

# Obituaries

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School where their mothers were friends and taught side by side. Gene and Becky quite literally grew up together, often seeing one another on teacher workdays. They first dated when Gene was 14, relying on their mothers to take them to the movies, ballgames, or anywhere else they wanted to go. Though they eventually went their separate ways, they later reconnected and rekindled their relationship.

After marrying, Gene and Becky lived in Polkton, NC, and later moved to their home in Norwood, where they began attending First United Methodist Church of Norwood.

Gene was a devoted family man. He had a stepson, Becky's son Brett Barry, and together Gene and Becky had two children, Thomas Eugene (Hannah) and Anne Marie. The family spent many summers on Lake Tillery, swimming, tubing, boating, and attempting to ski. Gene especially loved slinging the kids around on the tube. Each summer, he welcomed extended family to the lake, taking everyone out on the houseboat to watch Fourth of July fireworks. Gene, Becky, and the children also enjoyed annual trips to the beach and the mountains.

In 1996, Gene began working for the Rockingham ABC Store. When a second store opened in 2007, he managed it, a role he held until his retirement in 2022. He especially enjoyed talking with customers and getting to know their stories.

Motorcycles were a lifelong passion for Gene, beginning with minibikes at age seven and continuing throughout his life. He met one of his closest friends, David Brewer, in Sunday School when they discovered their shared love for motorcycles. From that moment on, they were inseparable riding partners. Gene and David often rode alongside friends Steve Poindexter and Harold Thompson, taking trips across the country to destinations such as Myrtle Beach, St. Augustine, California, Montana, Colorado, Nova Scotia, and Key West.

Later in life, Gene and Becky enjoyed traveling on cruises with his in-laws, Haskell and Annette Tarlton, and Anita Tarlton and David Waters. Their travels took them from Alaska, Cozumel and Nova Scotia, and they deeply enjoyed seeing the world together.

Gene was a man of tradition and will be fondly remembered for his signature Palm Land polo shirts and Members Only jackets. They just don't make 'em like they used to.

Gene is survived by his wife and children. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by an infant daughter. A service to celebrate his life was held on Sunday, January 4th at Leavitt Funeral Home in Wadesboro, with a visitation one-hour prior to the service. Inurnment was held at Forestville United Methodist Church in Lilesville, NC.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Tillery Compassionate Care (960 North First Street, Albemarle, NC 28001) or First United Methodist Church of Norwood (PO Box 948, Norwood, NC 28128).

## Eugene Carrington Wall

Eugene Carrington Wall, of Norwood, NC, formerly of Wadesboro, passed away on Saturday, December 27, 2025. He was born in Wadesboro on February 23, 1963, to the late Thomas Diggs Wall, Jr. and Marie Harkey Wall.

Gene's father was ill for many years during Gene's childhood and passed away early in Gene's life. Gene had heard his father call Tom Sr. "Daddy," and when Gene heard it, he ask how he could have 'two daddies.' From that point on, Tom Sr. became "Two-Daddy" to Gene. Two-Daddy was dear to Gene's heart and served as a father figure after Gene's father's passing. Summers were spent on Lake Tillery, swimming, boating and skiing.

Gene was a member of the Southview Academy Class of 1981, where he played basketball and was voted "Most Likely to Succeed." He later attended Appalachian State University, graduating in 1985 with a degree in Business Management.

Gene loved his work. In the early 1980s, he worked at the Wadesboro Woodmen of the World pool alongside his friend, Mack Odom. He later worked for CMC Building Supply, managing stores in Mount Gilead and Norwood, and also managed carwash operations in Wadesboro and Cheraw.

In 1992, Gene married the love of his life, Becky Tarlton Wall. They had known one another since childhood, first meeting as children in classroom A2 at Anson High

## ‘Writing Your Story’ Workshop

Everyone has a story to tell. Perhaps you lived an adventurous life and want it documented, traveled widely and wish to share your experiences, or simply want to leave a written record for your grandchildren and future generations.

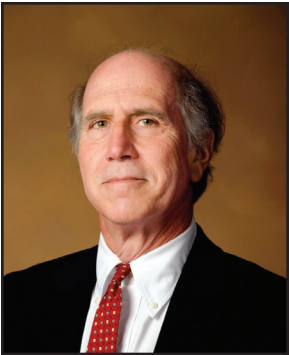
A workshop led by Joseph Bathanti, author of 20 books spanning poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, is designed to help participants begin shaping their life stories. Bathanti will present "Writing the Memoir" from 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. on January 31 at the First Presbyterian Church fellowship hall. The cost is \$45 and includes a catered lunch.

Bathanti is a former Poet Laureate of North Carolina, serving from 2012 to 2014, and the recipient of the 2016 North Carolina Award for Literature. He was inducted into the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame in 2024 and is a Distinguished Professor at Appalachian State University.

Bathanti also has a special connection to Anson County, having served as an Artist in Residence here during the 1980s.

Those wishing to register before January 28 may call or text Sandy Bruney at 704-949-7523 or email [info@ansoncountywritersclub.org](mailto:info@ansoncountywritersclub.org).

The program is sponsored by the Anson County Writers' Club.



**Joseph Bathanti**

## Application Period Now Open For State Government Summer STEM Program

**High school girls interested in STEM-related public service careers can apply through February 23**

The application period for the annual Lady Cardinal Mentorship Program is now open. North Carolina high school girls in grades 9 through 12 may apply now through February 23, 2026, for the four-week paid summer STEM enrichment opportunity with North Carolina state government. Established in 2019 by the North Carolina Department of Administration's Division for Women and Youth, the Lady Cardinal Mentorship Program provides college-bound students with the opportunity to explore STEM-based careers within state government while encouraging more young women to enter these fields.

According to a report published by the National Girls Collaborative Project, women make up 48 percent of the national workforce but accounted for only 35 percent of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics jobs in 2025. The Lady Cardinal Mentorship Program aims to nurture interest among high school girls in STEM-related public service careers and help address this gap.

"STEM careers continue to be on the rise and in high demand, proving to be among the top-tier professions of today and tomorrow," said North Carolina Department of Administration Secretary Gabriel J. Esparza. "We need to get more of our best and brightest students interested in STEM careers, including by encouraging more girls to pursue careers in this growing field."

Interested students can find Lady Cardinal program details and application information by visiting the Department of Administration's website at [www.doa.nc.gov](http://www.doa.nc.gov).

Candidate interviews will take place in mid to late March, with selected applicants notified of their placement in April. The mentorship program will run weekdays from July 6 through July 31.

All mentees are expected to work 40 hours per week, with time divided between working side-by-side with women leaders for 24 hours each week and participating in a group project for 16 hours weekly. The summer enrichment experience also includes lunch-and-learn sessions and field trips to various state government agencies. Students who complete the program will receive a \$1,700 stipend.

Participating agencies this year include the North Carolina departments of Administration, Commerce, Environmental Quality, Natural and Cultural Resources, Public Safety, Revenue, and Transportation, along with the Office of State Budget and Management and the Office of State Human Resources.

In addition to working on a technology project, last year's Lady Cardinal mentees took part in a geology tour with the Department of Environmental Quality, visited the Biogen campus at Research Triangle Park, and participated in lunch-and-learn sessions with state government leaders, among other educational activities.

The purpose and goals of the Lady Cardinal Mentorship Program are based on recommendations from the 2018 Status of Women in North Carolina Employment and Earnings Report, released by the Division for Women and Youth in collaboration with the Institute for Women's Policy Research. The report highlights disparities in employment and earnings between women and men across the state. To learn more about the report and apply for the Summer 2026 Lady Cardinal Mentorship Program, visit [www.doa.nc.gov](http://www.doa.nc.gov).

**About NCDOA and the NC Division for Women and Youth** The North Carolina Department of Administration serves as the business manager for North Carolina state government. Under the leadership of Secretary Gabriel J. Esparza, the department oversees government operations and advocacy programs that promote and assist diverse segments of the population that have been traditionally underserved. The North Carolina Division for Women and Youth works to advise the governor, state legislators, and state leaders on issues impacting women and youth across the state.

## Anson Department of Social Services Opens Heating Assistance Applications for Eligible Households

**Applications for Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) now being accepted**

The Anson County Department of Social Services (DSS) invites qualifying residents to apply for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) to help with heating costs this winter. Due to the federal government shutdown, there was a delay in accepting applications, but the program is now fully underway.

Automated LIEAP payments were distributed at the end of November for households with a person who met one or more of the following criteria:

- 60 years of age or older,
- A person with a disability receiving services through the NCDHHS Division of Aging,
- Currently receives Food and Nutrition Services (SNAP),
- Or received a LIEAP payment during the 2024-2025 season.

Households that meet these criteria but did not receive the automated payment may apply online starting December 10, 2025, at [epass.nc.gov](http://epass.nc.gov). Additionally, residents can contact Anson DSS for assistance with applications by phone, in person, or by printing a paper application from [epass.nc.gov](http://epass.nc.gov) to mail, fax, or drop off at the agency.

For all other eligible households, applications opened on January 2, 2026. Applications will be accepted until March 31, 2026, or until funds are exhausted.

To be eligible for LIEAP, a household must meet the following criteria:

- At least one U.S. citizen or qualifying non-citizen in the household,
- Income at or below 130% of the federal poverty level,
- Responsible for heating costs.

For more information, residents can visit the Anson County DSS office at 118 North Washington Street in Wadesboro or call the agency for assistance.

## Anson Crisis Ministries Provides Free Food Tuesday Through Friday

Anson Crisis Ministries distributes free food items to over 1,000 families each month. This adds up to an estimated 50,000 people a year in Anson and surrounding counties. They serve families Tuesday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Anson Crisis Ministries is located at 117 North Rutherford Street in uptown Wadesboro. The telephone number is 704-694-2445.



## Mrs. Ann Caudle Brooks

**June 1, 1935 — December 26, 2025**

On Friday, December 26, 2025, Mrs. Ann Caudle Brooks, 90, passed away at her home.

Funeral services were held at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 31, 2025, in the Chapel of Leavitt Funeral Home. Interment followed in Anson Memorial Park.

The family greeted friends one hour prior to the service Wednesday at the funeral home.

Annie Lou Caudle was born June 1, 1935, in Anson County, NC and was a daughter of the late

James Gilbert Caudle and the late Julia Margaret Thomas Caudle. She was a graduate of Polkton High School.

She worked for a brief period at Polkton Manufacturing, but her main career in life was that of being a devoted wife and mother at which she excelled.

Ann was a longtime and faithful member of Poplar Hill United Methodist Church, where she taught Sunday school, sang in the choir, and directed Christmas plays. Her service to the Lord extended far beyond the church walls through her thoughtful ministry of sending cards, making phone calls, and offering encouragement to family and friends in both joyful and difficult times. Even as her own health declined, Ann continued this ministry, often praying for healing so she could send more cards and make more phone calls to those she loved.

Ann was an avid bird enthusiast who found great joy in the natural world. She loved watching the birds at her feeder, practicing their calls, and delighting in her clock that marked each hour with birdsong. She also treasured collecting seashells and rocks, often asking family members to bring her back a small shell or stone from their travels to add to her cherished collection.

Those who are left to cherish her memory are her children, Bonnie Thomas of Charlotte, Patty (Michael) Livingston of Wadesboro and Warren (Ann) Brooks of Oak Island; her grandchildren, Kasey (Rob) Rosenhaus, Colby (April) Thomas, Collin Thomas (girlfriend Lauren), Patrick Livingston (girlfriend McKenzie), Cydney Livingston (boyfriend Dan), Melissa (Stan) Dean, Stephanie (John) Springer, Brandon (Kim) Brooks and Lila Brooks; her great-grandchildren, Kami Rosenhaus, Rhett Thomas, Savannah Dean, Karter Dean, Jace Dean, Lexie (Travis) Wilson, Langston Springer, Pierson Springer, Maybree Springer, Beckett Brooks and Colton Brooks; her great-great-grandchildren, Beckham and Holland Wilson; her brothers and sister, Larry (Ann) Caudle, Jean Wright, and Rodney (Denise) Caudle, all of Polkton; her sister-in-law Betty Sue Caudle of Polkton; and her nieces and nephews and their families.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Benjamin "Benny" Thomas Brooks; her son Jeffrey Brooks; her infant twin grandsons and her brother James Caudle.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Poplar Hill United Methodist Church, c/o Emily Carpenter, 720 Ross Wright Rd., Polkton, NC 28135.

The arrangements were in care of Leavitt Funeral Home and online condolences may be made at [www.leavittfh.com](http://www.leavittfh.com).

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