



# Rufus Carlee Bryant

MAR 16, 1937 - JAN 8, 2026



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Cremation Services  
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# Rufus Carlee Bryant

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**R**ufus Carlee Bryant, age 87, of Petersburg, Tennessee, passed away on Thursday, January 8, at the home of his daughter, Bridgyt Copley, in Rogersville, Alabama.

Rufus was born March 16, 1937, in Petersburg, Tennessee, where he spent most of his life. For more than forty years he lived in the rock house he built with his own hands—a lasting testament to his strong work ethic and talent as a craftsman. He was preceded in death by his parents, William Rufus Bryant and Jessie Parker Bryant; his former wife, Frances Hazel Gleghorn Bryant Mitchell; sisters Rachael Whitaker and Martha Lou Wallace; and brothers William Monroe Bryant and Bobby Joe Bryant.

He is survived by his devoted daughter, Bridgyt B. (Jay) Copley; stepdaughters Cynthia Hart and Hunterland Ganier; granddaughters Calee A. Copley and Carly M. Copley; sister Marie Tucker; brothers Earl Mack (Billie Jo) Bryant, and Ron Bryant; along with many beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins.

At the age of 17, Rufus proudly joined the United States Air Force with the written permission of his father. After basic training he was stationed at the Atomic Bomb Testing Site in Indian Springs, Las Vegas, Nevada, where he decontaminated and painted aircraft and photographed takeoffs and landings. He loved telling the story of accidentally capturing a “big red bull” in one of his film footages—an incident that angered a Colonel but ultimately led to his reassignment to France. While stationed there, Rufus learned to operate cranes and heavy equipment, sparking a lifelong passion for running bulldozers and machinery.

Following his military service, Rufus put those skills to work throughout Tennessee. He helped build the foundation of the Raccoon Mountain Hydroelectric Facility outside Chattanooga and worked on the original construction of Interstate



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65 in the Franklin area. Countless roads, ponds, lakes, and construction projects across Lincoln County stand today as part of his legacy.

Rufus was known for his creativity and talent as a rock mason. What began as a hobby turned into a lifetime of beautiful work—entranceways, ornamental stone beds, bridge supports, shops, and two completed houses. He took great pride in gathering his own rock and shaping each project with care and individuality.

He was a natural storyteller and a jokester. For many years his day began with a 7:00 a.m. trip to the local Co-Op to visit and swap stories with friends before getting on with the day's work. He also loved tinkering with old cars and trucks and barbequing. Seeing him under the hood of an automobile with the smell of whole-hog barbeque with his special sauce was common occurrence. He was rarely seen without a loyal dog by his side, faithful companions throughout his life.

Rufus Bryant will be remembered as a hardworking man with a quick wit and hands that built lasting things. His grit and lifelong hard work will not be forgotten and he will be missed.

A Celebration of Life ceremony is being planned for March 28, 2026 at West Fayetteville Church of Christ Fellowship Hall, 24 Boonshill Road, Fayetteville, Tennessee 37334 at 1pm.




# Events


**Rufus Carlee Bryant**

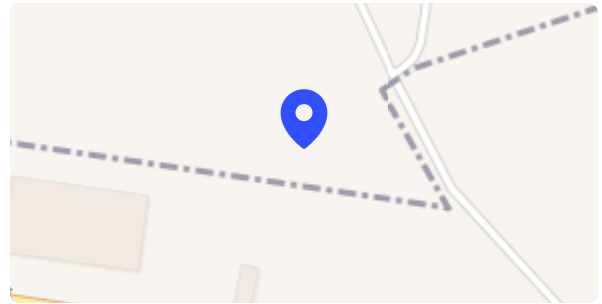
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## Celebration of Life Service

 **Saturday**, March 28, 2026

 1:00 PM CT

 **West Fayetteville Church of Christ**  
24 Boonshill Road, Fayetteville TN 37334





## Tribute Wall

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**Carly Copley** posted:

I enjoyed exploring his garden in the summer. He always had an abundance and variety of veggies and melons that were well cared for.

March 9 at 2:42 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Rufus by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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