



## Joe Ben Shelton

March 7, 1934 - June 2, 2025

Joe Ben Shelton was born in Polk County on March 7, 1934, to Benjamin and Isa (Matthews) Shelton. He peacefully went to be with his Lord on June 2, 2025. Joe Ben grew up on the family farm and went to school at Collins School, a small one room schoolhouse. He went on to graduate from high school at Marion C. Early in 1951.

Joe spent his entire life affecting the lives of young people. Following his service to his country with the U.S. Army in Korea, he went to college at Southwest Baptist College and Southwest Missouri State University to become a teacher and coach. After a number of years as a teacher and basketball coach, he worked with disadvantaged youth through the Job Corp program preparing them with skills to be successful. He helped establish Johnson County Community College, being the fourth person hired.

About this time, he moved his family back to the family farm in Morrisville while he received his EdD in Education from the University of Arkansas. Joe went back to Marion C. Early for a year as the high school principal where he was influencing kids again. An opening became available and Dr. Joe became a beloved professor at Southwest Baptist University. Almost every student who went through the school had him in class. He loved the students so much and could remember them years later, including where they sat in class. Dr. Joe also loved all the athletes and was a steadfast supporter. He loved

attending all the games, whether it was basketball, football, baseball, track or cross country.

When he wasn't at school, Joe was working on the farm. He was really a full-time professor/full time farmer. Many long days were needed to manage his cattle and fescue crops. Additionally, long hours were spent preparing for the classes the next day. During this time, he was approached to represent his area of the county on a new plan to build a hospital. While on the board of Citizens Memorial Hospital, not only was the hospital built, but through the vision of the original board, the CMH campus has become what you see today.

But as much as he worked and cared for students and his community, he loved his family so much more. He met the love of his life, Donna Lewis, his second year at Southwest Baptist College. They were married in 1958 and celebrated 67 years of life together in May. The two taught their three children, Michael, Julia and Carla, how to live a Christian life, work hard and take responsibility, and what a loving home should be.

Joe loved the Lord with all his heart. He always said one of the most important decisions he ever made was accepting the Lord as his Savior and he found Him at a chapel service at SWBC. His life was spent serving the Lord and trying to be the best Christian he could be. So many people throughout his life were recipients of his love.

Joe Ben is survived by his wife Donna, children Michael (Bobbie) Shelton, Julia (John) Conley and Carla (Ray) Godfrey. His grandchildren Brittany Shelton (Dr. Tom Adams), Grant Godfrey, Clint (Jessie) Godfrey, Ben Shelton (Dr. Briann Sutton), and Bradley Shelton. He had two great grandchildren, Noah and Rosie. He was preceded in death by his parents, siblings Ruth Cox, Grace Hall, Wilma Emmert, Roy Shelton, Wanda Smith, and Ralph Shelton.

With such a large family there were many nieces and nephews whom he loved very much.

Everyone has a Joe Ben, Joe, Jody, or Dr. Joe story to tell. The best stories were daddy stories. He will be so missed but not forgotten any time soon.

A visitation will be held from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM on Monday, June 9, 2025, at First Baptist Church in Bolivar.

Services will be held at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at First Baptist Church in Bolivar.

Memorial contributions may be made to First Baptist Church of Bolivar.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN **9**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church  
316 N. Main  
Bolivar, MO 65613

## Service

JUN **10**. 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church  
316 N. Main  
Bolivar, MO 65613

# Tribute Wall

VB

“ I am so happy that I had the opportunity to study under his leadership at Southwest Baptist University. He supervised my internship in 1991! What an amazing academic leader!

Vanita Boyd - December 14, 2025 at 08:54 PM



“ Donna and family Joe Ben was a wonderful person.  
He was always positive  
Gave John a hard time for bringing his thermos to class and rolled down the aisle, he said Mr Shuler didn't know he wasn't to bring a thermos to class in front of everyone.  
He would say to John I see you brought your daughter, that gave us a big laugh & smile.  
He has touched so many lives.  
Was such an asset in MCE school and community.  
Prayer's and blessing to all of you.

John & Earnita Shuler

Kendall Shuler - June 09, 2025 at 09:23 AM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Joe Ben Shelton.



June 06, 2025 at 01:26 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joe Ben Shelton.

June 06, 2025 at 01:26 PM



“ Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of Joe Ben Shelton.



June 06, 2025 at 11:13 AM



“ Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Joe Ben Shelton.



June 04, 2025 at 03:04 PM

JA

“ I was so sorry to hear of Joe's passing. I first met Joe in the late 60's as he moved back to this area. Joe bought my Grandparent Turner's farm on Old Morrisville Road. My Grandfather has passed and my Grandmother was living in Arizona. For the next few years my hay crew would haul hay for Joe, if our schedules matched up. Following my time in the Air Force, I enrolled at SBU. Joe became my advisor and guided me through by degree. I had him for several classes. He was an inspiration to me and was one of those individuals who challenged me to realize there was more to life than hauling hay. Following graduation, I spent the next seventeen years working with Joe at SBU. I always enjoyed seeing and visiting with him. Since I arrived at Citizens Memorial Hospital a couple of years ago, it has been a pleasure seeing him volunteer at CMH. This provided us with an opportunity to visit. I will always be grateful for the influence that Joe had on my life. Please know that you and your family will be in my thoughts and prayers.

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**Jerald Andrews** - June 04, 2025 at 02:46 PM