



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

Previous 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

LM

“ *Bill and I send our deepest sympathy to you and your family on the recent death of Johnny. You are in our thoughts and prayers. May our dear Lord surround you with his peace and comfort. Lorraine and Bill McCue*

Lorraine McCue - May 23 at 08:43 AM

WS

I was so sorry to hear of John's passing. He always had a smile on his face when I saw him. My prayers go out to his family during this difficult time.

Walter Shroyer - May 24 at 05:14 PM

PA

“ *I was the quarterback at Wittenberg University when Johnny was there. What a great receiver he was! He was fast, quick and had a great pair of hands. What a great person he was! RIP Johnny Rocky Alt Wittenberg 71*

Paul(Rocky) Alt - May 18 at 07:42 PM

BM

“ *Johnny was my little brother in our fraternity at Wittenberg. He lived in the same residence hall and was quite homesick for Becky early in his college days.
I was able to attend his wedding and my wife and I visited in Bluefield. He and Becky were welcoming and gracious hosts. Johnny had class. The world needs more gentlemen like him. Rest in peace.*

Bob Mott - May 17 at 06:28 PM

SL

“ *Becky, Rick and I were sad to hear about Johnny’s death. I know it was a long struggle for you and God bless you for fighting the good fight with him. May the Lord comfort and bless you. You are in our prayers.*

Rick and Suzanne

Suzanne Lowry - May 17 at 01:37 PM

MS

“ *Becky, please know that I am thinking of you and your family.*

Sincerely, Marsha Smith...Huntington

Marsha Smith - May 16 at 07:15 AM

HF

“ *Becky,*
I’m so sorry for the loss of Johnny. Y’all hold a lot of special memories for me. Love to all of you.

Holly Fisher - May 15 at 11:18 AM

BS

“ *Brock Smith purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of John Preston Beckett Jr..*



Brock Smith - May 15 at 09:09 AM

BH

“ *My heart and Prayers go out to the family. I spent 4 great year at Beaver with Johnny. I have fond memories of him playing every sport and he was good at all of them. He made our high school years very exciting with our winning records. Seeing him again at the 50th reunion was great and to catch up on our experiences. He will be missed.*

Bill Heldreth - May 14 at 12:15 PM

TP

“ *Terry Puster purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of John Preston Beckett Jr..*



Terry Puster - May 14 at 10:16 AM

AB

“ *There are no words for the legacy that John Beckett left behind, or the amount of people he has made an impact on. I know Mom that your love and his love has made an unbelievable difference in my life when you adopted me and gave me the honor and chance of being a part of your family. You both have always taught us the very most valuable lessons in life, and no one could have ever had better parents. Sending love, thoughts, and prayers to you mom. Please stay strong and let the many wonderful memories of the life you had together help carry you through this painful time. Love always...
Anthony and April*

Anthony Beckett - May 13 at 09:58 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of John Preston Beckett Jr..*



May 13 at 08:36 PM



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

May 13 at 08:36 PM



“ *John was one of the inaugural members of the One Valley Bank-Pinehurst Golf Group. We traveled to Pinehurst the last weekend of April for 25 + years. Great memories!*



Mark Wiete - May 13 at 02:51 PM



There are no words for the legacy that John Beckett left behind, or the amount of people he has made an impact on. I know Mom that your love and his love has made an unbelievable difference in my life when you adopted me and gave me the honor and chance of being a part of your family. You both have always taught us the very most valuable lessons in life, and no one could have ever had better parents. Sending love, thoughts, and prayers to you mom. Please stay strong and let the many wonderful memories of the life you had together help carry you through this painful time. Love always... Anthony and April

Anthony Beckett - May 13 at 07:07 PM

JB

“ Played football at Beaver with Johnny. He was a great athlete and person. Talked to him off and on over the past several years. Thoughts and prayers for his family.

Jack W. Ball - May 13 at 01:29 PM

JS

“ Becky and family,
We are so very sorry to hear of Johnny's passing. We are so thankful that we got to spend time with you at the BHS 50th class reunion. It was a true gift. You are in our thoughts and prayers and forever in our memories.



joe and Karen Simon - May 13 at 12:11 PM

CE

“ We are so sorry for your loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Chris Bruckner Elswick - May 13 at 09:48 AM

BS

Grew up in First Baptist Church with Becky. So who shows up in my living room one Sunday evening? None other than Beaver's star running back Johnny Beckett and Becky. Talk about making a kids day!! Played church league softball with Johnny. My family's thoughts and prayers are with Becky and family and the Beckett family.

Brock Smith - May 13 at 10:41 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of John Preston Beckett Jr..*



May 13 at 09:14 AM



“ *My heart aches with the passing of Johnny. My memories date back to my high school years spending time at their house and feeling like a part of the family. A wonderful husband, father and friend to all. Sending love to the entire family.*

Beth Zachwieja - May 12 at 06:44 PM



“ *Kris and Hayes Rutter purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of John Preston Beckett Jr..*



Kris and Hayes Rutter - May 12 at 06:34 PM



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



Hal & Lynda - May 12 at 05:07 PM

HL

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

Hal & Lynda - May 12 at 05:07 PM

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 - May 12 at 04:37 PM