



John Preston Beckett Jr.

July 20, 1949 - May 10, 2026

Civic leader Johnny Beckett dies at 76

By Larry Hypes

Bluefield Daily Telegraph

"Bluefield- John P. "Johnny" Beckett Jr., longtime Bluefield banking executive and community leader, died Sunday, May 10, at his College Avenue home following a long illness. Beckett, 76, was born in Bluefield and spent much of his personal and professional life in the city.

He was an all-state athlete at Bluefield High School, Class of 1967, and a starter and tri-captain on the 1965 undefeated AAA state championship Beaver football team. He also served as co-captain of the basketball team and captain of the state's second-ranked track team. Beckett maintained perfect attendance in high school, was senior class president and lettered every year in every sport he played.

Beckett attended Wittenberg University in Ohio and was a member of the school's 1969 NCAA Division III national championship football team, which won the Amos Alonzo Stagg Bowl.

He began his career as a guidance counselor at Bluefield High School and served as an assistant football coach on the 1975 state championship team. He later coached the boys basketball team to the WVSSAC Final Four and teamed with Jim Nelson as a radio broadcaster for Bluefield High football games.

A decades-long banking career took him and his family to Virginia, Kentucky,

North Carolina and West Virginia. He retired in 2016 as senior vice president and trust officer at First Century Bank in Bluefield.

He earned advance degrees from Radford University, Campbell University, Northwestern University and the University of Delaware.

Beckett was an active member of Christ Episcopal Church in Bluefield, where he served at various times as a Sunday school teacher, trustee, treasurer, vestry member and senior warden. He was also trustee emeritus at Bluefield University and supported a variety of programs at the school.

He was a charter member of the 1965 Bluefield High School Interact Club and later was a member of the Bluefield Rotary Club for more than 50 years, promoting the Rotary theme of "Service Above Self." A multiple-time Paul Harris Fellow, he served as club president in 2018 during the organizations 100th anniversary celebration. He also received the District Governor Meritorious Service Award. He assisted with numerous service projects, including providing a security system to Whitethorn Elementary School, supplying band instruments to Bluefield High School, sponsoring a backpack program for needy children, supporting Project Graduation and helping provide scholarships for students attending Bluefield University and Bluefield State University.

He was inducted into the Bluefield High School Hall of Fame in 2018.

His parents were John P. and Louise Clark Beckett. He married Becky Easley in 1970, and the couple shared 55 years of marriage.

Survivors include his wife; sons Keith (Tonya) of Bluefield, Preston (Tami) of Cornelius, North Carolina, Anthony Beckett of Charleston, West Virginia, and David Farmer (Tammy) of Monroe, Georgia; family friend, Dee of Bluefield, Virginia; godson Will Puckett of Bluefield, Virginia; brothers James (Diana) of Annapolis, Maryland, Joey (Sandie) of the Villages, Florida, and Jeff (Hope) of California; and sister Margaret of Bluefield, West Virginia.

Services will be held Saturday, May 16, at Christ Episcopal Church on Duhring Street in Bluefield. Visitation will begin at 10a.m., followed by the funeral at 11 a.m. Burial will follow in the church columbarium."

The family would like to thank Hospice Compassus for the wonderful care that they received.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Easley Library, 3000 College Drive, Bluefield, Virginia 24605, Christ Episcopal Church, 200 Duhring Street, Bluefield, West Virginia 24701, or to Rotary Club of Bluefield, P. O. Box 121, Bluefield, West Virginia 24701.

Cemetery Details

Christ Episcopal Church Columbarium

Bluefield, WV 24701

Upcoming Events

Visitation

MAY **16**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Christ Episcopal Church
200 Duhring St
Bluefield, WV 24701

Memorial Mass

MAY **16**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Christ Episcopal Church
200 Duhring St
Bluefield, WV 24701

Tribute Wall

HL

“ Hal & Lynda purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of John Preston Beckett Jr..



Hal & Lynda - 33 minutes ago

HL

“ Hal & Lynda planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of John Preston Beckett Jr..

Hal & Lynda - 33 minutes ago

TF

“ I Will miss Poppy so much all the memories of Thanksgiving, Christmas , graduations , weddings , Easter He was a dad figure I never had . I love Poppy he always made me feel important . Your marriage is a testimony and a blessing to have witnessed and strive for . I know Poppy you are healed and in perfect peace with Jesus ~ it is not goodbye for one day I will see you again . Bebe I love you so much I admire the Proverbs 31 women you truly are .



Tammy Farmer - 1 hour ago