



David Rudolph "Rudy" Blakely

August 29, 1936 - May 23, 2025

David Rudolph "Rudy" Blakely (88), husband of Loretta Johnson Blakely passed away peacefully at his home on May 23, 2025, after a long illness, surrounded by his loving family. He was born on August 29, 1936, in Laurens, SC and was the only child of David Reid and Etrula Gosnell Blakely.

Rudolph's childhood was spent on the family farm where they raised chickens and rabbits as well as truck crops. He graduated from Laurens High School in 1954 and from Clemson University in 1958 with a degree in Agricultural Education. While at Clemson, Rudolph was a member of the last military class. He participated in ROTC and was selected for the elite marching and rifle Senior Platoon. Rudy, even as a youngster, had a knack for repairing things and helped in the family business at a young age, when they opened Laurens Saw Company.

After graduating from Clemson, Rudy joined the US Navy and was commissioned as an Ensign. After flight training at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida, he was stationed in Argentia, Newfoundland and served as an airborne navigator on a Super Constellation Early Warning Radar Plane. He completed over 100 flights between Newfoundland and The Azores in Portugal as part of the barrier patrol during the Cold War. He had additional training at Pax River Navigation School in Maryland and was designated as a Check Navigator. He was promoted to Lieutenant, JG and later to Lieutenant in the Ready Reserves.

Rudy and Loretta dated for five years, including his last two years at Clemson,

while Loretta was at Winthrop College and they became engaged after graduation. They married on New Year's Day, 1961, at Union Baptist Church in Laurens, SC. and began their life together in Pensacola. He was released from active duty in 1962, and they moved to Greenville where Rudy helped his father start and develop Blakely's Sales & Service, a lawn and garden equipment business in what is now known as the Cherrydale area. After working with the business for a short time, Rudy left and served as Assistant County Agent with the Clemson Extension Service for two years. He was responsible for working with local farmers and especially with the 4H Clubs in Greenville.

Blakely's Sales & Service business was growing, so Rudy returned to work there and remained until 1978. He was hired by W.W. GRAINGER Inc., an industrial and equipment supply company where he helped set up the Greenville distribution center and opened the Upstate territory. He became the leading salesperson in his area and later was a sales trainer for twenty years. He retired at age 60 in 1998. Rudy was active in the community, serving on the board of directors of The Poinsett Bank and The Bank of Camden.

Soon after retiring, Rudy was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He had a long period of time where he sought out and endured numerous surgeries and other procedures at The Cleveland Clinic and Duke Medical Center. Through his perseverance in seeking the best treatments he was finally able to enjoy life fully once again. This involved travel with Loretta and friends to places all over world as well as throughout the United States. In 1998 Rudy and Loretta moved to the Green Valley area where he enjoyed many years of playing golf and card games with his buddies. He loved working in his shop, taking care of his yard, working on all types of equipment and computers for friends and family.

Rudy's faith in God was always an important part of his life. He was actively involved during his youth at Rocky Springs Presbyterian Church. He continued this interest in his adult life and was elected as the youngest deacon at the church he joined in Pensacola. He and Loretta joined McCarter

Presbyterian Church when they moved to Greenville, where he served as Deacon and then Elder. In 1971 the family moved to Travelers Rest and joined Trinity Presbyterian Church. He became an integral part of the church, serving as an elder and several terms as Clerk of the Session. He also was active in Foothills Presbytery, serving on the committee for training new ministers as well as serving on the steering committee and board of the Foothills Presbyterian Home in Easley. He was a delegate from Foothills Presbytery for two years to the PCUSA National General Assembly. Rudy was always learning, and he was a talented teacher. He spent many hours in preparation for instruction in "What it means to be a Presbyterian." He took classes on the Bible at Furman University and through the Presbytery.

The greatest joy of Rudy's life was his family, who had his complete devotion. He enjoyed spending time with his children and grandchildren, who affectionately called him "Poppy." He especially loved having them all together in his home for holidays, special occasions or to watch Clemson Football.

Rudy was a complex individual in some ways but his basic beliefs in his family, his church and his country were unwavering. He was a true patriot and loved his country, not only during active military service but throughout his life. He was surprisingly well read in many areas, loved country music but also enjoyed the classics. He was adept at figuring out complex problems, especially in engines, computers and routine things around the home, sharing this knowledge with his daughters and anyone who was lucky enough to soak it in.

To describe Rudy, one remembers his joy of life, wonderful sense of humor, loyalty and protective nature, and most of all his dependability. He always fulfilled his promises. He was a people person and had many dear lifelong friends.

Rudolph is survived by his loving wife of 64 years, Loretta; his two daughters, Sherry Blakely Ogletree (Frank), Annette Blakely Taylor (Gordon); grandchildren, Erin Blakely Ogletree and Anna Ogletree Mishra (Yash),

Sydney Taylor Arowood (Justin Briggman) and Grayson Bradley Taylor; great grandchildren, Easton, Remi and Maverick.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Trinity Presbyterian Church Building Fund, 405 Trailblazer Dr., Travelers Rest, SC 29690.

The family will receive friends Tuesday morning from 10:00 a.m. until 11:15 a.m. at Trinity Presbyterian Church. Funeral services will follow at 11:30 a.m. in the church sanctuary. Burial will be 3:30 p.m. in Rocky Springs Presbyterian Church Cemetery, 1063 Rocky Springs Church Rd., Laurens, SC 29360.

Cemetery Details

Rocky Springs Presbyterian Church Cemetery

1063 Rocky Springs Church Rd.
Laurens, SC 29360

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 27. 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM (ET)

Trinity Presbyterian Church
405 Trailblazer Drive
Travelers Rest, SC

Church Service

MAY 27. 11:30 AM (ET)

Trinity Presbyterian Church
405 Trailblazer Drive
Travelers Rest, SC

Tribute Wall

YW

“ Yvondra Whitmore lit a candle in memory of David Blakely



Yvondra Whitmore - May 27, 2025 at 11:17 AM

BW

“ Lots of golf fun, loved playing with hm, Bob Williams Green Valley Country Club.

Bob Williams - May 26, 2025 at 11:07 AM

KC

“ Sherry and Annette and Loretta, I have so many fond memories of our families getting together over the years. My heartfelt sympathy to you all.

Karen Cleveland - May 25, 2025 at 04:17 PM

MC

“ Rudy was one of the nicest people I know and I know he was a great Christian dad, too. You have my deepest sympathy in your loss.

Your sister in Christ, Mary Cline

Mary Cline - May 25, 2025 at 07:58 AM

ST

“ I met the Blakely Family when I attended Trinity Presbyterian Church in the early 90’s and enjoyed Rudy’s personality and sense of humor! He will be missed! The family has my prayers during this difficult time!

With sympathy & love,
Susan Trammell

Susan Trammell - May 25, 2025 at 12:05 AM

KV

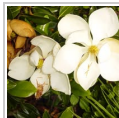
“ I have fond memories of Rudy at Trinity Presbyterian Church while serving as a deacon along side of his years of experience. Cherished time for me. May he Rest in Peace 🙏🙏🙏

Kathy Vernon - May 24, 2025 at 03:24 PM

IH

“ Condolences Loretta and family. Such fond memories of a nice man who I am delighted to call my friend.
Irene Holland Mount pleasant

Irene Holland - May 24, 2025 at 02:55 PM



Irene, your expression of sympathy means so much to me since I know you traveled this journey with your sweet Harry. Still miss all our dear golfing buddies!

Loretta Blakely - June 11, 2025 at 01:51 PM