



## Dr. J. Elliott Blaydes

February 26, 1927 - May 19, 2015

Prominent ophthalmologist, J. Elliott Blaydes, M.D., peacefully passed away on Tuesday, May 19, 2015 in Bluefield, WV surrounded by his loving family. He was preceded in death by his parents James Elliott Blaydes, M.D. and Mabel Hill Blaydes, sisters Elizabeth Blaydes, Nancy Pride and Boyd Sawyer and two sons, James Elliott IV and William Mitchell Blaydes.

Elliott was born in 1927 in his beloved Bluefield, West Virginia where he spent his early years and developed his love for the community and its people. He attended high school at the McCallie School in Chattanooga, TN becoming the only two-time recipient of the school's highest honor, the Grayson Medal. Upon graduation, he entered the U.S. Navy, where as an outstanding leader and athlete, served in the Naval Recruit Swim Training program. After WWII, he attended Princeton University obtaining his undergraduate degree and then continued his education at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia where he was elected president of the Undergraduate Medical Society. Upon receiving his medical doctorate, he was selected for a one year internship at the Pennsylvania Hospital and completed his ophthalmology training at New York University and New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, serving as a chief resident physician.

In 1958, he returned to Bluefield to join his father in the field of ophthalmology. His practice focused on bringing the latest advances in eye care to his patients. His professional milestones included the development of new and improved suture materials, surgical instruments and techniques for cataract

surgery. Most significant was his use of a small incision for cataract removal and intraocular lens implants which allowed the patient faster physical and visual recovery. For these innovations, research and his educational seminars, he was recognized as a Phaco Pioneer for cataract surgery by the Congress of the United States.

As an active leader in national and international eye societies, Dr. Blaydes authored many publications and lectured worldwide. His humanitarian focus included a medical mission to Honduras, the China Vision Project and coordination of the Rural Health Care Symposia in Appalachia.

He was past president of the West Virginia Academy of Ophthalmology, an associate examiner for the American Board of Ophthalmology, served on many editorial boards for ophthalmic periodicals and had clinical faculty appointments at WVU and Marshall University. He was also involved in many civic organizations and served on numerous boards on the local, national and international level.

For his distinguished career, Dr. Blaydes was recognized with numerous honors and awards within his profession, most notably the American Academy of Ophthalmology Senior Achievement Award and the Lions Club Leonard Jarrett and Melvin Jones Fellow awards. St. Luke's Hospital, where Dr. Blaydes operated, was designated Humana's first Center of Excellence in Ophthalmology in 1982.

The Blaydes family commitment to ophthalmology since 1921 continues today with the work of his son, Stephen Blaydes, M.D. The Blaydes Clinic has proudly served the people of our area from a heartfelt desire to bring the best available eye care to the region. Many of the milestones Elliott reached are advancements that could have been reached anywhere in the world, but they were achieved in Bluefield. He chose to live and conduct his life's work in the mountains where his father had come so many years before.

In his personal life, Elliott was dedicated to the love of his family and loyalty to his friends. Fun loving with a quick sense of humor and a generous spirit, his

charm was that of a true Southern Gentleman. He had a love for the outdoors and was an avid sportsman primarily hunting, fishing, golf and tennis. He authored two books, a biography, "Bringing It Home" and a hunting memoir, "Dogs, Fields and Friends." His interests and passions were wide ranging from WWII history to hunting dogs, musicals to westerns, The Greenbrier to East River Mountain, dancing to rhododendrons, butter and bacon to champagne! Elliott was always eager to learn new things. As a fierce competitor, he pushed himself towards excellence in everything he undertook. Elliott always had a strong faith that sustained him in his personal and professional life. He was a longtime member, former Deacon and Elder of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Left to cherish his memory, are his loving and devoted wife of 38 years Anita Shrader Blaydes, son Stephen Hill Blaydes, M.D. and wife Kathleen of Bluefield, WV, Elizabeth Blaydes Lewis and husband Andrew of Flowery Branch, GA and daughter Jaime Blaydes Gilliam and husband Randy of Greensboro, NC. He was Poppy and Granddaddy to grandchildren Jennifer and husband David Brooks, Susanna and husband Kenny McMillan, Rebecca Lewis, Abby Lewis and Charles Blaydes. He was great-grandfather to Judah and Willa McMillan and is also survived by his mother-in-law, Audrey Gibson Shrader.

In his final years, Elliott was blessed to be attended by his faithful caregivers for whom his family is forever grateful: Tyrone Murray, Darrell Neal, Dashi Sho-Johnson, Mashi Sho-Johnson, Edmond Johnson and Michael Barnes. Elliott was also fortunate to have other special people in his daily life: Kaki Roach, Linda Caywood, Deborah Wooley, Remona Robinson and Mel Thomas. Over the years he had the opportunity to work alongside so many wonderful employees of the Blaydes Clinic, who he dearly treasured. He also greatly respected and admired his fellow professional colleagues throughout his career.

A visitation will be held on Friday, May 22nd at Mercer Funeral Home, 1231

W. Cumberland Road, Bluefield, WV from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. A funeral service conducted by Pastor Jonathan Rockness will take place on Saturday, May 23rd at 11:00 am at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2005 Washington Street, Bluefield, WV. Burial will follow at Monte Vista Park Cemetery in Green Valley. All are welcome to attend and celebrate a life well lived by J. Elliott Blaydes.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Westminster Presbyterian Church or the Blaydes Eye Foundation.

Those wishing to share memories or condolence messages with the family may do so by visiting [www.MercerFuneralHome.com](http://www.MercerFuneralHome.com) Mercer Funeral Home & Crematory is serving the family of J. Elliott Blaydes, M.D.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY **22**. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Mercer Funeral Home & Crematory  
1231 West Cumberland Road  
Bluefield, WV 24701  
(304) 327-6155  
mercerc@mercercfuneralhome.com  
<https://www.mercercfuneralhome.com/>

## Funeral Service

MAY **23**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
2005 Washington Street  
Bluefield, WV 24701

# Tribute Wall

MP

“ I often think of Dr. Blaydes and today thought to look up the clinic in Bluefield. I can't tell you how happy it makes be to see the legacy continue.

*I met Dr. Blaydes in the 1980's when I was an 11-12 year old girl with horrible astigmatism, a lazy eye and had worn Coke bottle thick glasses with bifocals most of my life. This kindly gentleman helped me get rid of the bifocals all together (until about a year ago, when I turned 48).*

*My parents and my optometrist from Kentucky made the trip to Bluefield for two surgeries and I am forever grateful. Not only did Dr. Blades vastly improve my vision, he was so kind! When he came to my hospital room he brought me giant coloring books that I could work on without glasses. He also brought me flowers before I was discharged, and I never, ever left his office without him giving me heaping handfuls of lollipops and a hug. He called me Little Miss Pike County. I will never forget him and my deepest sympathies go to his beloved family.*

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**Melissa Ramey Parks** - May 06, 2025 at 03:20 PM



“ Dr. J. Elliott Blaydes

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October 05, 2023 at 06:08 PM

MW

“ What memories my family has of Dr. Blaydes! (Richard and Loraine Alley) Not just as our doctor, but for many years in Westminster Church. My prayers go out to your family.

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**Myra Alley Wood** - June 16, 2015 at 05:51 AM

PF

“ Steven please accept my deepest sympathy. Your grandfather started my eye care when I was 5. Your Dad took over soon after. Your family took care of mine for over 50 years. I am truly blessed to have been a patient with the Blaydes Eye Clinic. Love the you.  
Patricia Cornett Farley

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**Patricia Cornett Farley** - May 28, 2015 at 01:11 PM

LH

“ To an outstanding doctor who served the people of Bluefield with a caring, Christian spirit, and a man who was a true friend and family eye doctor of the Walker family - we remember you fondly. May God give the Blaydes family comfort and peace. Agnes Lee (Walker) Harris

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**Lee Harris** - May 23, 2015 at 06:54 PM

PR

“ We were so sorry to learn of Dr. Blaydes passing. He was a wonderful man and certainly a gifted physician. Truly, Dr. Blaydes was one of Bluefield's all-time finest! Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this difficult time.  
Patti and Richard Reese

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**Patti Reese** - May 23, 2015 at 01:09 PM

IB

“ My thoughts and prayers are with your family. I began working for Dr. Blaydes in June of 1970, just after graduating from high school. I felt so blessed to work for him. I have many fond memories of Dr. Blaydes and of my time in his employment. He was a wonderful doctor and made a difference in so many lives! May God continue to bless, comfort, and strengthen each of you during this difficult time and always. Ima Jean Brooks

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**Ima Jean Brooks** - May 23, 2015 at 01:04 PM

BP

“ Elliott was a super brother-in-law for many years. I have many pleasant memories of hunting and golfing with him during visits with the family. We were happy to see him this past summer, and sorry to hear of his passing. Our deepest sympathy to Anita, Steve, Betty Boyd, Jaime and Betty. Bob and Adrienne Pfohl

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**Bob and Adrienne Pfohl** - May 23, 2015 at 10:23 AM

CB

“ My thoughts and prayers are with your whole family. The Dr Sr and Jr both cared for me as a child. I had surgery and have my vision today because of them. I have nothing but fond memories of both of them. Peace to your family. Cindy Stacy Backus

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**cindy stacy backus** - May 22, 2015 at 03:29 PM

JP

“ Dear Dr. Blaydes and family: Joe, Gina & I want to say how sad and sorry we are about the passing of such a wonderful doctor, but also as your Father. We will never forget how kind he was to us at a very scary time when he operated on Gina's "lazy eye". It was a perfect success. The day of the surgery, when he came in her room to check on her, he brought her a beautiful doll. Gina was delighted and so were we. Well, just think of his passing like this. It may be our loss, but the Good Lord may need bifocals by now and he has the "best" to take care of Him.

Sincere regards,  
Joe, Gina & Brenda Pullano

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**Joe, Gina & Brenda Pullano** - May 22, 2015 at 03:11 PM

JH

“ *Dr. Stephen Blaydes and Anita, my thoughts and prayers are with you and the rest of your family. I always enjoyed seeing Dr. J. Elliott and Anita when they came to the Greenbrier. I wish I could be there to give you a hug but I can't make it before 6. Please accept my sympathy and know that prayers are being lifted on your behalf.*  
*Jill Highlander*

Jill Highlander - May 22, 2015 at 01:17 PM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dr. J. Elliott Blaydes.*



May 22, 2015 at 01:03 PM

CW

“ *Carolyn Worley & Charlotte Calfee--Dr. Blaydes never charged my parents a single penny for his services because my father was in full-time Christian service. Because of this my mom always took him baked goods of some kind to our appointment. One year she made a "Watergate" cake. Dr. Blaydes shook it carefully and said, "What does it do?" He was a sweet man and a superb doctor!*

Carolyn Worley - May 22, 2015 at 11:02 AM

BA

“ Anita, Steve, Betty Boyd, Jamie, and all of the Blaydes Family, My name is Mary Francis Armbrister, I have known Dr. Blaydes all of my life. He took care of me for a lot of years. His father removed my tonsils when I was a little girl. My mother worked at St. Luke's hospital for over 30 years and knew your family well. Her name was Margie Francis and she took her training at St. Luke's back in 1945. She always spoke wonderfully about the Blaydes family. Your dad took care of my father for a number of years. Our prayers and thoughts are with you all during this sad time. Mary E. Francis Armbrister and Blair.

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**Blair and Mary Armbrister** - May 22, 2015 at 07:34 AM

BK

“ This man gave me my start in the medical field all of those years ago. He was a great man, and has a great family. My prayers go out to all of the family. Steve, please accept my condolences. Bill Kidd

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**Bill Kidd** - May 21, 2015 at 09:23 PM

VJ

“ I worked with Dr. Blaydes in 1968-early '70's both on nursing units and later in O.R. after I graduated from Anesthesia school at Bluefield Community. His and his father's special anesthetist Kathleen Christopherson was a good friend and encourager to me. Always the perfect gentlemen and lovely, upbeat people!! I have fond memories of Dr. Blaydes. Later, after I moved to Florida, I worked for 27 years with Dr. J.P. Gills in Tarpon Springs, FL, who is and was a good friend of Dr. Blaydes. I am saddened at his death and know the world was a better place because of him and his father!

Vella Joyner-Marshall  
Summerfield, Florida

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**Vella Joyner-Marshall** - May 21, 2015 at 09:13 PM

TA

“ Hello my name is Teresa Alexander I was a patient of Dr Bladyes when I was a child. In 1971 (when I was 1 year old) I was diagnosed with retinoblastoma and had to have my right eye removed. I saw Dr Bladyes very often during my whole childhood. I look back at that time and remember how kind and special he made me feel. If he had not diagnosed my problem I would have died before Christmas of that year. I still have fond memories of that difficult time in my life because of Dr. Bladyes. He was indeed a very special man.

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**Teresa Alexander** - May 21, 2015 at 05:26 PM

HM

“ My deepest condolences to all the Blaydes ' family and all others that have had the fortunate opportunity to know the family. With love and sympathy, but accomplishments and memories that will last always....to an amazing family. Regards.

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**Heather Comeau Mitchell** - May 21, 2015 at 03:04 PM

RS

“ Rob Tulloss -Alcon Surgical purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Dr. J. Elliott Blaydes.



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**Rob Tulloss -Alcon Surgical** - May 21, 2015 at 02:40 PM

KF

“ I was an employee of Dr Blaydes Jr. and Dr, Blaydes, Sr. from 1971-1978. I have so many memories of those years. Dr. Blaydes was always so good to me and my family. He was a kind and generous man. I remember the weekend we all worked and packed our old office to move to the new Blaydes Clinic. Dr. Blaydes Sr. passed away before the new clinic was complete. My prayers will be for the entire Blaydes family for God's comfort. He will be missed by so many. May God Bless this great family.

Kathy Reynolds French - May 21, 2015 at 11:05 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. J. Elliott Blaydes.



May 21, 2015 at 10:58 AM

RR

“ We were sorry to hear of your great loss. Although we can't personally be with you, Elliott and your family are in our prayers.

*Dr. Richard and Eleanor Rashid  
Drs. Nicole Rashid and Paul Bown*

Richard Rashid - May 21, 2015 at 10:01 AM

BB

“ *My goodness, the memories just keep coming. Dr. Blaydes was always so very good to me during my years in his employment and always a true Southern gentleman. He taught me so much and I had the pleasure of traveling so many places during my employment with The Blaydes Clinic, of course, due to his international reputation for excellence in the field of ophthalmology. He was definitely one of a kind and I am honored to call him my friend. My deepest sympathies to Anita, Jaime, Steve and Betty Boyd. I'm sorry I cannot be with you tomorrow evening to honor his legacy, but am out of town. You will be in my thoughts and prayers.*

*Beverly Whittaker Baker*

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**Beverly Baker** - May 21, 2015 at 09:06 AM

JO

“ *JOANIE lit a candle in memory of Dr. J. Elliott Blaydes*



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**JOANIE** - May 21, 2015 at 04:26 AM