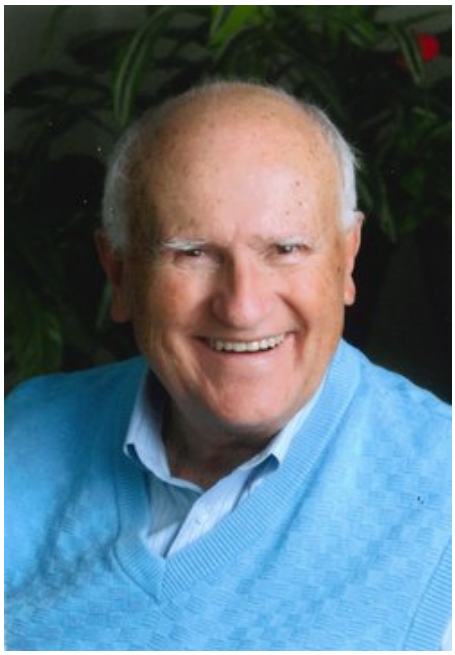
Sossoman
Funeral Home & Crematory Center
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Walter "Rudy" Bell

May 23, 1933 - Aug. 20, 2025

Walter "Rudy" Bell, 92 of Morganton, NC went to be with his Lord on Wednesday, August 20, 2025. Born on May 23, 1933, in South Port, NC, he was the son of the late Walter Enos Bell, Sr. and Aileen Pierce Bell. Rudy was a member of First Baptist Church of Morganton. He worked at JCPenney then later owned and operated Burand's Department Store. Rudy later opened Bell Properties as a real estate agent. He was a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill with a BS in Business and was a member of Phi Delta Kappa and Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Fraternities. Rudy was very active in the community. He was President of the Burke Board of Realtors, Burke County UNC Alumni Association, Burke County United Way, Morganton Kiwanis Club, Downtown Development Association, and the Phoenix Home. Rudy especially cared for the Mimosa Christian Counseling Center and the Hmong Ministries of First Baptist Church. He was a cofounder and chairman of the Burke County Christian Business Men's Committee (CBMC).

Rudy is survived by his wife of 70 years, Carolyn Bell; children, Sara Inman, Annette

Searcy (Bryan), Wally Bell (Alex), and Tom Bell (Gina); and grandchildren, Carson Searcy (Lindsey), Mason Searcy (Stephanie), Fen Inman, Katy Ann Searcy, Jesse Inman, Anna Inman, Sarah Cox (Michael), Sadie Inman, Harrison Bell, and Rudy Bell.

In addition to his parents, Rudy was preceded in death by his daughter, Denise L. Bell; and sister, Joy Cornwell.

The family will receive friends from 12:30 to 2 p.m., Monday, August 25, 2025 at First Baptist Church in Morganton. The funeral will be held at 2 p.m. in the sanctuary with the Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Bland, Jr. and Rev. George Logan officiating. Burial will follow at Forest Hill Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Bell Scholarship Fund, c/o First Baptist Church, PO Box 459, Morganton, NC 28680.

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

Tribute Wall

Carolyn, I was saddened to see this about Mr. Bell’s death. I have many fond memories of the years I worked for him at Burand’s. He was a wonderful boss and a kind, caring man. I love you and all your children and would love to have seen all of you. I pray that the Lord will hold you close to His heart and give you comfort and strength in the difficult days ahead. Hugs to you and all your family.

–Vangie Gober



Dear Bell Family, I am so sorry to learn of Rudy's passing. He was a great neighbor, family man, and community member! I drove through the old neighborhood recently with fond memories of his children who were also part of my childhood. Wally was a long-time classmate. I hope that you find the support that you need as you go forward and always remember that love never leaves. Take good care. - Jan Howard

–Janice Howard

Cindi & I met at the Rudi’s Bible study held at Hugh Tate & Anne Ervin’s house which I think Sara started before we attended. I met Rudi earlier likely at CBMC shortly after moving to Morganton in 1983. Always smiling. Always welcoming. A wonderful friend. Never afraid to admit his weaknesses because he was not depending on his own merits, but on the finished work of Jesus Christ in whom

he rested while he walked among us and in whom he rests now. We regret not having seen him in recent years but we thank God for him, and his dear wife and family. May Our Father in Heaven, Our Savior the Lord and giver of Eternal Life, and his Holy Spirit grant you, the family, peace during this difficult time.

–Dan & Cindi Kuehnert



He was a God loving family man. I have had the pleasure to know all his children and been to there weddings. We all loved Rudy's wife. I know he is in a better place with our Lord.

–Scott Huston



–Ruth Roseboro

I'm so sorry to hear of this loss. He was such a nice person with a heart for the Lord. I remember him from when I attended First Assembly years ago and was in youth group with Wally and Alex. My prayers are with y'all during this time.

–Lori Barlow

–Sue sager

Carolyn & all family! You are very very special folks to Dick and I! Rudy was an amazing man and friend that we met over 45 years ago at First Assembly of God Church! Rudy introduced us to Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts that was Christian based ; helped in several areas of our " child-rearing"! Wonderful memories, like

the time Carolyn, Rudy, Dick & I rode motorcycles to Evangel Cathedral in Spartanburg for a service! Also, remember visiting their home on Lake James while our sons enjoyed swimming ! God bless you all as you grieve, yet rejoice that Rudy is with his Lord Jesus!!! Prudy & Dick Greene

–Prudy Greene

I am so sorry to learn of Rudy's passing! I didn't know he was having any problems, this news really shocked me.

–Jim & Sandy Hawn



In our thoughts and prayers during this time

–Bob and Bronda Green / Cyrus Austin

Rudy walked his talk! As our Sunday School teacher at First Baptist Morganton he was full of biblical knowledge! As board member at Mimosa Christian Counseling Center he insisted upon affordable professionally certified therapists to folks who came for help in life's struggles! He was a big advocate for our scholarship fund which is used when clients cannot pay total costs per sessions God's blessings to his family! Ed

–Ed Hardin

What a good man. Rudy had a heart for the lost, wanting all to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord, and he wanted Christians to grow deeper in their relationship with God through Bible study and prayer. His love of God shone through his love of people. I'm sure my parents are happy to see him again. God bless Carolyn and all of the family.

–Eugenie B. Fein

Please know the Grace Ridge Retirement Community residents and staff have you in our thoughts and prayers. Mr. Bell was an amazing person and will be missed. Everyone that knew him has been blessed. May you find peace and comfort.

–Lisa Miller

–Dan Ervin

Rudy Bell Aug. 20, 2025 My best friend and spiritual father has entered the gates of Heaven. This man has invested in me for the past 46+ years. From the time I was 30 years old to this day. Rudy took me individually on a 1 time per week for one hour for a 6 week journey through a program that was called apply enough Operation Timothy. Together we learned what God expected of us, as Christian leaders, with the leadership tools needed to navigate being a husband, father and leader. We memorized scripture together and we shared our struggles in life to be faithful Christians. Lord, I will be ever grateful for that. My heart and soul goes out to Carolyn, their children, and grandchildren along with the community of faith in Jesus Christ.

–Wayne Giese

–Laura McCoy



Dear Bell Family, I was just thinking about Rudy a few days ago when passing the old Burand's building. I hadn't heard or seen him in some time. We use to sit together sometimes at REALTORS board luncheons. I was so sad to hear today of his passing.My prayers and love to all his family whom he loved so much.Prayers and hugs my Friends.

–Roger Austin Hart



So sorry to hear this for my friends in the Bell and Searcy families. Rudy was a good man and very, very wise. Prayers and best wishes Wally and family...

–David Kiser