



## Ellis Edward Murphy

April 2, 1937 - January 21, 2021

Ellis Edward Murphy, age 83, of Unicoi, passed away on Thursday, January 21, 2021, at the Johnson City Medical Center. A native of Hunt Dale, NC, Ellis is a son of the late Edward Wesley and Dorothy (Tipton) Murphy. Mr. Murphy was a member of the Church of the Brethren, where he faithfully served as Deacon. He was a Teacher, Coach and Principal. His career included Norview High School and Booker T. Washington Academy, both in Norfolk, VA, as well as his many years at Unicoi County High School. But the titles he was most proud of were Loving Husband of 57 years, Loving Brother, and Mentor to so many young people. He was also an avid golfer. In addition to his parents, Ellis is preceded in death by his sister, Shirley Wright; brother-in-law, Gary Wright; and special friend, Wayne Whitson; father-in-law and mother-in-law, JK and Pansy Shelley.

Ellis Edward Murphy leaves behind to cherish his memory:

Wife of 57 years: Doris Murphy;

Sister: Karen Murphy;

Special cousin: Eddie Tipton;

Brothers-in-law: Odie Barnett,

Bill Shelley;

Special nephew: Kevin Barnett;

Special niece: Pam Willis;

Longtime friends;

Old golf buddies;

Faculty and Staff of Unicoi County High School.

The family would like to offer special thanks to their friends and family who have been so supportive during this difficult time.

The family will attend a private graveside service. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Ellis' name to Unicoi County High School or to

the charity of your choice.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and for the health and safety of our guests and staff, we respectfully request that all who attend the services wear a mask or face covering and observe all social distancing guidelines.

Condolences and memories may be shared with the family and viewed at <http://www.valleyfuneralhome.net> or on our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/ValleyFuneralHomeErwin>. These arrangements are made especially for the family and friends of Ellis Edward Murphy through Valley Funeral Home, 1085 N. Main Ave., Erwin, 423-743-9187.

# Cemetery

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## **Roselawn Memory Gardens**

3033 South Roan Street

Johnson City, TN, 37601

# Comments

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Karen,

I am so very sorry to hear of Ellis's passing. I know this will leave a huge void in your daily life that will never be the same. You have suffered a lot of loss in the last few months, and my heart breaks for you, dear friend! Losing a sister recently, I know your pain. I will be praying for you and Doris in the coming days. Love you, Karen.

Debbie Lamie

Debbie Lamie - January 27 at 02:56 PM

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We were so sorry to hear of the loss of Mr. Murphy. I got to know him in three different roles. I was a student under him at Unicoi County High School and as an office worker, I had many contacts with him. He was always so nice and such a gentleman! Later I returned to UCHS as a teacher. He was always so kind and helpful to me as a teacher, but he was most impressive in his dealings with students. He was strict, but he showed respect and kindness to students who got in trouble. This helped many students to try to behave better and not disappoint him. The third time I got to know Mr. Murphy was as the brother of one of my very best friends, Karen. His love and caring for her was always so obvious to me. She returned complete love and devotion to him to his last moment here. We will all miss Mr. Murphy!

PENNEY HIGGINS - January 26 at 08:48 PM

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Ellis was not an office principal. He was with his students and teachers. Ellis supported and knew his staff and he had a keen insight into managing difficult students. Ellis was a superior principal that I thoroughly enjoyed teaching with. I always appreciated and delighted in his wonderful sense of humor. Any contact, long or short, always left me aware of a man who offered us his happiness and his love. I commend his belief in God and his courage and determination over these past years as he endured many physical challenges with a grace that I've rarely seen. Ellis leaves me with wonderful memories from throughout my life, but I'll miss Ellis. You know what I mean.

Lewis Thornberry - January 25 at 08:09 PM

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“ I was blessed to get to know Mr. Murphy and work with him for 19 yrs. We had great times together and with the faculty and students at UCHS. Mr. Murphy always had a "story" to tell. He loved students and was willing to give all a second chance. I have heard Mr. Murphy tell students to read Ecclesiastes 3 to emphasize there is a time and place for everything. He would go on to say if you don't believe the Bible, this sure will not hurt you. Mrs. Murphy was a special wife and partner to him. If he wanted to get her attention, he would say "Doris Jean". It was usually giving her a "coaching tip" on her golf swing. Great friend and fellow educator! I count it a blessing to have been associated with Ellis and Doris.

**Glenn Davidson** - January 25 at 05:49 PM

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“ Beverly Edwards-Silvers lit a candle in memory of Ellis Edward Murphy



**Beverly Edwards-Silvers** - January 25 at 12:43 PM

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“ We are so sorry to hear of Ellis' passing. One of our first and most enjoyable friends for years. Even a few months ago seeing him in the field with his big german shepherd dog brought a smile to our faces. Our most sincere condolences. Phillis Fox and Bill Powley

**Phillis A Fox** - January 25 at 10:21 AM

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“ He was a wonderful man. I will never forget the times he visited the classroom and spoke about a question he had asked a classroom years prior. He had asked, "Who said, 'I will return?'" " He expected the class to respond with McArthur, but a boy voiced, "Jesus!" He was so impressed with his answer. I will pray for his family, and I wish them peace during this time.

**Courtnee Turner Hoyle** - January 24 at 10:26 PM

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“ Karen, I am so sorry to hear of Ellis' passing? I have fond memories of him as my principal. I will be praying for you and Doris! Love you much, friend!

**Robin Lamie** - January 24 at 08:10 PM

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“ Karen, I am so sorry for your loss. You were a very loving advocate and caregiver to all your family! I know they treasure the fact that you were always in their corner advocating for them. Always know that they loved you dearly as I know you do them. Ellis always knew his baby sister would come through. May God keep you and comfort you in this time of sorrow.

**Dianna Holland** - January 24 at 03:56 PM

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“ I'm so very saddened to learn of Mr. Murphy's passing. I will always remember him for the kindness he showed me as a "new" teacher. I rarely ever saw him without a smile on his face and a spring in his step! He certainly touched many lives throughout his years in the school system. God-speed to you Sir and my condolences to those he cherished who are left behind for now~

Debbie (Ratliff) Collins

**Debbie Collins** - January 24 at 01:27 PM

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“ Karen, I am so sorry for your loss. You are such a sweet, caring person! You have cared for all of your family members in such a very loving manner. They were all very fortunate to have you in their corner advocating for them. I know they would say that the family couldn't have done it without you! Please let me know if there is anything I can do.

Lots of love,  
Dianna Holland

**Dianna Holland** - January 24 at 01:27 PM

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“ This man impacted lives in ways that many will never know. He was always one step ahead of students but willing to give a little grace. Prayers for the Murphy family.

**Nick Lingerfelt** - January 24 at 06:46 AM

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“ To Doris and Family. Sorry for your loss.



**Bob and Donna Ensor** - January 23 at 03:55 PM

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“ Doris, Karen & Family, We are so sorry for your loss and send our deepest sympathies to all of you. Ellis was a wonderful neighbor and friend as well as a "golf buddy" from many years ago. Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this sad time.

Jerry & Gay Whitt

**Jerry & Gay Whitt** - January 23 at 03:26 PM

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“ I met Mr. Murphy when I was 14 years old. Mr. Murphy was more than just the principal of U.C.H.S. He was a teacher, mentor, friend, and a surrogate father for so many students. He always had a smile on his face and a spring in his step. He always had a kind word or a piece of advice for the "young people." His smile and mere presence made students like me feel accepted in a place that was intimidating to a ninth grader.

After I graduated in 1990, I returned to U.C.H.S. to teach English from 1994-1997. Mr. Murphy gave me my first opportunity to teach He was willing to take a chance, and more importantly, he believed in me. As a teacher, I observed Mr. Murphy helping children in ways few people ever saw. If he knew a student was hungry, he took care of the situation. If a child was despondent, he lifted their spirits. He has inspired and shaped so many people through the years. Mr. Murphy showed me as a teacher that children ALWAYS come first and curriculum comes second. I owe so much to this educator. Mrs. Murphy, I am so deeply saddened to hear this news. I know Mr. Murphy will always be remembered by so many people like myself- his memory will forever last.

Mr. Murphy, I hope you are playing on the best golf course ever. I will miss you.



**Nicole Holder Atkins** - January 23 at 02:14 PM

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“ David Light lit a candle in memory of Ellis Edward Murphy



**David Light** - January 23 at 11:30 AM

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“ ELLIS WAS A GREAT FRIEND. WE SPENT MANY HOURS TOGETHER OVER THE YEARS BUILDING FENCE AND LOTS OF ODD JOBS, LISTENING TO TALES FROM THE PAST, COOKOUTS, AND JUST TALKING WITH ELLIS AND DORIS.GREAT MEMORIES. WHAT A BLESSING! WE LOVE YOU ALL. GOD BLESS!  
WE'LL MISS THOSE TIMES

JM AND JOANN

**JM AND JOANN WHITSON** - January 23 at 11:26 AM

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“ I teared up upon seeing this. Mr. Murphy was a wonderful principal, mentor, and friend to me. I loved him dearly and he is truly missed. Condolences to the family.

**Ken Hilliard** - January 23 at 10:31 AM

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“ Mr Murphy was one of the most kindest, most caring men I've ever known. He was so good to me in high school and I will always remember that. Mrs. Murphy I am so sorry.

**Nancy Allen McGee** - January 23 at 10:08 AM

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“ I'm so sorry to hear this! I was just telling a story about being sent to his office a few days ago. Mr. Murphy was always so kind and funny. I'm pretty sure I was "disciplined" by having to listen to his golf stories and stories about his dogs. He was a great man and had such a positive influence on so many of us. Love and prayers to his family.

**Allison Seeley** - January 23 at 10:06 AM

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“ I’m so very sorry to hear of Mr. Murphy’s passing. He was my high school principal and Mrs . Murphy was my art teacher. They were wonderful leaders to our school system. I became reacquainted with them over the past few years at the doctors office I work at. Both of you always smiling, miss Doris. Prayers for you and your family

**Dionysia Bryant** - January 23 at 09:51 AM

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“ Doris, I am so deeply sorry to hear of your loss. I have such great memories of your all’s friendship with my parents. I will never forget your wonderful positive influence and the kind things you did for me as a teenager/young woman. I will pray for your comfort and healing.  
Love,  
Pam Peterson Mobley

**pam mobleu** - January 23 at 08:28 AM

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“ Dawna Deadrick lit a candle in memory of Ellis Edward Murphy



**Dawna Deadrick** - January 23 at 08:22 AM

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“ So sorry about Mr. Murphy passing away. My thoughts and prayers go to Doris and Karen. Always liked him and his family.

**Becky Love** - January 23 at 08:00 AM

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“ So very sorry for your family's loss. Mr. Murphy was a good person. Your family is in my thoughts and prayers.



**Chris Boings** - January 23 at 07:59 AM

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“ I'm so thankful to have known Ellis. Thoughts and prayers to the family and especially Doris. Debbie Holloway.

**debra holloway** - January 23 at 07:49 AM

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“ I met Mr. and Mrs. Murphy when I was 12 years old. I have always been impressed by how they presented themselves to others. He was such a wonderful example of an educator and just a human being in general. I recall how good he was to each of his students and the stories he would share with us. My prayers are with his family. Rest in Peace, Mr. Murphy. You will be sorely missed.



**Vicky Willis Reeves** - January 23 at 07:48 AM

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“ Mrs. Murphy,  
So sorry to hear of Mr. Murphy's passing. Loved you two the first time you set foot in UCHS. Good memories will always be with me.  
Love Kathy Bennett Padgett

**Katherine Bennett Padgett** - January 23 at 07:16 AM

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“ My heartfelt sorrow goes out to Doris and Karen. The only thing the virus can't take from us is our memories. I sure had plenty of great ones with Ellis and will cherish them forever! I hope to be able to reach out to Karen and Doris soon!  
Bill Nuss

William Nuss - January 23 at 06:55 AM

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“ Mr. Murphy was a wonderful person. He was a great principal. May he RIP. Prayers for you all during this difficult time.

Michelle Mcinturff - January 23 at 06:53 AM

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“ Nancy Osborne Rutter lit a candle in memory of Ellis Edward Murphy



Nancy Osborne Rutter - January 23 at 12:49 AM

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“ I was sad to learn tonight that my high school principal recently passed away. Mr. Murphy was more than a principal to most. He was a mentor and friend. Some of my fondest memories of him was spending time at his house when he and Doris took the girls golf team into their home often and treated us like we were their own. We had a special bond with them. So much of a special bond that he would make phone calls to my parents out of concern if he thought I wasn't making the best decisions. He truly cared about and loved so many kids over the years. He always had this smile on his face and was full of funny stories or jokes. He left an incredible legacy. Rest In Peace, Mr. Murphy.

Nicky Redmond - January 22 at 11:22 PM

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“ Mr. Murphy was my principal as a student and my first principal when I started teaching at UCHS twenty-nine years ago. I had my first interview with him. He was a good friend and helped me in many ways during my teaching career. He and Doris have remained lifelong friends and I'm sure if there is a golf course in heaven that he's playing a round without getting winded or needing a cart. I am reminded of all the retirement parties we've had at UCHS over the last ten years. Ellis and Doris were always the first to arrive and usually the last to leave. Ellis could recall so many stories of his past years at the high school and at Booker T Washington that we all loved to hear. My prayers go out to Doris, Karen and the family. We've lost a good man today. But, may your memories comfort you in the days ahead. Joey Lewis

Joey Lewis - January 22 at 10:11 PM

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“ Nellie Arrowood lit a candle in memory of Ellis Edward Murphy



Nellie Arrowood - January 22 at 09:38 PM

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“ We always enjoyed seeing Ellis and Doris ride around their property with their dogs. Always together with a smile and a wave. We pray for those left behind and ask God to send his special comfort. Your neighbors,  
Ricky and Sherry Watford



sherry watford - January 22 at 07:46 PM

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“ Mr murphy was a great guy i always remembered the advice he gave me he said son dont ever give up stay focused on your goals and your going to do great and he was right i stayed focused on my school work and i graduated with my diploma him and mr wilcox shook my hand and handed my diploma.mrs murphy you and your family are in my prayers.

**Conley oaks** - January 22 at 07:21 PM