



Donnis Cecil Lyon

December 25, 1931 - April 29, 2013

Donnis Cecil Lyon, 81, of the Shady Grove Community in Laurel, Mississippi, passed away on April 29, 2013, at Forrest General Hospital in Hattiesburg. Born early on Christmas morning, 1931, Mr. Lyon was the middle child of Carl William Lyon and Esther Elizabeth Powell Lyon of Laurel. His siblings, Delores Lyon Reeves and Dorman Lyon, are both lifelong residents of Shady Grove Community.

In 1953, Mr. Lyon married his high school and college sweetheart Mary Ball at Shady Grove Baptist Church, on May 29. This year's anniversary would have been their sixtieth. A well-known and highly respected educator, Mr. Lyon earned degrees in biology and chemistry from the University of Southern Mississippi after completing an A.A. degree at Jones Jr. College, where he competed on the Bobcats' track team. Subsequently, Mr. Lyon attended Mississippi State University and the University of Southern Mississippi, receiving Master's degrees in Biology and in Educational Administration, as well as a Specialist's Degree in biology.

During a teaching career that spanned forty years of service to the State of Mississippi, Mr. Lyon taught at Ruleville High School in the Delta, Jones County's Sweetwater Community, as well as Central and Mason Schools, Maddox Junior High and R. H. Watkins High School, all in Laurel. He also conducted field research through The Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. From 1970 until his retirement in the mid-1990s, Mr. Lyon taught various biology courses, particularly anatomy and physiology,

at his alma mater, Jones Jr. College. Greatly admired as an inspiring teacher and gifted lecturer, Mr. Lyon enjoyed few activities more than providing students with a spirited, enlightening and rewarding educational experience. During episodes of ill health over the last decade and a half, Mr. Lyon took frequent comfort and considerable pleasure in so many of his care providers being former students. Mr. Lyon received numerous honors for his exceptional instruction, including "Teacher of the Year" at Jones Jr. College. Nothing provided more gratification to him, though, than proudly following the successful careers of his former students.

After retirement, Mr. Lyon embarked on a virtual second career as a genealogical researcher, compiling several volumes of material on his Lyon, Powell, Lowe, Collins, Murray, Welborn and Valentine ancestors as well as Mrs. Lyon's Ball, Smith, Ishee, Holifield and Long forebears. Various other researchers, churches and interested groups sought Mr. Lyon's valuable information, keen insights and scrupulous research. He also served as a genealogy and family history consultant for Professor Victoria Bynum's book, *The Long Shadow of the Civil War: Southern Dissent and Its Legacies*. Mr. Lyon thoroughly enjoyed the connections he made and assistance he gave through this avocation.

A football and basketball standout for the Shady Grove Golden Eagles during high school, Mr. Lyon remained an avid sports fan throughout his life, enthusiastically following college football and basketball (particularly JCJC and USM teams), Brett Favre's career, and the Boston Celtics. After one of his sons graduated from the University of Alabama, Mr. Lyon became a staunch supporter of the Crimson Tide as well. Classical music constituted yet another enduring hobby. Mr. Lyon accumulated an enormous collection of recordings and listened to music several hours each day. His favorite television program was always *Gunsmoke*, a series that fortunately continued in reruns. However, Mr. Lyon's four grandchildren undoubtedly provided him with the most enjoyment, to which his many nieces, nephews, and their children added. Finally, Mr. Lyon will be deeply missed by his constant companion,

Chico the Chihuahua, who appeared from nowhere one Christmas morning (Mr. Lyon's birthday).

Mr. Lyon is survived by his wife of sixty years, Mary Ball Lyon, sons Kenneth Lyon (wife Donna Ford Lyon) of Flowood, Mississippi; Keith Lyon (wife Laura Ward Lyon) of Washington, North Carolina; and Kevin Lyon (wife Tina Boykin Lyon) of Laurel, as well as a sister, Dolores Lyon Reeves (husband Felton Reeves) of Laurel and a brother, Dorman Lyon (wife Doris Lowe Lyon) of Laurel. Mr. Lyon also leaves four grandchildren, Sara and William Lyon of Laurel, Kelsey Lyon of Washington, NC, and Rachel Lyon of Flowood.

Visitation will be held at Memory Chapel in Laurel on Friday evening, May 3, from 5:00 until 8:00. Funeral services are scheduled for 11:00 A. M. on Saturday, May 4, also at Memory Chapel, with burial at Shady Grove Baptist Cemetery to follow. The Reverend Dr. Ronald Bishop, one of Mr. Lyon's colleagues from Jones Junior College, will officiate, with pastoral assistance from Reverends Danny Pitts and Joseph Harris. Pallbearers consist of son Kevin Lyon, brothers-in-law Floyd Ball and Charles Boone, nephew Michael Ball, Dale Holifield and Roy Boutwell. Mr. Lyon's long-time colleague and friend W. H. Pope, along with his many nephews, will serve as honorary pallbearers. Thank all the relatives, friends, colleagues and former students of Mr. Lyon who have expressed their condolences in various deeply appreciated ways.

Tribute Wall

J1

“ *With deepest sympathy. So sorry for your loss.*

Janet Abercrombie White - Class of 1964 - May 05, 2013 at 07:38 PM

DA

“ *Donnis Cecil Lyon*

DELINDA ASHLEY-SMITH - May 04, 2013 at 10:20 AM

CF

“ *I have fond memories of Coach Lyon at RH Watkins. He was a very caring teacher. My sympathy and prayers are with his family.*

Charlene Myrick Ferguson - May 03, 2013 at 10:06 AM

JJ

“ *I am so sorry to hear about Mr. Lyons passing. He was the best teacher I ever had and I learned so much from him. He was a wonderful christian man and I admired him so much. Jane Johnson a former student*

Jane (Webb) Johnson - May 03, 2013 at 09:58 AM

CH

“ *Mr. Lyon, Taught Me in the Sixth Grade at Central School, too...LHS Class of '62, He was Our First Male Teacher, and A Wonderful Role Model for Us All. May All of You Know, He was a Great Teacher and A Blessing in preparing Us for Junior High!!! He made a Difference in Our Lives! Remembering You Prayerfully in these Most Difficult Days!!*

Charles Hudson - May 02, 2013 at 05:43 PM

DH

“ I, along with countless other Radiology students, had the pleasure of having Mr. Lyons as our Anatomy and Physiology teacher at JCJC in 1979. Radiology students were in his afternoon class. He was a great teacher to keep us alert and his instruction was an asset in helping the students to pass their National Certification Exam for Radiology. May you take great comfort in your memories of Mr. Lyons, and also in the fact that he so wonderfully touched so many students lives. God Bless you.

Debbie Bankston Haas - May 02, 2013 at 02:07 PM

KJ

“ Donniss was one of my brother's classmates at Shady Grove. I went through the Laurel school system, but never had him as a teacher. He was at Mason Elementary and Watkins when I attended those schools. I did teach all three of his sons and Tina Boykin when I taught at West Jones. Always thought a lot of Donniss and Dorman. Sympathies and prayers for the families.

Ken Jones - May 02, 2013 at 01:05 PM

JT

“ I thought quite a lot of Coach Lyon. He was always one of my favorites. God rest his soul.

JOHN RICHARD THAMES - May 01, 2013 at 06:19 PM

MC

“ He was so good to everybody, to all of us. I have nothing but very fond memories of him. He set such a great example for all of us and he was like that all of the time. My sincere sympathies go out to his family. May he rest in peace. Mack Cameron

Mack Cameron - May 01, 2013 at 04:58 PM

GH

“ There is no higher calling than being a good teacher and Coach Lyons was that. I had him as a teacher in Junior High and High School as well as a coach in basketball and will never forget what a caring man he was. He will be missed by a multitude of his students.

Gregg Hilton - May 01, 2013 at 02:06 PM

MT

“ I'm so sorry to hear of Mr. Lyon's death. I have so many wonderful memories of him as one of the best teachers I ever had. My prayers are with you, Merry Beth Tigert

Merry Beth Tigert - May 01, 2013 at 02:00 PM

SH

“ Coach Lyon was one of those teachers one never forgets! I am relatively certain that the caring, intelligent way he presented biology is one of the main reasons I chose my career in laboratory medicine. He was never too busy to answer questions and always had a kind word for everyone!

Shirley Hilton - May 01, 2013 at 01:57 PM

SC

“ Coach Lyons was my 6th grade teacher at Central School. He was my all-time favorite teacher and a true role model. I know I speak for countless others in saying what a special person he was to so many students. Certainly to the Class of 65.

Susan Waits Clarida - May 01, 2013 at 11:17 AM

LL

“ *Mary & Family,
Our thoughts and prayers are with you. We are so sorry for your
loss and regret we are unable to make the trip to Laurel for the
funeral.*

Larry (Latrell) & Margie Lyon - May 01, 2013 at 10:28 AM