



Harley "Dean" Whitley

Nov. 15, 1964 - Feb. 6, 2026

Harley "Dean" Whitley, 61, of Morganton, North Carolina, entered his Heavenly home on February 6, 2026.

Born on November 15, 1964, in Wilkes County, NC, he was the son of the late Geno Whitley and Nell Ellis Whitley.

Dean was born deaf, but he never let silence define his life. His family moved to Morganton so he could attend the North Carolina School for the Deaf. He formed lifelong friendships there, played football and basketball, and graduated in 1985.

Dean worked for Frederick Edwards before health challenges eventually led him to disability. Even then, his joy, humor, and love for others never faded.

Dean loved the outdoors, especially fishing and hunting. He looked forward to family hunting trips to Wilkes. As well as trout fishing trips to Cherokee, bass fishing on the lake, and surf fishing at the beach. He found happiness in simple pleasures like shooting basketball, playing cornhole and ladder ball in the summer, sledding in the winter, and pulling off a good practical joke. He loved good food (especially steak, home cooking. and homemade blueberry cobbler). and his favorite teams (NC State

home cooking, and homemade dressing, coleslaw, and the favorite teams (the Dallas Wolfpack and the Miami Dolphins).

One of his greatest joys was spending time with family. He took special pride in teaching his great-nieces, Cherish and Lakelynn, sign language, patiently sharing a world that meant so much to him. He deeply loved and missed his loyal dog, Bud.

Most importantly, Dean loved Jesus. He attended Grace Baptist Church when able and remained a member of Maple Grove Baptist Church in Hays, North Carolina, where he will be laid to rest.

Dean's life was filled with faith, laughter, and love. While he lived without sound on earth, today he hears clearly, speaks freely, and rejoices fully in Heaven.

Those left to cherish his memory include his siblings, Jackie Whitley and wife. Judy. of Morganton. Vickie Smith and husband. Dennis. of Rutherford College. Bobby Whitley and wife. Becky. of Morganton; beloved nieces and nephews, Tracy Whitley and husband, Gabriel Flynn, Jacob Whitley and wife, Sarah, Samantha Page and husband, Billy, Denny Smith, Jason Whitley and wife, Chasitie, and Kelli Andrews and husband, Daniel; as well as cherished great-nieces and nephews, Cherish and Lakelynn Whitley, Riley Page, Isabel and Mason Andrews, and Piper and Jaxx Whitley.

The family will receive friends from 2 to 3 p.m., Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at Grace Baptist Church and the memorial service will follow at 3 p.m. in the church. A committal service will be held at a later date at Maple Grove Baptist Church Cemetery in Hays, NC.

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

Tribute Wall



—Anonymous



—Anonymous



—Anonymous