

Carol Ann (Smith) Cole
December 31, 1939 - October 12, 2024



Carol Ann (Smith) Cole, 84, died on October 12, 2024, under hospice care at Catawba Memorial Hospital in Hickory, North Carolina. In the last years of her life, her home was Abernethy Laurels Retirement Community, in nearby Newton.

Predeceased by Lynn, her husband of 62 years, Carol is survived by three children: David Cole, North Carolina (wife Michelle); Phyllis Cole-Dai, South Dakota (husband Jihong); and Barry Cole, Colorado (wife Melissa). She also has nine grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

Carol was born on December 31, 1939, in Wood County, Ohio, to Warren Smith and Jeanette (Oberholtzer) Smith. She was the baby sister of Ralph, Joann (Stram), and Janet (Mains). Joann survives, in Findlay, Ohio.

Shortly after graduating from Mt. Blanchard High School in 1957, Carol married Lynn. Together they established Cole Swine Farms, Inc., which operated until 1997. During that period, she was heavily involved in the Mt. Blanchard United Methodist Church as well as a rich variety of other organizations.

In 1997, Carol and Lynn moved to Oneida Baptist Institute in Oneida, Kentucky. Carol first managed the school's craft house/gift shop, then became the school's food services director.

In 2009, the couple retired to Morganton, North Carolina, near their elder son David and his family.

Carol was active in service to that community, especially at St. Matthew's United Methodist Church, until she and Lynn transitioned into elder care.

Throughout her life, Carol was fond of trying different forms of artwork fancy papercutting, watercolor painting, wood-burning, acrylic painting, sketching, making handmade greeting cards, drying gourds to transform into art objects... She delighted in gifting her creations to other people.

In every task she undertook, Carol could be counted on to keep her word, give her best effort, be creative in her approach, and wrap others in kindness. She was a quiet, private person, but she had a huge heart. If she believed in a cause, she wasn't afraid to step up and lead. At Abernethy Laurels, she was called "Mama Cole" because she so thoughtfully tended her fellow residents. She even assisted the staff members she knew best, volunteering practical suggestions and hands-on support.

Carol's family deeply appreciates the staff at Abernethy Laurels for caring so compassionately for both her and Lynn during their residency there. They also wish to express their gratitude to the wonderful medical personnel at Catawba Memorial Hospital and Comfort Care for so tenderly easing Carol's passage from this life.

Carol's ashes will be inurned beside Lynn's at Riverview Cemetery near Mt. Blanchard, OH. A private celebration of her life will be held by the immediate family at a future date.

The family invites Carol's relatives and friends to leave expressions of love and condolence at <http://bit.ly/4dR6IXA>. In lieu of flowers, you're invited to make a gift to Hospice Foundation of America, 1707 L Street NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20036. You may donate online at <https://givedirect.org/hfa/>.

Draughn principal is Burke principal of the year

BURKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Burke County Public Schools named Draughn High School Principal Charles Williams the 2024-2025 Principal of the Year for the district.

Williams' fellow Burke County Public Schools principals nominated him for the honor, and he is now chosen to represent the district at the regional Principal of the Year level.

"Being nominated for Burke County Principal of the Year by my peers is an incredible honor," Williams said. "It's very humbling to know that my colleagues — who understand the challenges and responsibilities of this role firsthand — see value in the work I do."

"I have always tried to be a resource to help and support those who I work with and I appreciate those who have done the same for me. I have had many influences in my career, some have retired such as Ms. Leicha SanMiguel, Mrs. Becky Roach and Mrs. Susan Pollpeter. As well, I am fortunate to have a tremendous support system within BCPs and some tremendous colleagues that I depend on daily. We work together as a team. Our role is extremely challenging and having a close network is crucial."

Williams said focusing on relationships, the art of listening and flexibility are valuable skills for leaders.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Mike Swan said Williams has dedicated his life to public education.

"He has worked in all levels — elementary, middle and high school — and is a strong instructional leader for our district," Swan said. "Mr. Williams is very deserving of this recognition from his peers. He has a passion not only for education but also for his students, especially those who are from tough backgrounds. We know he will represent us well at the regional Principal of the Year level."

Williams started his career with Burke County Public Schools in 1991 as a daycare worker. In 1995, he took a position as a teacher assistant. He has also been a substitute teacher, bus driver, EL teacher (non certified), teacher, instructional coach, assistant principal and principal. Draughn is his fifth principal assignment as he has also served at Ray Childers, Chesterfield, Mountain View and Valdese.

"Over the course of my career, education has changed in significant ways, particularly with an increased focus on ac-



BURKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PHOTOS

Superintendent Mike Swan, Sadie Williams, Charles Williams, Heather Williams, Deputy Superintendent Karen Auton, Director of Secondary Education Desarae Kirkpatrick and Director of Regional Support Services—Northwest with the NC Department of Public Instruction Stephanie Dischiavi.



Charles Williams with his wife, Heather, and youngest daughter, Sadie, after being named Burke County Public Schools Principal of the Year.

countability," Williams said. "Today, there's a greater emphasis on data-driven decisions, standardized assessments, and ensuring that we meet specific benchmarks. This level of accountability is important, as it ensures that we're delivering quality education and continually improving student outcomes."

He said the most important constant is that students remain at the center of everything.

What keeps him going each day as an educator? Williams said it is "knowing that I'm making a meaningful impact on students' lives. When I was a teacher, I could influence the students in my classroom. As an instructional coach, that impact grew wider as I supported and guided fellow teachers. Now, as a principal, the scope of my influence is even larger, shaping an entire school's culture and affecting the lives of students, staff, and families."

Williams enjoys the daily interactions with students. He said, "As a new high school principal, I've come to understand even more how meaningful relationships can create a larger, lasting impact. These connections are at the heart of what we do, and they remind me every day of the importance of our work. This ongoing pursuit of excellence and connection keeps me energized and focused on doing what's best for our school community."

In his spare time, Williams enjoys spending time with his family. He enjoys baking with his wife, Heather, also an educator. He said, "I'm even pretty good at decorating cakes." The couple is involved in a marriage ministry at their local church, where they organize marriage retreats and family events. They have two graduates of Draughn and a current student at the school.

Work, volunteers plentiful in Old Fort

Weeks after

Helene, town still digging out

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The burgers were sizzling on Wednesday at The Davis Country Store & Café on East Main Street in Old Fort. For the past three weeks, the store has provided breakfast, lunch and dinner to anyone hungry and in need.

The family-owned business has dispensed about 600 meals a day since Hurricane Helene rolled through and swamped the town, according to 21-year-old Anderson Davis, who works with his parents, Amy and Robert Davis.

Anderson Davis said the store will serve free meals "as long as the need is there."

Across Old Fort on Wednesday, helping hands were plentiful. So was the work.

At the home of Pearl Shelton on Catawba Avenue, a volunteer crew was stripping down the residence.

A restoration team from BELFOR Property Restoration was masked up and cleaning out Old Fort Elementary School.

And Old Fort Mayor Pam Snypes was singing the praises of the city's nine full-time employees over at town hall.

Davis Country Store & Café

After the storm left Old Fort residents without electricity or water, the grills were fired up and food served at the café, Anderson Davis said.

He said the café cleared out its freezers. Since then, people have donated food and volunteers have helped with the cooking.

In addition to providing a meal, Davis said the café became an information center in the storm's aftermath.

"People came here to find others," he said. "People didn't know how their neighbors were doing. It's been tough on a lot of people."

The house on Catawba Avenue

Members of God's Pit Crew assembled at the home of Pearl Shelton on Catawba Avenue to muck out the home, said Jeff Rexrode, a member of the volunteer group.

Rexrode said people came from places such as Texas, New York and Ohio to help out in western North Carolina, including the people working at Shelton's home.

Winter coats, a damaged dresser and pieces of ceiling were among the items the crew removed from the Shelton home.

And mud. Lots of mud. Six inches of mud, according to one of the workers.

Rexrode said God's Pit Crew is a Christ-centered volunteer organization that began in 1999. He said he came from Danville, Virginia, to take part in the cleanup.

He said there is no charge for the services of God's Pit Crew. The organization operates on donations.

No tags were visible on the Shelton home, but Matt Zapp, the town manager of Emerald Isle, said 47 homes in Old Fort have been red tagged. Another 36 have been yellow tagged.

Zapp, who was working with town officials, said red tag homes are considered condemned. He said yellow tag homes are dwellings that may have power restored but have significant concerns.

Old Fort Elementary School

A cleanup crew from BELFOR Property Restoration was hard at work at the school. One worker said the initial cleanup phase was nearly complete. The next step is repair, the worker said. About 50 people were working at the school on Wednesday.

Town of Old Fort

Old Fort Mayor Pam Snypes took a moment Wednesday to praise the employees of the town.

She said employees have worked up to 16 hours per day, seven days a week without complaint.

"I am so proud of the town of Old Fort," she said.



XAVIER MARTIN

God's Pit Crew member Mark Reitz, right, drags a sled full of mud out of Pearl Shelton's house in Old Fort on Wednesday. Volunteers from God's Pit Crew came from as far as California, Mississippi, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Virginia to assist in cleanup efforts.



Sharon Ivester Everhart

for Burke County School Board

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