



## Gene Allen

October 2, 1939 - December 18, 2024

Gene Allen, a respected farmer and dedicated leader in his church and community, passed away on December 18, 2024, at the age of 85, after a brief illness.

Thomas Eugene Allen III was born on October 2, 1939, in Shellman, Georgia, to the late Tom and Marifrances (Boswell) Allen. After graduating from Shellman High School, he left home to study chemical engineering at Georgia Tech before transferring to Norman Park College to pursue a calling to ministry, earning an A.A. degree. His academic journey then shifted to political science, earning a B.A. from Georgetown College, an M.A. from the University of South Carolina, and a Ph.D. from Emory University.

It was during a biometry class at Emory that he met Ann Lyn Lightner. They were married on March 25, 1967. While completing his dissertation, he served as an assistant professor at Stetson University and then at Georgia Southwestern. Despite his love for teaching, he found himself drawn back to his roots. His father's declining health made it increasingly difficult to continue operating the farm, which had been in the family for four generations. In 1973, Gene committed himself fully to its stewardship.

Knowing that there was much he did not know, he set out to learn all he could. He pored over agricultural journals, consulted with scientists, and sought

advice from experienced neighbors. He worked to modernize the farm, installing center pivot irrigation and experimenting with new crop varieties and cultivation methods. Ever the early adopter, he bought a personal computer and learned to program it, using it to manage the growing operation—a move that earned him good-natured ribbing from friends and a cover story in Peanut Farmer magazine in 1982.

Gene believed modern agriculture is essential to feeding a growing population but recognized its tradeoffs. Committed to environmental stewardship, he took steps to reduce erosion and protect soil, water, and air for future generations. He terraced fields, planted trees, and retired wetlands to provide habitat for fish and wildlife. For a time, he served as a supervisor for the Lower Chattahoochee River Conservation District.

He consulted for Procter & Gamble over several years, leading efforts to improve peanut quality and reduce aflatoxin, a naturally occurring mold that poses serious health risks. He also served on the board of the Southwest Georgia Farm Credit Association for over 25 years, as well as on other boards, including the Randolph County Hospital Authority.

Ordained as a minister in young adulthood, he was a devoted member of First Baptist Church, Shellman, where he served as a deacon and adult Sunday school teacher. He also served as interim pastor at Carnegie Baptist Church and spoke at church services, graduations, and other events.

He pursued many hobbies over the years, including running, astrophotography, and fishing. An avid reader, he had a wide range of interests that reflected his curiosity and love of learning. He took delight in his children and grandchildren and had a special interest in their education. He was especially proud that his three children all earned Ph.D. degrees and pursued academic careers.

Gene is survived by his wife of 57 years, Ann Lyn (Lightner) Allen, and their three children: Thomas E. Allen IV (Susan) of Danville, Ky., Martha Allen-Dietrich (Blair) of Milledgeville, Ga., and Timothy E. Allen (Kimberly) of Charlottesville, Va.; his brother, John Boswell Allen (Barbara), and his sister, Lillian Kusmik (Peter); and eight grandchildren: Luke, Seth, Elizabeth, Katherine, William, Evan, Meghan, and Zachary.

A memorial service will be held at First Baptist Church, Shellman, at 1:00 PM on Saturday, December 28, 2024, led by family, followed by an informal gathering in the Bethea Building. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the church.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

DEC 28. 1:00 PM.

First Baptist Church Shellman

# Tribute Wall



“ Williams Funeral Homes and Crematory created a Tribute Video in memory of Gene Allen



Williams Funeral Homes and Crematory - December 27, 2024 at 02:24 PM



“ 77 files added to the album Life Tributes



Williams Funeral Homes and Crematory - December 27, 2024 at 09:01 AM



“ Martha, Blair and family, May fond memories be with you in the coming days. So sorry for your loss.



Ellen Mayers - December 21, 2024 at 12:00 PM