



Dr. Billie Olen Blackburn

February 18, 1934 - September 12, 2025

Dr. Billie Olen Blackburn departed this life on Friday, September 12, 2025. He was born February 18, 1934, in Limestone County, Alabama, the eleventh child of Monroe Sublett Blackburn and Winnie Lou Halbrooks Blackburn. He graduated from Athens (AL) High School, received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Auburn University in Auburn, AL, and did post-graduate work at Iowa State University in Ames, IA. He was part of the ROTC program at Auburn, and after graduation worked briefly for the USDA in Tennessee before receiving his commission in the Air Force. He was posted to Nellis Air Force Base outside of Las Vegas, NV, later serving overseas.

While in the service, Billie met and married Angeline (Angie) Armbruster of Bay County, MI. He and Angie raised a daughter and a son, later welcoming a daughter-in-law and grandchildren into the family. Billie and Angie made their home in Norfolk, England; Chaumont, France; Columbia, TN, and Ames, IA, before moving to Athens, AL in 1989 after Billie's retirement as associate director of the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames. Wherever he lived, Billie was deeply involved at his church, teaching classes and serving as a deacon. He lived a life of ministry to others because he loved the LORD and he loved people.

He was preceded in death by his wife Angie, and brothers and sisters Jessie Blackburn, Naola Bailey, Jaque Bailey, Eula Butalla, Reuben Blackburn,

Freeda McCulloch, Doris Blackburn, David Blackburn, Ruth Blackburn, Donald Blackburn, and Tootsie Gooch.

Billie is survived by his daughter Melanie Blackburn of Athens; son Corey Blackburn and wife Joanna of Heath, TX; grandchildren Jonathan Blackburn of Addison, TX; Katherine Blackburn of Charleston, SC; and Ian Blackburn of Heath, TX; and many nieces and nephews.

Limestone Chapel Funeral Home is assisting the family. Visitation will be Friday, September 19, from 11 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. at Sardis Springs Baptist Church, 18310 AL Hwy 251, Athens. The Celebration of Life service will follow at 1 p.m. with Jeff Oates officiating. Pallbearers will be grandsons Jonathan Blackburn and Ian Blackburn and grand- and great-grand nephews Charles Deffenbaugh, Samuel Evans, Jacob Jones, and Tim Spidel. Burial will be in Sardis Springs Baptist Church Cemetery.

If you wish to do something in Billie's memory, the family suggests you contribute to a Christian ministry. Among the ministries that he supported are Sardis Springs Baptist Church (ssbcathens.org), the Navigators (navigators.org), and Gideons International (gideons.org).

Cemetery Details

Sardis Springs Baptist Church Cemetery

Athens, AL

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 19. 11:00 AM - 12:45 PM.

Sardis Springs Baptist Church

Celebration of Life Service

SEP 19. 1:00 PM (CT)

Sardis Springs Baptist Church
18310 AL-251
Athens, AL 35613-4626
(256) 232-2056

Tribute Wall



“ Nancy and I have such fond memories of Billie and Angie. We met at Grand Ave Baptist Church in 1981 and sang in the choir together. For some reason, Angie and I made each other laugh at odd times, making both Nancy and Billie give us sideways glances. I remember Billie and Angie being so loving and kind to Angie's father, always showing him grace. That kindness extended to us and many others. We were delighted when they came to Colorado Springs and we were able to share a meal and spend much of a day together. Their encouragement to follow Christ and serve others was needed and heartwarming. In the past decade, I enjoyed exchanging letters and prayer requests with Billie. He never stopped asking the Lord to use his life. I thank God for him and for his ministry to me and many others.

Mike Jordahl - October 20, 2025 at 04:44 PM

CH

“ I live on Black Road just over the hill from where Dr. Blackburn lived. When my wife and I moved to our house nine years ago, Dr. Blackburn was the first one to show up at our front door to welcome us and invite us to his church. We were and are active members of another Baptist church in the area, but we appreciated the welcome and the invitation. Over the years there have been many times I drove down the road thinking it was so hot I was glad I was in an air conditioned car and not working outside, only to drive by Dr. Blackburn's house or one of his pieces of property and see him working outside. Dr. Blackburn remained faithful to the end in his work and in his Christian life, and I appreciate him for a life well lived.

Charles Hall

Charles Hall - September 18, 2025 at 05:07 PM

DD

“ I rented the little house between him and Melanie. He was a very good man and will be missed by many. My condolences to the family ❤️🙏❤️

Denise Durkee - September 18, 2025 at 05:06 PM

BB

“ As a young boy, I remember going to the home of Billie and Angie Blackburn In Ames, Iowa. My parents had only recently trusted the Lord Jesus as their Savior, and had started attending Grand Avenue Baptist Church in Ames where they met Billie and Angie, and Melanie and Cory. On many occasions, they invited us to their home, extending warm and loving hospitality, and encouraging my parents in their newfound faith. One distinct memory of Billie has come back to my memory, countless times over the last 50 years or more. He had taken my father and I to the university where he was doing veterinary research, and he showed us samples of worms, and parasites, and other such things that were removed from animals and humans. During that visit, I still can remember a long hallway that he led us down while whistling the old hymn, “I Know Whom I Have Believed.” I have heard that same hymn countless times over the last 50 years, and every time it takes me back to that long hallway, listening to Billie whistle that song. The song itself has been a source of great comfort and encouragement to me personally: “For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded, that He is able to keep that which I’ve committed unto Him against that day.”

- from Billy Tom Beedle, San Antonio, TX.

Beedle Bill - September 17, 2025 at 09:21 AM

TN

*Billie was by far the best deacon
That ever served with me in the Churches I served. What owned
belonged to God and his people
If the needed to use it. Everyone
Felt free to asked to use his truck, his van, his house, and
His time. He was with his dear
Angie, available to God and to his people. They took bold and loving
stands for God and the Gospel and raised Godly children. Marie and I
will love
Them forever. Tom NESBITT*

Tom Nesbitt - September 18, 2025 at 02:54 PM

RD

“ *One of my favorite memories of Uncle Billie is when he brought his family to visit ours in Indianapolis. My mother, Eula, was his sister and it was a highlight of our year to get company. They were on their way from Ames, Iowa to Athens, Alabama for a summer visit. Aunt Angie's parents, Mr. & Mrs. Armbruster, were with them. Mr. Armbruster and I would practice our German and I was astounded when Uncle Billie understood us. We had been discussing his garden and Uncle Billie of course, being the avid gardener he was and having listened attentively to his in-laws, had picked it up. Although I was in high school, he treated me like an adult and I appreciated that and I am very happy we got a glimpse into their family life on the road every year. God bless your soul, Uncle Billie. I love you very much.*

Ruth Doxsee - September 16, 2025 at 08:03 PM