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Lena Faye Watts Taylor

Sept. 16, 1935 - Jan. 1, 2023

Lena Faye Watts Taylor, 87, of Morganton, NC died peacefully at home Sunday, January 1, 2023. She was born in Burke County on September 16, 1935 to the late Tommy Watts and Callie Mae Causby Watts. She was a member of Mt. Olive Baptist Church where she served as music director and Sunday school teacher for over fifty plus years. Lena retired from Burke County Public Schools as a teacher with over thirty years of service.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, just fifteen days ago, Melvin H. Taylor.

She is survived by her daughter, Vicki Leonard (Mark); son, Mike Taylor (Peggy); grandchildren, Tiffany Taylor (Jesse) and Lauren Cabell (Dustin); great-grandchild, Clarke Cabell; sisters, Loretta Dean Watts McCracken and Wilma Jean Watts.

The family will greet friends from 12:00pm to 1:00pm Thursday, January 5, 2023 at Mt. Olive Baptist Church. A memorial service for both, Melvin H. Taylor and Lena Watts Taylor will begin at 1:00pm in the church with Rev. Michael Gantt officiating. Lena will be laid to rest beside her late husband, Melvin following the service.

Memorial contributions may be made to Mt. Olive Baptist Church Building Fund.

Melvin H Taylor (94) of Morganton, NC died peacefully at his home on Saturday, December 17, 2022. Fifteen days later Sunday, January 1, 2023, his wife Lena W Taylor (87) of Morganton died peacefully in her home.

Melvin and Lena were both born in Burke County to the late Cordie and Ben Allen (his parents) and Tommy and Callie Watts (her parents).

Melvin and Lena are survived by their daughter, Vicki Leonard (Mark); son, Michael Taylor (Peggy); grandchildren, Tiffany Taylor (Jesse) and Lauren Cabell (Dustin); and great-granddaughter, Clarke Cabell.

Melvin and Lena were married on June 15, 1956, and both were members of Mt. Olive Baptist church. Melvin served as a Deacon and Lena as the music director and Sunday school teacher for 50 plus years.

Melvin was a US Army Veteran of the Korean War and a prisoner of war for 27 months. He retired from Great Lakes Carbon after 42 years and owned and operated his own sawmill. Melvin was also a member of the DAV for 40 plus years.

Lena graduated with her master's degree from Appalachian State Teacher College and started teaching in 1956 at Valdese High School. She went on to teach English at Glen Alpine High in 1960, where she taught for 14 years. It was well known that if you didn't pass Mrs. Taylor's Senior English class, you would not graduate. (IYKYK) From there, Lena went on to teach English at Freedom High School from 1974-1986 where she retired.

She was a sponsor of the Anchor Club and also served on the board for DSS for many years. Lena was active in painting, drawing, ceramics, and doll making classes; with Melvin complimenting her with his many talents and skills.

Lena and Melvin both were active members in Wheels of Time Car Club, where Lena was the secretary for 20 plus years. They were also both active in Brendletown Dance Club over the years where they learned and perfected many ballroom-style and line dances. They both belonged to Marion Lake Golf Club. Lena hit 2 holes in one and Melvin hit one (she never let him live that down).

They both led very busy lives serving others, but during their “quiet time” one could find Lena in her flower garden, and Melvin (always working on a project) in his shop garage where he and his son, Michael, restored and remodeled over 20 cars, tractors, and they even modified a race car together. Melvin would always say “to take it easy”, and that is something that took some longer to learn than others.

Lena and Melvin also had a knack for traveling which they did worldwide; with some of their best of friends, Ben and Francis Morrison, and Eldorador and Dallas Norman to name a just a few. They visited most of the 50 United States, five continents, and over 25 countries. Lena shared that her favorite trip was to the Holy Lands, (where it was shared later that Lena wore her heels while touring the Holy Lands) Lena was always dressed to impress, and made sure Melvin was dressed to compliment.

Melvin at 94 yrs. and Lena at 87 yrs., truly LIVED a full life, with a solid relationship with our Heavenly Father, and to each other.

Each of our human houses that we call our bodies is going to break down and is eventually going to die… but the good, good news for Melvin, Lena, and for all believers is that the Bible tells us death has no sting as it is not the end.

This memorial was simply to lay them to rest together until Jesus comes again. Lena and Melvin would discuss and joke about who would go first, and Melvin joked while saying “he married a younger lady, so she could take care of him”, and they would both just laugh. This is when Lena mentioned that they would just GO together, and thankfully that was God’s will.

Written by their grand daughter, Tiffany Taylor, who loved and adored both Nana and Pa.

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

Tribute Wall



I'm so sorry to hear of the passing of one of my favorite teachers at Freedom High, she was one of the BEST, class of '82. Rest easy now Ms Taylor you will be truly missed by many.

–Victoria Vance (Vickie)

Sending love and prayers for your loss

–Nancy&Mike Leonard

Vickie and Mike, Sending my deepest condolences to you and your family in the loss of your parents.

–Rita Rankin

So sorry for you loss. Was privileged to have had Mrs Taylor as a teacher at Freedom High School and just a few short years ago was privileged to have met Mr Taylor and Mrs Taylor again. May God give you peace and comfort in the days ahead.

–Bruce Carpenter

Vickie, I am so sorry to hear of the loss of your Mom and Dad just shortly before her passing. Your Mom grew up at Pilot Mountain with my Mom. She was related to the Watts of that community. They went to Pilot Mtn. School together and

to the Watts of that community. They went to Pilot Mtn. School together and when I was reading Mrs. Taylor's obituary to her last night, I told her that I graduated at Freedom High School with you. I never had Mrs. Taylor for a teacher there but I do remember other classmates would say that she was a good teacher. A teacher that you learned from. She has left a legacy to so many students that were in a class that she taught. Mom said that everyone on 'Watts Hill' were all close in friendships back in the day. She said that they didn't have all the distractions that we have today. It was a time when family and neighbors visited one another. Sending my sincere condolences to you at this time. I am sorry that you lost both of your parents so close together and at Christmas. Prayers to you and your family.

–Vickie Campbell



–Michael Goodnight

We are so sorry for your loss. I know they will be missed around here. They were great neighbors. God had a plan for them to go so close together. Bless all the family, if you need anything we are here. Love you all!

–William & Linda Michaels

So sorry to hear of Mrs. Taylor’s passing. She was absolutely my favorite teacher. She and your dad were good neighbors to my mom and and dad-Lester and Evelyn Brewer. We will keep you in our prayers.

–Becky Brewer Walker