



Mr. David Lewis Allen

June 4, 1923 - February 17, 2023

It is with deep sorrow that the Allen family announces the death of Mr. David Lewis Allen, 99. Mr. Allen entered into rest on Friday, February 17, 2023. The Directors of Brown-Pennington-Atkins Funeral Home & Crematory are caring for the family.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 3 o'clock on Sunday, March 5, 2023, at Wesley United Methodist Church, 145 E. College Avenue, Hartsville, SC, with The Rev. Fran Elrod and The Rev. Tony Adams officiating. A visitation will be held in All Saints Hall immediately following the service. The interment will be private.

Mr. Allen died peacefully Friday afternoon, February 17, 2023, in Hartsville, SC. He was the son of Frederick G. Allen and Marguerite M. Fletcher Allen of Hartsville, SC. In addition to his parents, David was preceded in death by his wife of more than 65 years, Anna Divver Vaughan. He also was preceded in death by two brothers, Fred Allen (Sheri Helen) of Corpus Christi, Texas, and Fletcher Allen (Betty) of Franklin, TN; and sisters, Jane Graham (Ed) of Hamlet, NC, and Lutie Gibbes (Jimmy) of Bennettsville, SC.

A child of the Depression, he grew up in rural Darlington County, SC, and went on to graduate from Presbyterian College in 1943. A veteran of World War II, he earned a Purple Heart and Bronze Star for heroic service in the

Ardennes Forest during the Battle of the Bulge.

He returned to Hartsville, where he met the love of his life, Anna Divver, and began raising their two children, David, Jr., and Rachel. He also began his 43-year career with Coker's Pedigreed Seed Company, retiring as General Farm Manager. In those years, he developed a national reputation as a preeminent agriculturist and leader in the soil and water conservation movement. His reputation as a farmer extended far beyond South Carolina. Agricultural experts came from as far as India, Egypt, and China to study farm practices he developed. In 2009, he was awarded the state's highest civilian recognition, The Order of the Palmetto, for his extraordinary lifetime of achievement, service, and contributions of national and statewide significance.

As a conservation leader, he believed that we were but stewards of the land and water, that God blessed us with their use, and we are morally bound to protect them. A member of the Southeastern Conservation Partnership Hall of Fame, he served two terms on the South Carolina Land Resources Commission and as chairman for one of those terms. He served over 30 years as a Conservation District Commissioner in Darlington County, many as its chairman. In 2005, he was named District Commissioner of the Year in South Carolina. On the national stage, he served on the National Association of Conservation Districts Board of Directors for six years.

Locally, he served on the Board of the South Carolina Farm Bureau and on the board and as president of the Darlington County Farm Bureau. Among his many awards, he was recognized as the Darlington County Agriculturist of the Year, as well as Distinguished Agriculturist by the South Carolina Farmers Cooperative Council.

His lifelong devotion to the land saw him continue to manage farmland well

into his 90s. He also was a founder and president of the Coker Farms National Historic Landmark Foundation, which is dedicated to preserving the legacy of Coker's Pedigreed Seed Company's pioneering work breeding plants and developing high-quality seeds.

A lifetime member of Wesley United Methodist Church, David served in any capacity needed, from chairing every committee that required his service – from lay leader to teaching Sunday school to helping run the church soup kitchen. In honor of his decades of service, the David Allen Prayer Garden is just outside the north side of the church sanctuary.

He was a Past Master of Hartsville Lodge #173, Past District Deputy Grand Master, and member of the Omar Shrine, having held numerous local and regional offices. He was recently recognized for his 75 years of service in the Hartsville Lodge. He was also a member of the Hartsville American Legion Post #53.

He is survived by his son, David L. Allen Jr. (Debra); daughter, V. Rachel Allen Franklin (Lonnie), both of Columbia; sister, Elsie Allen Byrd of Hartsville; as well as four generations of many beloved nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial contributions be made to Wesley United Methodist Church, the Coker Farms National Historic Landmark Foundation, or a charity of one's choice. The family would like to thank the Staff at Morrell Nursing Center for their loving care of David.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR 5. 3:00 PM (ET)

Wesley United Methodist Church
145 E. College Ave.
Hartsville, SC 29550

Visitation

MAR 5. 4:00 PM (ET)

Wesley United Methodist Church
145 E. College Ave.
Hartsville, SC 29550

Tribute Wall

SP

“ Prayers for his children I took care of his wife at Morning Side and he was always there to visit her every afternoon .They were a loving couple.Rest in peace together in heaven.

Sara Purvis - March 05, 2023 at 08:13 PM

EA

“ I myself took care of Mr David and I loved to hear him tell me stories of his life and when he told me about the little white Coker building I went and took a picture of it and put it in a frame for him and I seen that smile on his face made me smile to . I'm sure gonna miss him he was a wonderful man.

ellie aycoc - March 05, 2023 at 11:31 AM

MH

“ I met Mr Allen and Mrs Allen at Morningside of Hartsville. What a beautiful couple. He was at Morningside every night I worked to see his wife. Love them both. They are together in Heaven! You are all in my prayers.

Maxine Howle - March 05, 2023 at 07:16 AM

JP

“ *David L. Allen was at the top of the list of America's GREATEST GENERATION! As a young man in his early twenties he fought in World War II, even after suffering a major wound. Upon his return to Hartsville, he soon became farm manager of Coker Farms. It wasn't long before he was named to the board of the Darlington Soil and Water Conservation District. From that position, he became president of the South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts. He then served two terms as a member of the South Carolina Land Resources Commission, one term as chairman. He became a director of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), a position of national leadership he held for a number of years. He specifically served as chairman of the national Soil Stewardship Committee of NACD during that time. As a result of his exemplary leadership in conservation at the state and national levels, Mr. Allen was named Conservationist of the Year in South Carolina, inducted into the Southern States Conservation Hall of Fame by NACD and presented the Order of the Palmetto. He was one of those special people God placed in the garden called Earth to dress it and to keep it. David Allen's legacy of conservation leadership has earned him the prestigious title of honor: A KEEPER OF THE LAND. John W. Parris, Columbia, SC*

John W. Parris - March 03, 2023 at 05:21 PM

RS

“ *Rebecca Skinner lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



Rebecca Skinner - March 01, 2023 at 02:05 PM

LE

“ *Larry Easterling lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



Larry Easterling - March 01, 2023 at 04:01 AM

JB

“ *Jim & Betty lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



Jim & Betty - February 26, 2023 at 12:00 PM

LP

“ *Linda Parker lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



Linda Parker - February 24, 2023 at 06:35 AM

VB

“ *Vernon G Boyd lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



vernon G boyd - February 23, 2023 at 07:07 PM

MI

“ *Mark Shealy III lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



Mark Shealy III - February 22, 2023 at 11:38 AM

DM

“ *David and Rachel, your family was apart of my childhood living on Allen Rd. Dad and David Sr. Working at Coker til their retirements. Love to you and your families.*

Dorothy Harrison Marsh - February 21, 2023 at 08:07 PM

GA

“ *Glori Allen lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



Glori Allen - February 20, 2023 at 11:01 PM

AB

“ *Amy Blackburn lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



Amy Blackburn - February 20, 2023 at 08:57 PM

CB

“ *Carol Elmore Bryant lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



carol elmore bryant - February 20, 2023 at 07:45 AM

CB

Mr. David was a kindhearted and humble man. I will always remember our chats at the Post Office. What a legacy he left behind. Blessings to his family, Carol

carol elmore bryant - February 20, 2023 at 07:47 AM

SS

“ *Sherron Skipper sent a virtual gift in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



Sherron Skipper - February 20, 2023 at 07:32 AM

JK

“ *So very glad I got a hug from David Allen a few weeks before he left us.....he was a true southern gentlemanI will always cherish the conversations I had with him.....my condolences to his family...*



JoFrieda Kelley - February 20, 2023 at 07:12 AM

JC

“ *Jeri A. Cox lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



Jeri A. Cox - February 19, 2023 at 08:18 PM

TT

“ *He had a wealth of knowledge and an interesting man that will be missed by many. Prayers to the family.*



Terry and Mary Thomas

Terry and Mary Thomas - February 19, 2023 at 07:27 PM

AW

“ I have had many blessings in life. They include, a great education, loving parents, a long period working for the United States Congress in DC on several staffs, endless White House functions over those years, sobriety, my health, forgiveness, great friends who love me (flies and all), salvation, enrolling in seminary, getting engaged to Amy, and knowing the love of Jesus Christ. God has given me a lot of wonderful friends since I came to a relationship with Jesus in 2010, and also found sobriety then.

Some of you local friends will know David Allen. David passed away Friday at the age of 99. Thanks to a short stint as a member at Wesley United Methodist Church in Hartsville, I got to know this great man. He was never on Facebook, and I shared these thoughts written here with him often - more recently - again last Christmas.

One afternoon a year or so before Covid, I spent the afternoon with him, after I finished a half day working at in the office of my church at the time. We had lunch with a pastor after that work, and then he and I spent some quality time riding around the county yacking about farming and history, and then some time at his farm. He was in the farming business for the former Coker Pedigree Seed Co. for decades. He was an expert, and I mean a true expert, on cotton and farming in general. We simply talked with ease for hours riding in his truck, and later in the den of his home.

At some point, while a guest today at his home, I saw a plaque on his wall indicating that he had received a Purple Heart in WW2. I never knew this, because, frankly, he never talked about it, as much as we have talked over these last few months. For the first time in my life, I held a Purple Heart in my unworthy hand. I cannot tell you what this meant to Andy Williams.

David received his Purple Heart at 22 years of age, after an incident in Belgium where shrapnel from a bomb dropped by a plane in the snowy days of January 1945, nearly blew the lower half of his face off. I also was able to hold the shrapnel that the doctor's dug

out.....it weighs at least as much as the heaviest fishing weight I have ever held, and was just as large.

Friends, I hope that one day I am as 1/3 as great as David Allen, and just as humble. Up until past 95, he lived alone (his wife died a few years ago), he drove everywhere, he was in church without fail weekly, he was still an active farmer, largely handling the vast acreage of the late Robert and Lois Coker in the rural areas of Darlington County that is still farmed. Specifically, he mowed their property and oversaw it for the surviving family - up until 96 or so. He always had a smile on his face, despite the poor health of a daughter (Rachel) that was nearly killed in 2003 in a car accident as she crossed the road in downtown Columbia after she left work, and after burying his beloved wife, Divver.

What a testimony his life is! David reminds me, unless you give it away, what on earth are we here for?

May we all aspire to be like the heroes in our lives, the ones that are all around us every day, the ones we are often too busy to notice or get to know. You know, the every day ones that God sends our way when we need them, that we ALMOST missed.

For the record, wedding photos that he showed me of his daughter's wedding in the early 1980s when his wife was with him, meant far more to him than the Purple Heart he had in a drawer, or The Order of the Palmetto that Governor Mark Sanford gave him almost ten years ago, that was hanging on the wall of his farm house.

Thank You, Jesus, for letting me "see things" today. Thank You for my sobriety so that I can receive Your blessings.

Knowing David was a blessing. A REAL blessing. Amen.

ANDY

Andy Williams - February 19, 2023 at 02:35 PM

JG

“ Jimmy And Judy Gainey lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen



Jimmy and Judy Gainey - February 19, 2023 at 02:31 PM

PJ

“ Pat James lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen



Pat James - February 19, 2023 at 01:00 PM

VS

“ I met Mr. Allen in 1978. What a wealth of knowledge he had about the environment. He certainly helped and guided me in my career. It is hard to find an individual with a kinder heart, helping spirit and always a helping hand. He will be missed but not forgotten.

Von

Von Snelgrove - February 19, 2023 at 09:29 AM

JO

“ Joyce lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen



Joyce - February 19, 2023 at 08:13 AM

CT

“ I first met Mr. Allen when I was a high school student working at the Seed Company one summer. We then reconnected 30 years later when I returned to Hartsville and began attending Wesley UMC. I’ve never known a gentleman with a greater humble servant’s heart. He served his country, his fellow man, and his savior. Well done sir!! He will be missed.

Curtis Tyner - February 18, 2023 at 10:32 PM

JM

“ Johnny And Denise McLain lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen



Johnny and Denise McLain - February 18, 2023 at 06:22 PM

AW

“ Anna A Williams lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen



anna a williams - February 18, 2023 at 05:34 PM

LS

“ Lavonde Smith lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen



Lavonde Smith - February 18, 2023 at 05:33 PM

RD

“ Rick And Cheri Dunlap lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen



Rick and Cheri Dunlap - February 18, 2023 at 03:49 PM

MS

“ Love and prayers to the family of this most special and dear gentleman. I was lucky enough to know him, visit with him, and hear many stories about his life, and the love of his life, Divver. I will always cherish those moments. Your star will always shine brightly at Wesley, Mr. David, and we will always remember you with so much love!



Melinda & Al Sansbury - February 18, 2023 at 03:33 PM

JB

“ David Allen was a long-time member of the Hartsville American Legion Post 53. We mentioned him with fondness and respect during most every Post meeting. I heard him speak about his WWII experience once. I am glad to have met him and he will be missed by Post 53.

John Benjamin - February 18, 2023 at 01:43 PM

RD

“ Words cannot express how much Mr David and Ms Divva meant to me. I'm sure there was a joyous reunion in Heaven. I will always cherish my memories of them. Love and prayers for the family.

Renee Cooley Douglas - February 18, 2023 at 12:39 PM

SH

“ I have many fond memories of David Allen. He was a great man and lived a large life. I'm sure he's up there telling tales this very minute. Steve Harrison

Steve Harrison - February 18, 2023 at 11:55 AM

DO

“ Dianne O'Neal lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen



Dianne O'Neal - February 18, 2023 at 07:31 AM

MR

“ His dearest Divver was awaiting his arrival at the Gates.

I cherish the times spent with Mr. David.

Deepest sympathy to Dave and his entire extended family.

Mike Ray - February 17, 2023 at 09:05 PM

GB

“ Sorry to hear this! He was a great man!

Greg and Cherri Brown Cole Brown - February 17, 2023 at 09:04 PM

DN

“ very fine man. a true southern gentleman. not to many like him

dave newsome - February 17, 2023 at 08:15 PM

PE

So sorry to hear this. Mr. Allen was a great Christian man & I had a lot of respect for him. He will be sorely missed.

Pat Elliott - February 17, 2023 at 10:25 PM

BM

“*Few words can be said to express the loss of our wonderful friend and neighbor of 54 years. Hartsville and S. C. have lost one of the "greatest generation"*

Bob and Becky McWatty - February 17, 2023 at 07:16 PM

BM

*By luck, or the grace of God, we came to Hartsville in '69 and ended up renting their 1st home next door to them and never left. Oh. what a wonderful man, father, husband, and follower of Jesus. One could not find a better example to follow in life. I suspect that having cheated death in Europe in Dec '44 helped to guide his life for all his remaining years. We have be blessed to have have been a part of his life.
Bob and Becky*

Bob and Becky McWatty - February 18, 2023 at 04:52 AM

PJ

“*Pat James lit a candle in memory of Mr. David Lewis Allen*



Pat James - February 17, 2023 at 06:44 PM