



Dr. Jerry Franklin Bartlett

April 17, 1941 - January 28, 2026

Dr. Jerry Franklin Bartlett passed away in his home January 28, 2026. Born in Langdale, Alabama, on April 17, 1941, to J.J. and Estelle Frazier Bartlett, Jerry - the middle of five siblings - grew up in and always considered Double Springs his hometown. A football and basketball player, he graduated from Winston County High School in 1959, and Florence State College in 1963, where he met his wife, Gisela (Jill) Beyer, whom he married in 1963. After a brief career at Crawford & Company Insurance which moved the newlyweds to Atlanta and then Charleston, the Bartletts returned to Alabama, where Jerry enrolled in the Cumberland School of Law while Jill finished her degree at Samford University. Upon graduation in 1967, they moved to Huntsville and then Athens, where Jerry taught business law and real estate at Athens College while Jill taught German at Athens High.

Following publication of his textbook, "Getting Started in Alabama Real Estate," Bartlett rose through the ranks, becoming the youngest Dean of Business at Athens and later, Assistant to the President. In 1990 he was named Interim President of Athens State College, and in 1991 was the first Interim President to be appointed President. During his presidency he transformed Athens State, from the renovation and construction of numerous buildings on campus, to achieving record enrollment, to the building of the school's first free-standing library, to the school's embrace of distance learning, to the rebranding of Athens State from College to University. He

retired in 2008, after 41 years at Athens. He spent the remainder of his years restoring classic Porsches, traveling the world with Jill, and being “Opa” to his beloved grandson.

Jerry was a University of North Alabama Alumni of the Year, a Paul Harris fellow of the Athens Rotary Club, a board member of the Alabama Kidney Foundation, and a proud Methodist. He was predeceased by his parents and wife, his brothers Jim and Tom Bartlett, sister Ann Preuitt, and brothers-in-law Ken Preuitt and Dr. Don Dodd. He is survived by his daughter, Heidi Bartlett Evans, son-in-law D. Somerville Evans, and cherished grandson William Beyer Evans of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; sister Dr. Amy Bartlett Dodd; sisters-in-law Loretta Bartlett and Anita Bartlett; and, numerous nephews and nieces. His family will be forever grateful for “the village” who looked after Jerry, especially in his later years.

Visitation will take place in the sanctuary at Athens First Methodist Church, Saturday, February 7, from 10:00 am until 11:30, with a memorial service to follow. Memorials can be made to the Jerry and Jill Bartlett Endowed Scholarship at Athens State University, Community Table of Athens, Athens Animal Services, and the Alabama Kidney Foundation.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 7. 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

Athens First Methodist Church
208 W Hobbs St
Athens, AL 35611
(256) 232-2020

Memorial Service

FEB 7. 11:30 AM (CT)

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Tribute Wall

JH

“ We were friends with Jerry and Jill Bartett for over fifty years and we shared many happy times with them. We first met Jerry when Jim became a part time instructor with Athens College in 1973. For many years we were in a dinner bridge club with them and they traveled with us several times to Nashville to attend Vanderbilt football games. Our families travelled to Europe with a student tour group and made several vacation trips to Savannah, Georgia, and Asheville, North Carolina. Jerry Bartlett possessed a keen intellect and was a talented professor. We remember celebrating the publication of his book on real estate at a dinner party held at his residence. Jerry Bartlett was a man of integrity and leadership and his legacy as President Athens State University will never be forgotten. Rest in peace dear friend, Jim and Jonita Haynes.

Jim and Jonita Haynes - February 11 at 06:27 AM

DC

“ Jill and Jerry were our first Athens friends. We played bridge, made ties, bought houses, and had first babies during a cherished friendship. I am thankful for years of warm memories. Prayers as you navigate this life without them.

Diane Campbell - February 05 at 11:46 AM

FM

“ Dr. Bartlett was always such a good listener. My dad, who was struggling with dementia, met Dr. Bartlett at the Fiddlers Convention. Dad became obsessed with writing poetry for Dr. Bartlett to read. I was embarrassed at how often Dad showed up at Dr. Bartlett's office to give him another poem or story he had written. Dr. B. was never rude. He always took the time to speak to my dad and thank him for the poem or story. He made my dad feel important because the President of Athens State was reading his poetry. I will never forget how kind he was to my dad. Rest in peace, Dr. B!

Felicia Mucci - February 05 at 10:07 AM

NH

“ I was honored to remember Dr. Bartlett in many roles at Athens State. I was working on my degree in the 80's and attended his Real Estate course when he was an instructor. I still have the book written by him for Real Estate. The thing that most stands out even in his role as President is that you never ran into him that he didn't take the time to speak.
His favorite line when he ran into you was " Hey Kids"
He sometimes just dropped by to visit to see how things were going in Admissions. He always took the time to ask about my family. This was just who he was!
We will miss him. He was definitely one of my favorites!

Necedah Henderson

Necedah Henderson - February 03 at 04:38 PM