoughts and prayers to the family! Thoughts and prayers to his friends, former colleagues and former students! You will always be remembered and missed!

–Kevin Waldroup



Going to be greatly missed. Mr. Morgan was one of the teachers that made an impact on my life and made me feel alive. He made class interesting and fun. The world needs more teachers like him. Enjoy your wings Mr Morgan you deserve them. My heart and prayers going to the family. Just want to say thanks Mr Morgan from former student of MJHS.

–Barbara Ledford

Mr. Morgan “Ernie” as he let us call him, was one of the educators that changed and shaped my life. He made learning fun. He was a true teacher and friend. He earned the trust of his class and we were ready to follow him up into heaven. He

earned the trust of his class and we were ready to follow him up into space! He will always be remembered and missed.

–Alison Lookadoo Falls



I am at a loss for words right now RIP Mr.Morgan you was one of my favorite teachers at MJHS and you were a wonderful person and mentor to all of us you will be remembered forever and deeply missed by many RIP fly high.

–Teddy Berry



–Anonymous



–Dennis Setzer



–Irene Morgan

–Sheila

Ernie was a good friend and fellow teacher in space. We visited each other numerous times and traveled together to the Bahamas, Morocco, and backpacked across eastern Europe. He also took me flying in his motorized ultralight and attempted to teach me to fly. He will be missed. Yas his daughter has done a great job caring for him. Rest in peace, Ernie.

–Don Hoff



Wonderful and beautifully educated man. Remember well seeing him gliding through the air on his paraglider during my younger years. Truly an inspiration for all.

–Kimberly Cline



Mr. Morgan is one of the most memorable teachers I've ever had. When I think about people who've made an impact in my upbringing, Mr. Morgan comes to mind. I love the Albert Einstein quote. It sums up our science teacher in completion. Never stop questioning! Thank you Mr. Morgan... for your authenticity and passion to serve! My heart goes out to all who loved him.

–Hope Surratt-Foster

Mr. Morgan, You will be missed! I loved your class, eventhough I didn't make the best grades. You were a inspiration! You were the first person I ever saw eat a live

ant. You told us it was pure protein . Now you have your eternal wings fly high.
Your student 1980-1981. You will be missed!

–David Logan



A true friend. RIP Ernie.

–Russ Fulenwider



Had Mr Morgan for science in the early 80s he was
something else I'm so sorry for your loss

–Doug REVIS

I met Ernie as a fellow teacher in space, and we had a great and long friendship.
We traveled together to the Bahamas , Morocco and backpacked across Eastern
Europe together. I visited him numerous times in Morganton and he took me
flying on his powered hang glider. Yas has done a great job caring for him. Rest
in peace Ernie.

–Don Hoff



I am deeply saddened by the passing of my longtime
friend, Ernie. His life was an inspiration to all who knew
him. We had many exciting experiences together, that are
treasured memories for me. Our development of the



Ecological, Environmental, Education (Triplet E) Program, (Not affiliated with the North Carolina Outward Bound School), was one of the highlights of my life. It used experience-based teaching methods based on the N. C. O. B. S. model. Ernie's passing is a great loss for all who knew him. Rest in peace, my friend. Herb Stevens

–Herb Stevens



Loved and looked forward every day to Mr. Morgan's Science Class when taught under him at Morganton Junior High. His unique personality and zeal will never be forgotten! My Condutance to his family. Am sure it must be painful.

–Richard Jones



–Pam McLellan

God bless you, Ernie. You were the best teacher I ever worked with.

–Lynn Watkins



Mr. Morgan was a inspiration to all of his students. He showed us how to make water in class! There was a big boom in that lesson! He also encouraged us to participate in the exchange of a million dogwood tree seeds with Japanese students! I picked so many dogwood seeds that summer. I brought in bags crammed full of the little red berries to him for the exchange program. He always gave

me something to think about after his class. His classes were never dull! I also had the opportunity to be his TA . This meant I sent the entire class grading papers and listening to his other class! It gave me pride having the

privilege to be his TA for a quarter! Rest in peace as you soar Mr. Morgan



Ernie Morgan was a truly wonderful person. He was a good friend, a kind soul. His love for life was a source of inspiration to those around him. He was a loving and devoted father who took wonderful care of his children. His kindness and intelligence will be deeply missed. I am so sorry for your loss. RIP Ernie."

—Lynette Young Popal

Ernie was an exceptional educator. His enthusiasm for science was contagious. I was privileged to be in the classroom when he did his student teaching at Morganton High. We became good friends when he worked with the EEE program and fortunately remained friends. I will truly miss having great conversations which always taught me something new and exciting. Thanks Ernie for many years of friendship. May you rest in peace!

—Donna Benner



Mr. Morgan was an extraordinary man and teacher. I had the privilege of being in his 9th grade Science class in 1986, and I'll never forget watching the space shuttle launch with him and my classmates in the MJHS library. The moment the shuttle exploded, the look of utter disbelief on his face is etched in my memory. He was one of the two teacher finalists chosen out of North Carolina with the chance to be on that shuttle. We were all so proud of him! His passion

on that matter. We were all so proud of him. His passion for exploration and learning was truly inspiring. I remember his infectious energy and creativity; like the time he dressed up with a proton pack and glowing red contacts, just like the Ghostbusters, for movie day in the auditorium. He had a gift for making learning fun and left a lasting impact on everyone he taught. Rest well, Mr. Morgan. I know you're in Heaven now, among the stars you loved so deeply. Your legacy will live on in the hearts of all who were fortunate enough to know you. My deepest condolences to his family

–Sherry Caroway



–Anonymous

I loved having Mr. Morgan as a teacher in 8th and 9th grade at Glen Alpine Jr High School. I was able to go on one of the hikes in the EEE program on the Appalachian Trail on Roan Mountain. It was an experience I will never forget. Mr. Morgan was a great teacher and I never knew, or at least I don't remember hearing of his adventures in Europe. Wow! He lived life to the fullest!

–Laquita Lewis

Sending my condolences to the family. Ernie Morgan was my favorite teacher and I will always remember him and his love of science. I will carry such warm memories in my heart. He was such a kind, intelligent and funny guy. What an amazing life he led and the lasting impression he made on so many. Lifting you all up in prayer during this time.

–Debra Hefner Bauer

Mr. Morgan was my favorite teacher throughout my entire school years. I loved his Science classes at Morganton Jr High He will be missed by many. Rest in Peace Mr Morgan!!

–David Fetherbay

Knowing Ernie was a blessing in my life. He was a patient, sweet, smart man and taught me so many wonderful life skills. He will be missed. Sending love and peace to you Yasmina. You are a wonderful daughter and he was always so proud of you

–Cynthia Voegeli

I was in Mr. Morgans class. He would fly hang gliders off burkemont mountain. We would watch him and other's from my grandma's yard. He was a great teacher. I'm sure he will be missed by alot of people. May he rest in peace.

–Scott Walker

He was a good teacher and thought alot of him. He was not boring, he was funny at times. I liked being in his class. I just mentioned him before Christmas about the table rock wwhere. Not sure but was he kin to some becks up at lake james

–Cindy keys