

# FAITH & COMMUNITY

## Plumtree Church hosting Rodney Hogue



Rodney Hogue

Plumtree Church is hosting special meetings with Dr. Rodney Hogue at 7 p.m. Saturday, June 10, and 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Sunday, June 11.

Rodney Hogue has been in full-time ministry since 1977. He pastored more than 32 years on the west coast in Washington State and California, his last being 23 years at Community of Grace in Hayward, California.

Hogue began to minister in the areas of deliverance and healing in the 1980s

while pastoring in churches in Washington state. His passion is to equip believers to minister in power for healing, deliverance and to see the restoration of lives to fulfill one's destiny.

Hogue now ministers itinerantly, equipping believers nationally and internationally to walk out their identity and expand God's Kingdom, which includes demonstrating the Kingdom of God with power.

He and his wife, Mary, reside near Abilene, Texas.

## Loss of labor, delivery services 'devastating'

To our community:

I am writing as a local physician to respond to the news that Mission may close the labor and delivery unit at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital. The Celo Health Center medical staff strongly opposes closure. Many community members I have spoken with share our views. We are all very concerned regarding the effect that this could have on the health of the young families in our community.

Loss of labor and delivery services will be devastating to our counties. Over half of the women in our area prefer to deliver at Blue Ridge and the numbers have been growing. Many women and young families prefer to deliver with care provided by dedicated members of their own community, whom they may volunteer with, go to church with or see in the grocery store.

At our current volume, we expect well over 200 deliveries this year. We have excellent care providers and a low cesarean rate. Of note, in the article in the paper last week, it was stated that we do not have 24/7 surgical backup at our hospital. This is inaccurate. We have been continually providing 24/7 C-section coverage with surgical backup, and can make this sustainable with support from Mission Hospital and the community. Also, we have four beautiful, completely up to date, fully equipped labor/delivery/recovery rooms and brand new operating rooms. We have incredible, dedicated nurses, 4 doctors and a midwife delivering the babies of our wonderful community and 11 doctors covering 24/7



Dr. Philip MITCHELL

to care for newborns. We love what we do and we love our patients.

If our labor and delivery services close it will put young mothers and babies at risk. We live in an area that is still relatively isolated and quite rural. Studies have shown that increased travel time to place of delivery is associated with more risk for the baby. It is a long way down the mountain to Asheville or Marion, much longer in bad weather, when the road down the mountain may be impassable. Danger increases if a baby is born in the car, especially if premature, especially an hour or more away. In pregnancy, life-threatening conditions can occur quickly and without warning. Placental abruption, umbilical cord prolapse, preterm labor, pulmonary embolism are a few. These conditions are rare, but if they occur demand immediate treatment. In just the past two years the obstetric providers at Blue Ridge have managed four cases of this nature (involving nine lives) that resulted in positive outcomes for mother and baby. These were emergencies where the extra hour or more to Asheville or extra 40 minutes or more to Marion would likely have resulted in death or brain injury to the baby, and possible injury to the mother. We do not believe that this risk is acceptable. If labor and delivery is closed down, there will be no ability to perform a life-saving C-section at our hospital when one of these emergencies shows up.

Also, moving deliveries to Asheville and Marion, as proposed, will place

undue burden on patients, many who do not have dependable transportation. It shifts costs to the patients by increasing costs of transportation, time off work, finding babysitters, and cost of food and lodging. It will make it harder for other family members to come and provide support for the couple. Again, this puts increased stress on young families in rural areas, some of whom are already struggling financially.

There has been a general trend across the nation in the loss of labor and delivery services in rural areas. Many rural hospitals are closing altogether. Studies show that with loss of labor and delivery, there is usually a loss in the number of overall surgeries performed at a hospital, which can lead to increased financial losses. Young families are less likely to use the hospital and overall use decreases. If this happens, it could lead to the eventual closure of our hospital. This is not the right path forward for our community.

Labor and delivery services generally lose money. Like other health systems across the nation, Mission is under financial stress. However, our hospital has been doing better financially recently than expected. We can continue to improve upon that success. Financially, it may be best for a health system to close a rural hospital, but I do not believe it is what is best for the quality of life and access to health care for this rural area. We will have to work together as a community to make it work financially. When we built Celo Health Center we raised some \$250,000 or more from our local community. How much more we could do with people contributing from the entire community.

We have no interest in or expectation of closing the labor and delivery ser-

vices at the Kempfer Birth Center at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital. To solve the financial needs to keep our labor and delivery open will require this community to come together to support its hospital and raise money to make it possible to keep it open. We have many ideas about how we can do this. We need your support.

Please understand, this is a crisis. It may have far-reaching negative effects on our community. Everyone needs to recognize the threat and be willing to step forward and help solve it.

I believe rural areas need more resources, more access to care, not less.

I believe that a community working together leads to a better future for our children.

I believe that we can work together with Mission Health and make it possible to keep our labor and delivery open and continue to improve our hospital and health system.

I love this wonderful community and am dedicated to it. So many times I have been in awe at the ways in which I see people help each other in this special place. I do not doubt that great things are possible and can actually be accomplished.

I firmly believe that this crisis can be solved. So much good can be done. Be willing.

This is our life, our community, our home, yours and mine, all of us.

Please write to us, write to the paper, make phone calls, speak out.

People can write to: BRRH Board of Trustees, Martha Tyner, Chair, c/o Becky Carter, Blue Ridge Regional Hospital, 125 Hospital Drive, Spruce Pine, NC 28777; Dr. Ron Paulus, CEO, Memorial Mission Hospital, 509 Biltmore Ave, Asheville, NC 28801; or Save Labor and Delivery, P.O. Box 5, Burnsville, NC 28714.

## OBITUARIES

### BAKERSVILLE

#### Bobby Birchfield

Bobby Birchfield, 82, of Blevins Branch Road, Bakersville, went home to be with the Lord May 30, 2017. He was a native of Mitchell County and a son of the late Charlie and Martha Putman Birchfield. He was a member of St. Paul Freewill Baptist Church and was previously employed in farming and the lumber businesses. Bobby enjoyed camping, sitting on the porch and especially enjoyed spending time with his family.

Survivors include his loving wife of 53 years, Barbara

Birchfield, of the home; one son, Brandon Birchfield, and wife, Stephanie, of Bakersville; three sisters, Virgie Clark, of Hampton, Tennessee, Hazel Watson, of Spruce Pine, and Margie Wilson, of Unicoi, Tennessee; one brother, Charles Birchfield, of Bakersville; and two grandchildren, Connor and Caden Birchfield.



He was preceded in death, in addition to his parents, by daughter, Dorothy Sharon Birchfield; sisters, Dora Rose and Doris Boone; and brothers, F.D., G.W. and Leonard Birchfield.

Funeral services were 2 p.m. Saturday, June 3, 2017, in St. Paul Freewill Baptist Church with the Rev. Gordon Lewis, the Rev. Roger Laws and the Rev. Scottie Jenkins officiating. The family received friends two hours prior to the service. Interment followed at the Hughes Cemetery.

Flowers are accepted or memorials may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St Jude Place Memphis, TN 38105 or to Shriners Children's Hospitals, 2900 N. Rocky Point Drive, Tampa, FL 33607.

Henline-Hughes Funeral Home is assisting the Birchfield family.

### CANE CREEK

#### Barbara Edwards Hollifield

Barbara Edwards Hollifield, 74, of Cane Creek, went home to be with the Lord Tuesday, May 30, 2017, at the home of her daughter. A native of Mitchell County, she was the daughter of the late Tevis and Nell Edwards. She was also preceded in death by her husband, James Richard Hollifield; and a sister, Carol E. Dolan. Barbara



was a member of Grassy Creek Baptist Church. She enjoyed reading and adored her family, friends, and especially her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Surviving is her daughter, Cheryl Koontz Mulvey, of Spruce Pine; sister, Rachel Anne Lomas, of Newport News, Virginia; brother, Gene Edwards, of Bakersville; grandchildren, Kristen Mulvey, Trey Mulvey, and wife, Danielle, and Sean Mulvey; great-grandchildren, Kennedy and Liam Mulvey, and her beloved dog, Sandy.

Funeral services were 7 p.m. Thursday, June 1 in Grassy Creek Baptist Church. The Rev. Matt Mills officiated. The family received friends from 5-7 p.m. prior to services at the church.

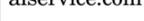
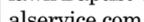
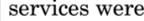
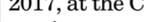
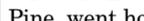
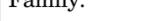
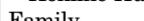
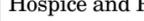
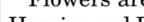
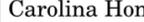
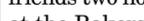
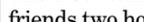
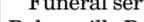
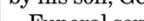
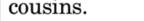
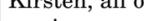
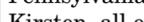
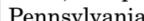
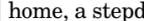
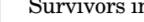
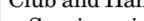
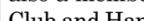
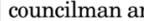
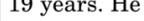
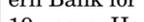
In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial donations be made to Hospice of the Blue Ridge, 236 Hospital Drive, Spruce Pine, NC 28777. Visit www.yanceyfuneralservice.com to send online condolences.

### BAKERSVILLE

#### George A. Wilson

George A. Wilson, 82, of South Mitchell Avenue, Bakersville, went home to be with the Lord Saturday, June 3, 2017. He was a native of Mitchell County and son of the late George D. and Bertha McKinney Wilson.

George was a member and deacon of Bakersville Baptist Church where he was also teller and on the building and grounds committee. George graduated Valdese High School and attended Oak Ridge Military Institute for two



years. He received his Associate Degree in business at East Carolina, served 12 years in The United States Air Force then two years in The United States Army Reserve. He worked two years at General Dynamic in California, then returned to Bakersville in 1967. He worked for Northwestern Bank for three years, then Henredon Furniture for 19 years. He was on the Bakersville town board as a councilman and was mayor pro-tem for 22 years. He was also a member of Bakersville Fire Department, Lions Club and Handmade in America.

Survivors include his loving wife, Carol Wilson, of the home, a stepdaughter, Leah A. Orndorff, of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; three grandchildren, Amber, Olivia and Kirsten, all of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; and several cousins.

He was preceded in death, in addition to his parents, by his son, George Russell Wilson.

Funeral services were 3 p.m. Tuesday, June 6, 2017, at Bakersville Baptist Church with the Rev. Jim Sutton and The Rev. William Ellis officiating. The family received friends two hours prior to the service. Interment followed at the Bakersville Memorial Cemetery with The North Carolina Honor Guard conducting Graveside Military Honors.

Flowers are accepted or memorials may be made to Hospice and Palliative Care of The Blue Ridge 236 Hospital Drive Spruce Pine, NC 28777.

Henline-Hughes Funeral Home is assisting the Wilson Family.

## DEATH NOTICE

### Robert Lee McHone

Robert Lee McHone, 82 of Grassy Creek in Spruce Pine, went home to be with the Lord Monday, May 29, 2017, at the Charles George VA Medical Center. Funeral services were 2 p.m. Saturday, June 3, 2017, in Woodlawn Baptist Church in Marion. Visit www.yanceyfuneralservice.com to send online condolences.

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