



# Joseph Britt McGinn Sr.

NOV 21, 1934 - JUL 4, 2022



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## **Joseph Britt McGinn Sr.**

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**H**untersville, NC - Joseph Britt McGinn, Sr. answered God's roll call on July 4, 2022. What we on earth thought to be a little summer afternoon thunder and lightning was actually the heavenly choir rearranging their risers to make room for a wonderful new tenor arriving to join the perfect harmonies.

Musical talent was one gift Joe McGinn contributed throughout his lifetime. He sang in school glee clubs and choirs while growing up in Steele Creek Presbyterian Church. Coming from a line of spirited pianists, he loved the gospel hymns and was always surrounded by friends with whom he could harmonize. His quartets, the Gospelairens and Joe's Boys and a Girl, performed concerts and recorded several CDs. Joe's groups performed at all-night gospel contests in Charlotte area schools, neighborhood centers, and church halls. The Gospelairens even performed at the great Ryman Theater in Nashville, Tennessee. Joe was often the comedienne and spokesman of the group, in addition to being the tenor who could hit stratospheric high notes. Whether around the piano, at the game or in the classroom, people naturally gravitated to Joe McGinn.

While at Huntersville Presbyterian Church, Joe served numerous terms as Deacon and Elder, was church Treasurer, taught youth and adult Sunday School classes, and participated in an international mission project in Brazil. He was busy with God's work in daily life. When asked to share his faith statement during a church officer training, Joe wrote "being a Christian is not only a privilege given by my family, but it bears lifelong responsibilities. Witnessing doesn't happen only when it's convenient or when I have nothing else to do. Fulfilling my obligations, giving my time, my talents, and my financial support, is a daily part of my life which brings me great joy."

In addition to having a music-loving heritage, Joe grew up with many teachers in his family. He followed in their footsteps. He attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he was awarded a Bachelor and a Masters degree in Education. For more than thirty years, Joe taught at Rutherford Elementary School, Alexander and Ranson Junior High Schools, and Olympic High School. He ended his career as Assistant Principal at West Mecklenburg High School, the school from which he graduated. There he worked with his dear friend and Principal, Freddy Leger. Joe's



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students appreciated his wit and the clever ways in which he taught history. Joe didn't emphasize memorizing long lists of dates but rather focused on understanding the actions of people in their times and the impact each of us has on the future. Some of Joe's students have called or visited in recent years and relayed stories of how important his lessons were in their lives. Many students and colleagues talked about his spirit of fairness, whether in teaching, testing for subject knowledge or in competition on the playing field. Joe wanted all of his students to reach their full potential. He encouraged them to attempt great things, to never think they were too small or somehow limited in their abilities.

Joe was an accomplished athlete. He was a three-letter man at West Mecklenburg High School. He played football, basketball, baseball and ran track to build stamina. In his 1953 yearbook, it appears Joe may have been the smallest player on each team. He used to joke that being the shortest gave him an advantage – he could just drop his shoulders and run through or under the other players to achieve the desired yardage or score. Joe was known to say, “He wasn't short, just built close to the ground.” As a senior basketball letterman, Joe was once pushed out of bounds onto the team bench by a much larger opposing defensive player. Joe's mother (a.k.a. Mub), ran onto the court, hit the offending player with her purse, was called for a technical foul, and removed from the gymnasium. Sometimes help comes in unexpected ways, beyond one's own resources, like a technical foul.

Joe was Tar Heel born and bred. He played soccer on his Carolina team. He always promoted his Tar Heels, donning a logo shirt or jacket, and a blue cap. In spring of 1957, when Joe was studying for final exams before graduation, the Tar Heels had accumulated enough victories to advance to the Final Four in Kansas City. Joe, with a group of basketball-loving buddies, drove an old Chevy halfway across the country, pooled limited resources for gas and food, and saved money for hotels by sleeping in the car. The Tar Heels won the National Championship, Joe and his friends graduated, and Joe retold the infamous highlights of that championship game for the rest of his life.

Joe loved and appreciated his family. He met his wife Sarah Pait when they taught together at Derita School. They married in 1961 and later celebrated the arrival of son Joseph Britt McGinn, Jr. and daughter Mary Ruth McGinn. As a young family, the McGinns enjoyed varied activities including RVing. Trips stretched from New Orleans to New England. Favorite destinations included the North Carolina mountains and Cross Country campground for square dance weekends. Western square dance lessons with The Oakdale Oakies occupied many Saturday



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evenings. As a family pastime, the promenade often continued until the wee hours of the morning. Sister Emily and husband Gilbert, owned a shop of western wear and outfitted the entire family with boots, shoes and crinoline skirts.

Joe and Sarah were snowbirds for twenty-eight years. Escaping the cold of winter, they traveled to Homestead, Florida in their motorhome to reunite with dear friends from up and down the east coast. Golfing, shopping, sunning and afternoon social gatherings rounded out their days in the sunshine state. In retirement, Joe developed a love for woodworking. This became a second career. He began making rudimentary trays and tables, but moved on to make fine furniture like secretaries, china and curio cabinets, beds and full kitchen remodeling. Family members are proud of the beautiful pieces made by Joe that grace their homes today. He took his woodworking skills to Campinas, Brazil in 1991 and helped Eastminster Presbyterian Church build an orphanage that provides housing, education and skills training for 300 children annually. What a joy it was for one of those children to graduate from her school in Brazil and come to study at the University of South Carolina in 2009.

Joe is predeceased by his parents, William Wilson McGinn, Sr. and Ruth Jeanette Fite McGinn, sister Emily Craig McGinn Cooper (Gilbert) and brother William Wilson McGinn, Jr. He is survived by his wife of sixty-one years, Sarah Pait McGinn, children Britt (Chi Yan Mok) and Mary Ruth McGinn, grandchildren Ashley and Austin, nieces, nephews and cousins.

The family wishes to thank the staff and residents of Trinity Oaks retirement community in Salisbury, Trinity at Home, Novant Health Hospice and Glenn A. Kiser Hospice House. We are grateful that Joe is where the sky will always be Carolina blue. As well as joining family in God's care, enjoying homemade peach ice cream and Aunt Ruth's lemon meringue pie, we rejoice that Joe is now Stepping on the Clouds with his maker.

Let us labor for the Master from the dawn til setting sun,  
Let us talk of all the wondrous love and care;  
Then when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done,  
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

Memorials may be made to John Calvin Presbyterian Church, Salisbury and Glenn A. Kiser Hospice House, Salisbury.



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A service to celebrate his life will be held at John Calvin Presbyterian Church in Salisbury on Wednesday, August 3rd at 2:00 PM EDT.

James Funeral Home of Huntersville is serving the family.




# Events

**Joseph Britt McGinn Sr.**

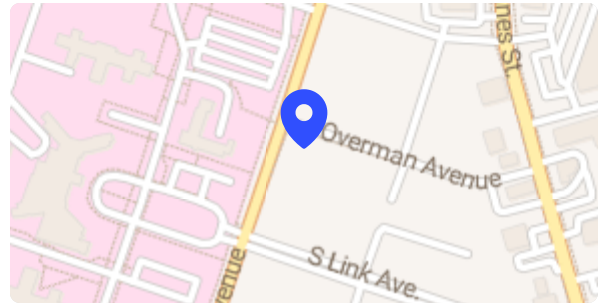
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## Memorial Service

 **Wednesday**, August 3, 2022

 2:00 PM ET

 **John Calvin Presbyterian Church**  
1620 Brenner Ave., Salisbury NC





# Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the McGinn family.

August 1 at 11:48 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the McGinn family.

August 1 at 4:25 AM



**Melvin Mcintosh** posted:

Joe was a neighbor when we were in Berryhill School and in a Men's Quartet together. We played together on the school basketball team and on a fast-pitch church softball team. Living so near one another, we were good friends and companions in many activities during our teen years. May God's greatest comfort be with all the family. Melvin McIntosh >

July 18 at 7:00 AM



**Melvin Mcintosh** July 18 at 4:13 PM

I should also mention that it brightened my life when my wife and I were able to visit Joe and Sarah a few years ago, in Salisbury. Melvin McIntosh >



**Brant Hart** posted:

Coach McGinn taught me Math in 8th grade at Ranson (1964-65). Because of him, I had no trouble with Algebra I in 9th grade. That year, he was my Health and PE teacher. I learned a lot from him in those two years, He was the only teacher that I had for both of my years at Ranson. When he was at West Meck, he was one of my customers at Hardee's on Little Rock Rd where I was a manager. I'm thankful that I had the opportunity to tell him how much he had helped me. I still think about lessons that he taught me. Rest in peace Coach McGinn!!

July 17 at 11:42 AM



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**Kim Morrison** posted:

Joe and I sang in the Huntersville Presbyterian Church choir for many years. He was quite a tenor. He also was the Joe of Joe's Boys and a Girl. He helped me fix an old oak chair. He was quite a good guy and friend.

July 10 at 1:59 PM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Joseph by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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