



Van Roberson Layson Sr.

July 1, 1928 - May 23, 2015

Funeral services for Mr. Van Roberson Layson, Sr., 85, will be conducted thursday, May 28, 2015 at 2 o'clock in the First Baptist Church in Eatonton with Rev. Bill Kitchen and Rev. Keithen Tucker officiating. Interment will follow in Eatonton Memorial Park.

The family will receive friends at the church on thursday from 1 pm until the funeral hour.

Beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend Van Roberson Layson of Eatonton, Georgia died Saturday, May 23, 2015. He now rests in peace with his wife of 62 years, Gertie Holmes Layson, who died on February 4, 2014. Van was born in Eatonton on July 1, 1928 to Gus and Allie Gerhart Layson of Eatonton, Georgia. He served in the United States Army for 34 months.

Van, a native and longtime resident of Eatonton, was a lifelong educator, dedicated to helping children of all ages, especially those in need. He attended Young Harris College and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Education with a special major in Exact Science from Georgia Southern University. Van received his Master of Arts in School Administration from Appalachian State University and continued post graduate studies at the University of Virginia, the University of Georgia and Georgia Southwestern College.

After he and Gertie graduated from Young Harris College, Van began his teaching career in Pelham, Georgia. He was a classroom teacher for the next 13 years in several Georgia school systems including Rabun, Young Harris and Morgan counties. After teaching, he focused on early education programs in his role as the federal programs coordinator for Putnam and Jasper counties. One of Van's proudest achievements was securing funding and support to establish full year Head Start programs in Jasper and Putnam counties.

Van was elected superintendent of Putnam County Schools and served from 1980 to 1984. He pushed hard to instill accountability and higher standards for Putnam County's children. He implemented a program to evaluate teachers and administrators, rewrote curriculum guides and introduced standardized testing. During his tenure, Butler-Baker Elementary School was accredited with honors and Putnam County Middle School was named a School of Excellence. He used his federal programs expertise to obtain funding for many initiatives, including a speech development program and a physical education program for elementary school.

Van was recognized for his contributions in *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*, *Who's Who in Georgia* and *Personalities of the South*. He also provided his expertise and leadership to Gatewood Schools in Eatonton as interim headmaster in the early 1990s.

Van loved music and was an avid bird watcher who could recognize many species just by their call. He wrote poetry, short stories and published his first novel in 2011, *A Soldier's Journey*, a fictional account of young soldier during the American Civil War. He was working on his second book about a boy named Percy. Van loved cats, and always named them "Sam."

He was a former deacon and Sunday school teacher at the First Baptist Church of Eatonton.

Survivors include his daughters Teri Layson of Burbank, CA and Jeannie (John) Shiffer of Clifton, VA; sons Steve Layson of Macon and Bobby (Sandy) Layson of LaGrange, GA; sisters Janie (Winford) Little of Eatonton and Eleanor Sirmons of Hawkinsville, GA; brother Addison (Connie) Layson of Calhoun, GA; 4 grandchildren; 4 great grandchildren and many other relatives.

In honor of Van's memory, please donate to one of the following organizations: the building fund of the First Baptist Church of Eatonton; the Macon, Georgia chapter of Habitat for Humanity; or the Putnam County, Georgia, Veterans Wall of Honor Park.

Cemetery Details

Eatonton Memorial Park

Godfrey Rd.
Eatonton, GA 31024

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 28. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Eatonton First Baptist Church
Eatonton, GA 31024

Service

MAY 28. 2:00 PM (ET)

Eatonton First Baptist Church
Eatonton, GA 31024

Tribute Wall

SL

“ *The Georgia Writers Museum extends condolences to the Layson family at the loss of one of our local writers. We appreciate the book Mr. Layson generously donated to the GWM library.*

Susan Larson - June 02, 2015 at 02:41 PM

JW

“ *Please accept my condolences on your loss; I never met Mr. Layson, but I have often heard Teri speak of him. His life seems to have been one that was full and generous.*

Janet Wilson

Janet Wilson - June 01, 2015 at 01:53 PM

NW

“ *So sorry for the loss of your loved one.*



Nettie Wolfe - May 28, 2015 at 02:14 PM

JD

“ *When I was a teenager around 15, Mr layson hired me to work with a federal program called title? He was always so nice. Recently I retired from Putnam general hospital but had many opportunities to share lunch in the cafeteria with Mr and ms layson. They always were so kind to everybody. After ms layson passed, Mr lays on continued to come but hefwas never the same. He missed ms Gertie. Back together again. RIP*

joyce cumbie davis - May 28, 2015 at 01:06 PM

KB

“ Kevin B. purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Van Roberson Layson Sr..



Kevin B. - May 28, 2015 at 08:32 AM

SF

“ Sorry for your loss. With fondest memories of your family in Pelham Ga. Bobby's childhood friend Stancie Wingate Frazier 471 Hinsonton rd. Meigs Ga. 31765

Stancie W. Frazier - May 28, 2015 at 07:44 AM

LW

“ Our sincerest condolences for your loss. May God's grace bring comfort and peace to you and your family during this time of great sorrow. Prayers and Blessings, Lisa & Glenn West (Census Family)



Lisa Glover West - May 28, 2015 at 06:44 AM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Van Roberson Layson Sr..



May 27, 2015 at 08:49 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Van Roberson Layson Sr..



May 27, 2015 at 03:52 PM



“ Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Van Roberson Layson Sr..



May 27, 2015 at 11:29 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Van Roberson Layson Sr..



May 27, 2015 at 09:14 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Van Roberson Layson Sr..



May 26, 2015 at 03:36 PM

LB

“ *Lise' Salter Brantley lit a candle in memory of Van Roberson Layson Sr.*



Lise' Salter Brantley - May 25, 2015 at 03:49 PM

LB

Sending my thoughts and prayers for the family in this time of sorry.
Lise' Salter Brantley

Lise' Salter Brantley - May 25, 2015 at 03:50 PM

SC

Praying for the Layson family.
Sheila (Cash) & Terry Clopton of Kathleen, GA
Pam (Cash) Peters of Rome, GA
Bob Cash of Cumming, GA
Robert & Pauline Cash of Eatonton, GA

Sheila Clopton - May 28, 2015 at 06:14 PM