

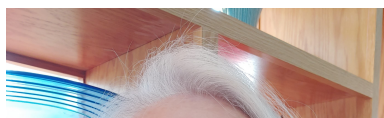


AARP Blacksburg Newsletter

February 2023



Pam Knox and Fred Piercy, Editors





Leslie Pendleton
AARP Blacksburg President

President's Message

“When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.” ~ Kahlil Gibran

We begin each new year by honoring and remembering our chapter members and friends who passed away in the previous year. In this special edition newsletter, our co-editors share Sandy Birch’s very thoughtfully and beautifully written 15 memorials presented during her invocation at the January 17th chapter meeting. To those chapter members who have and are experiencing the profound loss of one or more of these 15, I offer you my sincere and heartfelt condolences.

A week ago, I enlisted the assistance of a first-year engineering student (a family friend) to help me organize the AARP Blacksburg stuff stored in a closet at the Blacksburg Community Center. (She needed community service hours for her Hypatia residential living-learning community, and I needed motivation to tackle the long-overdue task.) Two big plastic tubs labeled “history” were among the many tablecloths, boxes of various AARP publications and chapter brochures, and some additional

procedures, and some realities.

Over the last week, I've taken some time to sort through those two tubs. Already saddened by the deaths of those members memorialized here, seeing all the history, accomplishments, and names and photos of leaders and members who are deceased (or are now unable to be actively involved) was both inspiring and dismaying.

To dampen my spirits even further, my best friend of the last 43-44 years informed me that she and her husband have separated and plan to move toward a "gray divorce," a phenomenon not all that unusual among empty-nesters and retirees. Last, but not least, over the last few months, my husband and I have been working with our financial planner and estate attorney to finalize all the components of our estate plan, something I've personally procrastinated for a long time.

Why don't we openly talk about preparing for the "winter" years and end of life matters and the grief associated with loss, death, and dying? It's normal to wonder, "What will my legacy be? Will I be remembered and for what? What comes after death?" No doubt, by the time we reach the senior years, we've all experienced or observed the difficulties associated with avoidance of putting final plans into place. We've all lost those we love: parents, spouses, partners, family, friends, beloved pets, and even children. Yet, many of us still find these topics difficult. (Ironically, as evidenced by seniors' typical conversations, me included, we don't seem to have trouble talking about Medicare and our ailments, physical and otherwise.)

The truth is that loss, divorce, death, and grief are all the price of love. So, love and appreciate your loved ones every day and talk about and mourn your losses. Know that - according to academics Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler - denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance, and meaning are normal stages of grief. Most importantly, as Gibran said, delight in the love and memories you shared.

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Blacksburg Chapter #2613

Chapter Officers 2023

President – Leslie Pendleton, lkpendleton@gmail.com

Vice President – Jerry Niles, niles@vt.edu and Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu

Secretary – John Burton, jburton@vt.edu

Treasurer – Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu

Board of Directors (term ending date)

2024: John Burton, Judith Jones, Beth Grabau, Fred Piercy, Nola Elliot

2025: Pam Knox, Wilma Dotson, Pat Hipkins

Newsletter Editors: Fred Piercy and Pam Knox

AARP Chapter Website: www.blacksburgaarp.org

Committee Chairs

Awards: John Burton, jburton@vt.edu

Care: Leslie Pendleton, lkpendleton@gmail.com

Chaplin: Sandy Birch, birch@vt.edu

Community Service: Judith Jones, judith@vt.edu

Financial Review: Jerry Niles, niles@vt.edu

Health and Wellness: Leslie Pendleton, niles@vt.edu

Hospitality: Terry Wildman, wiley@vt.edu

Leadership Development Co-Chairs: Jerry Niles, niles@vt.edu /Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu

Legislative: Vacant

LLI Partnership: Jerry Niles, niles@vt.edu

Mailchimp/Website: Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu

Membership: Wilma Dotson, wdotson7@juno.com

Newsletter Co-Chairs: Pam Knox, knoxphd@comcast.net and Fred Piercy, Piercy@vt.edu

Program Co-Chairs: Wendy Baldwin, wendybburg@gmail.com and Pat Hipkins, phipkins@vt.edu

AARP Virginia Liaison: Ben Crawford, ben.crawford@vt.edu

Community Foundation Liaison: Vacant

TOB/BCC Liaison: Joy Herbert, jherbert@blacksburg.gov

VTRA Liaison: Vacant

2023 AARP Memorial Service **by** **Sandy Birch**



The snowman (or woman) is a symbol that expresses the season's spirit and brings joy in festivity. Just like the flower blossoms for spring or pumpkin carvings in autumn, the snowman is a very well-known seasonal figure that makes the winter season filled with lightheartedness.

Our AARP family had fifteen men and women who also brought joy in festivities and in their everyday activities. They were well-known figures within their families, their circle of friends, and in their professions, who could fill all the seasons with lightheartedness, happiness, and kindness.

Today we honor and remember them.

Eula Bertrand Fontenot passed away peacefully on February 9. A proud pioneer season ticket holder at Lane Stadium and Cassell Coliseum, she was also an active member of St. Mary's Catholic Church. Eula had many interests, including cooking some of the best Cajun food, expertly sewing most of the clothing her six children wore and keeping a bountiful garden. All while happily

...caring for six children, here and keeping a beautiful garden, all while happily married to Joe, who predeceased her, for over 71 years. Eula was 92.

George Winfred Hawkins died on March 23 after a brief illness. His early Navy career was followed by degrees from North Carolina State and a PhD from Iowa State in 1963. After 27 years of service as Professor of Agronomy and Extension Agronomist at Virginia Tech, George retired though always sharing his knowledge with the farming community of Virginia. He was a 60-year member of Blacksburg Baptist Church, volunteering his time and talents for any needed tasks. George was honored to receive the Gunnar Teilman Lay Person of the Year Award from the Kiwanis Club in 1997. He was 95.

B. June Schmidt passed away on April 8 after suffering from Parkinson's disease. A professor emeritus of Human Resources and Education at Virginia Tech, her excellence in teaching and research found her in demand as a speaker and consultant, working with colleagues both nationally and internationally. June was also engaged with community projects to include the Woman's League of Voters and served as president of our AARP chapter in 2000. She relished frequent travel around the world with her husband, playing golf in far off places such as Spain's Costa del Sol. June was 89.

Harriett Cooper died on April 18. She was born in the South Bronx, N.Y. in 1927, the eldest of three children. Harriett went to Hunter College, earning her PhD in Animal behavior and worked as a researcher, seeking a cure for epilepsy. She was passionate about the arts, science and the environment. In later life, Harriett volunteered for the League of Women Voters and played the alto recorder and bass drum with community groups. She was 94.

Dale Duanne Wolf passed away on April 22. In 1967, he joined the faculty at Virginia Tech and as a professor of Agronomy, his research and extension work emphasized forage crop management and physiology and biofuels production. Dale was a longtime active member of the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church and a Cub and Boy Scout leader. He loved gospel and country music and played in several local bands. Dale found joy in refurbishing several classic tractors and contributed to a Guinness World Record by driving his 1937 F-20 Farmall in a parade with more than one thousand other antique tractors. He was 89.

Violet Lureen Shields Drake died in Winchester, Virginia, on May 3. She and her husband Charles moved to Blacksburg in 1956 when Charles joined the Virginia Tech faculty. Violet became a research technician and later the supervisor of the Clinical Pathology Lab at what is now the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, a position she held for 30 years. She was very active in the Blacksburg Baptist Church for over 50 years, served on the local AARP board, and volunteered at the Montgomery Regional hospital and the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry. Violet was 94.

Robert “Bob” Hayes Giles Jr. died bravely on May 5, suffering from dementia. He was a Professor Emeritus of Wildlife Management at Virginia Tech where he taught for 30 years. In the early 1960s, Bob was a pioneer in envisioning the use of computers for natural resource management and at his retirement party, a colleague noted that Bob has more ideas in an hour than most people have in a lifetime. He was a speaker at the first Earth Day at Virginia Tech in 1970, and when challenged by a student in the audience, “What are you doing about zero population growth Dr. Giles, Bob held up his hand in a peace sign and answered, “Two children and a vasectomy!” He was 88.

Carl Eugene Burke passed away on June 5 after a long and full life. After serving four years in the U.S. Air Force, he attended Niagara University, receiving a degree in accounting. In 1965, Carl came to Virginia Tech and eventually worked his way up to Assistant Vice President for Finance and University Comptroller, and Assistant Vice President for University Affairs. He was an active member of St. Mary’s Catholic Church, on the Board of Directors at Warm Hearth, and a longtime volunteer at the Montgomery Country Christmas Store, in charge of the men’s senior section. Carl was 93.

Joyce Anne Schad Bowling passed away on June 7. She grew up in Blacksburg, was a Navy veteran, and worked in a variety of positions including managing the Piedmont Condominiums in Blacksburg. Anyone who knew Joyce knew she loved cats and volunteered for years at the Humane Society of Montgomery County. It was said she rescued half the cats in Blacksburg and fed the other half. She also loved to run marathons and 10K’s. Even though

she did not start running until she was 40 years old, she brought home several ribbons and trophies. Joyce was 82.

George Terrill Blume died on August 7. He was a European theater World War II veteran having served in the U.S. Army. George was a graduate of Virginia Tech class of 1950 and received his doctorate in Sociology. He was a dedicated volunteer at Blacksburg Baptist Church and served the American Legion Post 182 for 79 years. George chose to sponsor and support African-American male and female students in the leadership program of the Corps of Cadets at Virginia Tech and hopes future contributions will continue his efforts. He was 96.

Michael Kosztarab, Professor Emeritus of Entomology, died on September 6. his autobiography, "Transylvanian Roots captured his and his wife's exciting, though dangerous adventures in escaping from Budapest when the Hungarian Revolution occurred, and their many travels thereafter. After arriving in the United States and completing his PhD at Ohio State, Michael became a professor of entomology at Virginia Tech from 1962 until his retirement in 1992. He served as the curator until 2003 of the largest and oldest insect collection in Virginia containing over 1.1 million specimens and was the recipient of many prestigious awards. Michael was 95.

James (Jim) Wolfe, founding President and President Emeritus of the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) passed away peacefully in his sleep on October 20. Prior to his leadership role at VCOM, Jim's career spanned 32 years at Virginia Tech, serving as Chemistry Department Chair and Vice Provost of the University. Students often remarked on how Dr. Wolfe knew their names and remembered unique things about them from their first day at VCOM. At graduation he personalized each announcement with a special comment and the students became physicians knowing the college president cared about them. Jim was 86.

Elizabeth Ann Agnew Ritchey passed away on November 21 after suffering from a stroke. Upon graduation from college, she and Jewell embarked on a 65-year journey together which included a move in 1963 to Blacksburg. Liz taught on the faculty at both Radford University and Virginia Tech, earning her

taught on the faculty at both Radford University and Virginia Tech, earning her PhD in health and physical education, while also managing to be involved in many activities, including Cub Scout leader and Band Booster president at Blacksburg High School. Closest to her heart was the Whitewater Women's Canoe Club that she started after retiring from teaching. Liz was 87.

Delbert (Del) Hamilton Futrell passed peacefully on December 3. He and his wife Wendy enjoyed nearly 51 years of marriage, spending many of those years in Potomac, MD, where they raised their family. His seven grandchildren called him Hoppy for reasons no one fully remembers. He was a lifelong lover of music, especially classical and barbershop, and in retirement sang in a barbershop chorus, The Kentuckians, in Lexington. In Blacksburg, where he enjoyed living for the past eleven years, Del and his wife participated in the Mount Tabor Ruritan Club. He was 81.

Val Eugene Coluni passed away on December 22 after having a heart attack and dealing with declining health. Val derived great joy from his work and had a rewarding career in Human Resources at companies including GE and Burroughs Corporation, for which he traveled extensively in Latin America and Asia Pacific. At the end of his career, he worked as a student advisor in the Deans Office of the New Jersey Institute of Technology. In his retirement in Blacksburg, he volunteered with the AARP, advocating with state legislators for retired people, and wrote a newsletter column sharing his perspective. Val was 90.

In the 1950s a popular song was introduced, Frosty the Snowman. The final lines of the lyrics, slightly modified, go like this..."For Frosty, the snowman, had to hurry on his way. But he waved goodbye, saying, 'don't you cry. We'll be together again someday.'" Today, we say goodbye to these fifteen precious friends and colleagues, without tears.

Blacksburg Chapter
Membership Application for 2023 (or join online:
blacksburgaarp.org)

Name: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Spouse/Partner: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Annual (Calendar Year) Dues: \$15.00 (includes spouse or partner)

New _____ Renewal _____ Life Member (90+) (free) _____ Lifetime member _____

Please consider an additional donation to support our AARP chapter and its projects.

\$10 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ Other \$ _____

Donations to the Blacksburg Chapter help us carry out our mission and community service activities while keeping member dues as low as possible. However, donations to the chapter are not tax deductible.

Please make your check payable to "Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613." Mail check and this form to AARP Blacksburg, P.O. Box 10082, Blacksburg, VA 24062.

Dues deadline: January 31, 2023



AARP BLACKSBURG CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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