



*Thurston Samuel  
Burnette*

**June 2, 1926 - Feb. 25, 2017**

Thurston Samuel Burnette of Morganton, North Carolina, passed away peacefully and with joyous anticipation into the comfort and care of his Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ on February 25, 2017. He was surrounded by the love and devotion of his family at the Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte. He was 90 years old.

Thurston was born June 2, 1926 in McDowell County to George and Fannie Burnette. He is survived by his wife, Gloria Perrell Burnette of their home in Morganton, N.C. Thurston and Gloria marked their 50th, Golden Wedding Anniversary February 24, 2017 one day preceding his death.

Also surviving are his two daughters, Lola Shannon Burnette of Morganton and Carolyn Burnette Ashworth and husband, Dr. Derwood Ashworth of Wilkesboro; one stepson, Van K. Mauney of Morganton; brothers; James Burnette of Higginsville, Mo. and Walter Burnette of Morganton; grandchildren, Arian Ashworth of New York City, Jeff Ashworth of Columbia, S.C., Amy Jo Jacobson of Lexington, S.C., Courtney Willis of Black Mountain, Stephanie Rector, Jacob and Caleb Mauney of Morganton; great-grandchildren; Marlie and Jolene Mauney, Peyton and Colton Rector of Morganton, Carley and Paige Ashworth of Columbia and Ash Jacobson of Lexington, S.C.; and many nieces and nephews. Preceding him in death is his stepdaughter, Vickie Ann Mauney; sister, Lillian Campbell and his parents, George and Fannie Burnette. As a young man, Thurston eagerly volunteered and served his country with honor and

distinction during World War II in the United States Navy Air Corps. He was a tail gunner on a Curtiss SB2C Helldiver, dive-bomber aircraft. He was a dedicated patriot who loved his country and was proud of his service in the military.

After his service in the Navy, Thurston found his calling and became a gifted salesman at McDowell Motors in Marion, N.C. Honing his skills as a talented

salesman, he later ventured forward and became a business owner. Burnette Motors was founded and opened for business in 1964 on Fleming Drive in Morganton.

Successfully operating for over 53 years, Burnette Motors has become and will continue to be, by legacy, a valued Burke County institution.

Thurston was, by nature, an accomplished horseman. His love and knowledge of the registered American Quarter Horse breed was respected nationally in the show ring as a skilled competitor and as a AAA Judge. Always a trader at heart, Thurston was renowned for his sharp eye and appreciation for a good horse in the sales arena. His love and passion for horses was handed down and shared by his daughters. One of his greatest joys was to teach, coach and watch his daughters grow in his passion for horses and exhibit them successfully in the show ring. Throughout his life, raising and showing horses was a cherished family affair.

Another lifelong passion was his dogs and especially pedigreed, Field Trial Beagles. Thurston loved to "run" his dogs for pleasure out in the field as well as competition. He enjoyed many Field Trial championships over his lifetime and was an accredited AKC Judge.

Thurston will be remembered lovingly by his family as a beloved husband and cherished father. Throughout his time on earth, and especially toward the end of his life, Thurston's enduring strength, determination and courage was evident as well as was his deep and unflagging love for his family and his love for his Lord. For all who knew him, he was an engaging personality and a one of a kind, self-made man. He was a man who made his own decisions and stood by them and always a man who, in his profound faith, "called his own shots" until the end of his time here on earth. Thurston's family will receive friends at Sossoman Funeral Home, Wednesday, March 1st. from 5:00 until 7:00 P.M.

A celebration of Thurston's life will be held Thursday, March 2nd at 11:00 A.M. at North Morganton Methodist Church in Morganton. The Reverend Burt Williams and Pastor Jerry Gamble will officiate. All are welcome to attend. Burial will follow in

Drexel Memorial Park with military honors provided by the US Navy and Caldwell County Veterans Honor Guard.

In lieu of flowers, memorials made be made in Thurston's honor to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, P.O. Box 1000, Dept. 142, Memphis, TN 38148-0142 or Burke Hospice and Palliative Care, Inc., 1721 Enon Rd., Valdese, NC 28690.

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

# Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.