



*Thomas Henry
Biggerstaff*

Jan. 29, 1940 - Sept. 26, 2024

Thomas Henry Biggerstaff, 84, of Morganton, NC passed away unexpectedly Thursday, September 26, 2024 at his home in the Lake James Community. He was born in Burke County, NC on January 29, 1940, and was the son of Paul Cole Biggerstaff and Ruth Lee Houk Biggerstaff.

Tom was known to many in Burke County as Coach Biggerstaff or the Driver Ed teacher who made his students get out and apologize to a stop sign if they didn't come to a complete stop in his class, which he denied even after retirement. To his children, Gaye and Tee, he was known as "Daddy" and to his grandchildren, he was simply known as "Da."

Tom knew what he wanted in life, went after it, and didn't let many things stand in his way. He loved the Glen Alpine Green Waves and played sports there in his high school years. After high school, he served in the United States Army. He graduated from Appalachian State University with a Bachelors in Education in 1972, and went on to obtain his Masters in Education from NC A&T in 1978. He taught many years at Freedom High School and coached tennis and football. He also coached tennis at the Morganton Recreation Center. After retirement, he went back to teaching for adult corrections until his final retirement. He was an avid fan of sports, really any sport. From teaching his children tough love on water skis at Lake James, to golf, football

and tennis: he loved coaching sports. This led to being awarded the Burke County Open Senior Champion in 2004 and he went on to be inducted in the Glen Alpine Sports Hall of Fame in 2015. His favorite teams were anyone but Carolina, but he pulled for Duke.

Despite his strong work ethic, he still found time to relax and have a good time. His favorite thing to do was to sit out on his back deck overlooking Table Rock and Shortoff Mountain at Lake James while listening to music. He also enjoyed boat rides to catch up on the latest developments and renovations across the lake when the weather was right. In his earlier years, he was well known for his excellent shag lessons which he taught at the Elks Lodge.

Tom will be missed dearly by all his immediate, extended, and chosen family and friends.

Left to cherish his memory are his daughter, Gaye Biggerstaff Jones, his son, Thomas "Tee" Biggerstaff and his wife, Christy; sisters, Barbara Wise, Brenda Kemp, and Becky Ligon; brother, Randy Biggerstaff (Betty); grandchildren, Daniel (Erika), Drew, Cal, Kayla, Austin, Greyson, and Madelyn; great-grandchildren, Attleigh, Harper, and Easton; as well as numerous nieces, nephews and extended family.

Tom was preceded in death by his brothers, Lawrence "Chick" and Larry "Puff" Biggerstaff; sisters, Tina Clontz, Betty Causby, Bea "Sis" Williams, and Bertha Bradshaw; and a great-granddaughter, Lila.

Services for Mr. Biggerstaff will be held at a later date.

The family would like to express their appreciation to the Lake James Fire Department, Lake James Fire & Rescue and the Burke EMS for their assistance.

In lieu of flowers, the family would like to request donations be made to the Lake James VFD Station 68, 3222 NC-126, Morganton, NC 28655 in Tom's memory.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



–Anonymous

I'm sending my deepest sympathy to Gaye and Tee and all of Tom's family as they grieve. Tom was a lifelong friend as we attended Glen Alpine schools together and graduated from Glen Alpine High School in the same class. Everyone remembers his success as the Green Wave quarterback, and his later success as a coach at Glen Alpine and Freedom high schools. I always admired Tom's determination and work ethic from the time of his employment at Hennessee's store to his college career. As we worked together on reunions and at both high schools Tom always contributed much more than was required. I hope I speak for his oldest friends at Glen Alpine and the class of 1959 when I write that we will miss your remarkable memory, your good humor, and your loyalty. I wish comfort for all of Tom's family. Personally, I will miss your smile, your laugh, and your upbeat personality. Peace, old friend. -Linda Heffner Chester

–Linda Heffner Chester

Tommy will be missed at our future Class Renunions. I know for sure that I will miss him, he was always very much liked by everyone. Sending prayers to his family.

–Kathleen Buff



Mr. Biggerstaff was a wonderful teacher. Blessed to have known him.

–Karol Harshawellis



My deepest condolences and prayers to Thomas (Tee) and his family. Mr. Biggerstaff was one of my favorites at Freedom High School. He was my Drivers Ed instructor, and I often think of him because he made it known to me that I was heavy on the accelerator. Later years we could laugh about it together when he came to work at the Department of Corrections. His contagious smile could light up a room. I will always cherish our talks and laughs we shared. May God comfort you all during this time and for days to come.
Sharma Tate Ervin

–Sharma Tate Ervin



Gaye and Family - Prayers for peace and comfort. Your dad was loved by many and I have fun memories of spending time at the lake with you and your family! He was a great dad!

–Tracy Thompson

I had Mr. Biggerstaff for archery, angling and golf. He was so fun and loved his students. He was a great guy and always gave us lots of laughs. RIP my friend!

–Anna Smith- Bradley

I will always remember Coach Biggerstaff as a great Drivers Ed teacher. While do

I will always remember Coach Biggerstaff as a great Drivers Ed teacher. While on my little drive on the range, I failed to stop at a stop sign! (Big Mistake) of course he saw. Made me go back and tell the Stop Sign I was sorry. It was a life lesson and I always think of him when I slow to a Stop Sign. Great Teacher with a lasting lesson. RIP Coach!!

–Kathy Robinson

One of my few favorites from FHS. He's the reason I can't imagine not having Drivers Ed taught in public schools. Loved his dry wit! Prayers and comfort to his family, friends and loved ones.

–Joy Thompson McNeely



–Robert Powell



Very sad to hear this. I had Coach Bigger staff for Driver's Ed. What I remember most is Coach telling me to slow down. RIP Coach.

–Michael Goodnight



To Tommy's family, I am so very sorry for your loss. Praying God will comfort you during this difficult time.

–Dianne Amos-Fields





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To Gaye and the Family I'm so sorry for your loss I know there will be a big void in your hearts forever Words of sympathy feel inadequate in expressing grief and sorrow for a loss so great. Sending a warm embrace and all my love during this sad time. Wishing you peace and comfort in these difficult days. Will be Praying for you and the Family in Hope God wraps his loving arms around you all and comfort you now and forever

–Randy Spake

–Dianne Amos-Fields



–Anonymous





Coach Biggerstaff was both an awesome teacher and coach. He will be truly missed. RIP Coach.

–Jeff T Revis