



## Wayne Thomas Counts

March 28, 1947 - July 30, 2024

Wayne Thomas Counts, 77, of Morris passed away on Tuesday, July 30, 2024 at St. Vincent's East Hospital.

Wayne was a devoted husband and loving father. He married his high school sweetheart, Carolyn Knopf, at the age of 18. He graduated from Mortimer Jordan High School in 1965, a three sport letterman in football, baseball, and basketball. After working briefly for State Farm Insurance, he made the decision to attend college and was accepted at Samford University where he graduated in the spring of 1969 with a bachelor's degree in physical education. He would return to Jordan in the Fall of 1969. He served as head junior high football coach for five years, head baseball coach for four years, and head basketball coach for two years. In 1971, he was the coach of the East/West County Baseball Tournament, leading that team to the championship. He left coaching in 1975 to attend UAB where he received his master's degree in American History. He also began driving a school bus route where he often sang to his student his favorite songs from the 50s. In 1989, he returned to coaching one last time to coach both the baseball and football teams, leading both to record seasons. During that fall he helped lead the Blue Devils to a 7-4 season and a trip to the State Play-offs. In the spring of 1990 the baseball team, under his guidance, won Jordan's first Jefferson County Championship. Through the years, Coach Counts held many titles, from janitor to coach to assistant principal. His greatest accomplishment

however was achieved in the classroom where he taught MJHS students the story and history of our country. He was first and foremost always a TEACHER.

He retired from the Jefferson County Board of Education in 1993 but his work was not over. Over the next 25 plus years, he maintained the Morris Cemetery on a volunteer basis. He was instrumental in the growth of the Morris-Kimberly Cemetery Association where he served as President of the association for many years, always focusing on building the association's trust fund to achieve perpetual care. He spent those years helping families when their loved ones passed by making himself available to measure and mark graves to prepare for their burial.

As a family, we are so proud to call him husband, father, and grandfather. He was adored by his students and respected by his community.

Wayne is survived by his wife of 59 years, Carolyn Knopf Counts; two daughters, Carla Counts (Shane Barber) and Heather Swindle (Bobby); and four grandchildren, Bellamy Corley (Brandon), Sawyer Swindle, Branson Swindle and Colin Swindle.

He was preceded in death by his parents, James Hobson Counts and Adrienne Louise Creel Counts.

Funeral services will be held on Friday, August 2, 2024 at 11am at Gardendale Heritage Funeral Home; burial will follow in Morris Cemetery. The family will receive friends on Thursday, August 1, 2024 from 5pm to 8pm at Gardendale Heritage Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made to either The Morris-Kimberly Cemetery Association or Enon Baptist Church.

# Cemetery Details

## Morris Cemetery

8600 Stouts Road  
Morris, AL

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 1. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Gardendale Heritage Funeral Home  
2214 Decatur Highway  
Gardendale, AL 35071  
(205) 631-8810  
gardendalefuneralhome2@gmail.com

## Funeral Service

AUG 2. 11:00 AM (CT)

Gardendale Heritage Funeral Home  
2214 Decatur Highway  
Gardendale, AL 35071  
(205) 631-8810  
gardendalefuneralhome2@gmail.com

# Tribute Wall

CC

“*Sorry to hear of your loss. May God give you the comfort that only He can give. We would like to have come but we were exposed to Covid and are staying for the isolation period. Yours in Christ; Doyle and Cyndi Creel*

Cyndi Creel - August 03, 2024 at 02:12 PM



“*67 files added to the album Life Tributes*



Gardendale Heritage Funeral Home - August 01, 2024 at 11:01 AM

LM

“*Many condolences to Carolyn and family in Wayne's loss. Rest in peace, Wayne, and thanks for all you contributed to the community of Mortimer Jordan. Your memories will survive.*

Linda Buzbee Moore - August 01, 2024 at 09:02 AM

VS

“ My heart goes out to the family. I knew him from the many times he helped us with marking of plots for my family. He was there with us anytime we needed him. He made the burden less heavy. He will be dearly missed. He was a wonderful, kind man.

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**Vickie Swann** - August 01, 2024 at 08:49 AM

CF

“ There are two people who were iconic in Morris, my secure, steadfast hometown, and one was Wayne Counts! The other was Booty Chandler. Wayne, a lifelong friend, was funny, always smiling and playing jokes! My mother, Helen, thought the world of Wayne. When he visited her in her latter years, he always came to the back door with food or flowers or to discuss something about the cemetery which he diligently cared for. We all knew Wayne was the "BEST" at taking care of anything in the neighborhood. Rest is Peace, bud!

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**Carmen Fountain** - July 31, 2024 at 04:19 PM

MW

“ I worked with Carolyn and Wayne in their Wedding Business. It was hard work but there was always fun after work. With everything in the vans and a trip going home, we had the best time singing 50's songs. Both my sons attended MJHS and the loved their history class Wayne taught. Both said it was fun but they learned a lot at the same time. Coach Counts presented history in story form and made you feel you were a part of that history. It was wonderful to know the family: Carolyn, who grew up very close to me and their two daughters Carla and Heather. They both worked hard right next to their Mom and Dad. I just want to add this: There will never never be another like Wayne Counts. He was unusual and unique and I am glad he was my friend.

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**Mary Todd Willis** - July 31, 2024 at 01:47 PM

CB

*Sincere condolences go out to Carolyn and all of Wayne's family. Wayne left an indelible print on everyone's mind and heart because he thought of others first - in his personal life and his career as a teacher. Wayne had a big heart. My late husband, John, said Wayne was a "walking encyclopedia of MJ - and could tell anyone in a nano-second the who, what, where and when of all its people and events." Wayne will be sorely missed and my prayers, sympathy and love go out to his dear family. "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4 Love to all.*

**Carmen T. Belcher** - August 01, 2024 at 11:32 AM

JB

*Carolyn, just heard of Wayne's passing. I'm so sorry. I'm sending sympathy to hou, the girls and grands. Joyce Blankenship*

**Joyce Blankenship** - September 29, 2024 at 12:31 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Wayne Thomas Counts.*



July 31, 2024 at 12:50 PM