Sossoman
Funeral Home & Crematory Center
5th Generation Family Owned & Operated Since 1949.

Russell Mayo Gaylord

None - Aug. 17, 2013

Russell Mayo Gaylord, 88, former Glen Alpine Mayor and retired Burke County Schools teacher died August 17, 2013 after a long battle with advanced dementia and Parkinson's disease. In 2009 he was preceded in death by his wife of 57 years, Iola Carrowan Gaylord.A native of eastern NC, Mr. Gaylord moved to Burke County in1950 to become the Vocational Agriculture teacher at Glen Alpine High School. In the years to follow, Mr. Gaylord became an integral part of the educational, civic, spiritual, and cultural framework of the area, actively serving his God and his community for more than 55 years.He taught at Glen Alpine High for 23 years, and from 1973-1979 he taught at the newly consolidated Freedom High School as the first Vocational Agriculture teacher and as Chairman of the Vocational Education Department.Deeply involved in the Glen Alpine community, Mr. Gaylord served in the town government for 24 years; as Alderman from 1968 -1976, as Mayor of Glen Alpine from 1977 -1987, and again as Alderman from 1994 -1999.He was a charter member, and charter president, of the Glen Alpine Ruritan Club. Named their "Man of the Year 2003," he was recognized publicly for his 42 years of dedicated participation in the club and for his service to the community.A member of the Glen Alpine United Methodist Church, Mr. Gaylord was involved as well in Bible distribution with the Gideon's International. He was also a past president of the Burke County Retired School Personnel, a member of the NC Agriculture Teachers Association, a Life Member of the Morganton Jaycees, and a member of the American Legion.During his high school years Mr. Gaylord became a leader in the Future Farmers of America organization, and in 1943 served as State President of the NC Association of Future Farmers of America.He enlisted in the Army later that year and proudly served in

England, Belgium and Germany as a PFC and Rifleman. When WWII ended he remained in Germany for a year in the Army of Occupation, based in Berlin. After his discharge he enrolled in the East Carolina Teacher's College (later East Carolina University). He transferred and completed his studies at NC State, graduating with Honors with a B.S. degree in Vocational Agriculture Education. He later earned a

Master's degree in Agricultural Education and Ornamental Horticulture from NCSU.In the spring of 1952 he was married on the nationally televised show, "Bride and Groom" a CBS broadcast filmed in NYC. Sponsored by Betty Crocker, the "live" program featured the wedding of a different couple every week.The Gaylords settled into their new home in Glen Alpine and joined the Glen Alpine United Methodist Church. Mr. Gaylord sang in the choir and served in various roles in the church during the next fifty years such as Lay Leader, Chairman of the Administrative Council, Men's Bible Class teacher, church liaison for the GA Cub Scouts, and even as part-time custodian and grounds keeper.A lifelong sportsman, he enjoyed camping, hunting small game, and loved fishing, both in fresh and salt water. He lettered in basketball and baseball at East Carolina, and in 1952 he played a season of semi-pro baseball as an infielder with the Morganton Aggies of the Class D League.He played for his church softball team until he was past 50, and remained in competitive athletics until well into his seventies. He participated annually in the Unifour Senior Games, winning dozens of gold medals in various events. He especially excelled in the horse shoe competition, utilizing his own personal set of gold colored horse shoes.In his large garden Mr. Gaylord grew beautiful flowers that Mrs. Gaylord would cut and arrange for the Sunday church services. He also grew a wide variety of fruit bearing plants and trees that produced the bountiful harvest of apples, pears, figs and berries used to make the countless pies and cobblers the Gaylords shared at church suppers and other community events.Music was deeply rooted in his soul and was a source of pleasure and comfort to him for his entire life. In addition to the church choir he also sang with Morganton's Happy Choraleers and the Grace Ridge Chorus. After a time, because of his disease process, Mr. Gaylord could no longer speak in full sentences. However, when someone started playing or singing a hymn, he would join in and sing two or three verses from memory, without missing a note or a word.In addition to his wife, Iola Midgette Carrowan Gaylord, he was preceded in death by his parents, William Thomas Gaylord and Effie Jane Payne Gaylord, by his six sisters and six

brothers and by his son-in-law, Dr. Van Fotinopoulos. He is survived by his daughter Susan Annette Gaylord of Hopewell, NJ, his grandson Angelo James Fotinopoulos of Glen Alpine, his son Richard Trent Gaylord and Richard’s wife Maureen Fahey Gaylord of Sellersville, PA, and by several nieces and nephews and their families.The family will receive friends between 6:00 - 8:00 pm on Friday, September 6th in the Chapel of the Grace Ridge Retirement Community, 500 Lenoir Road (Highway 18), Morganton, NC 28655. To get to the Chapel enter the Grace Ridge complex and travel up the hill to the Main Entrance and Visitor Parking. At the Entrance, you will be directed to the third floor Chapel location.On Saturday, September 7, 2013 at 11:00 am, there will be a service to celebrate the life of Russell Gaylord at the Glen Alpine United Methodist Church. The family will receive friends beginning at 10:00 am, followed by the service at 11:00. Burial will follow in the Glen Alpine cemetery next door where military honors will be provided by the NC National Guard.In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be given to the "New Building Fund" of the Glen Alpine United Methodist Church, 410 Linville St, Glen Alpine, NC 28628.Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.