



## Lon H. Thornton Jr

May 24, 1944 - July 16, 2025

Lon Thornton, Jr., age 81, of Sevierville, Tennessee, died peacefully on July 16, 2025, at his home after a bout with cancer, surrounded by his loving family. He was born on May 24, 1944, in Knoxville and raised in Newport, the oldest child of Lon H. Thornton, Sr., and Gertrude Jones Thornton.

Lon attended Carson-Newman College and East Tennessee State University. He was a longtime public school employee. He began his career with the Cocke County School District as an elementary school teacher, and in 1991, he joined the Sevier County School District, where he remained until retirement. In his last several years, he worked in school transportation.

His true passion was farming. Lon had a lifelong love of agriculture, beginning at a young age when he worked with his father on their farms in Sevier and Jefferson Counties, raising beef cattle. He enjoyed showing cattle at county fairs. He served on the Sevier County Fair Board for many years, the last 15 as president. He enjoyed riding horses on mountain trail rides and often camped on these rides with family and friends.

Lon was a well-known basketball referee. He began officiating when he was 18 years old and continued until he was 80. Throughout his life, he officiated for the Smoky Mountain Basketball Officials Association, Tri-Cities Basketball Officials Association, NCAA, and NAIA. He officiated in several states and at tournaments in the Bahamas. His love for being on the basketball floor never left him. In his later years, you could find him refereeing travel ball and recreational games. Along with officiating basketball, he spent most of his life

umpiring baseball and softball. Lon was also an avid fan of the University of Tennessee football team, holding season tickets for 60 years.

Lon was an active member of Newport First Baptist Church. He served as an usher, drove the church van, and was on the security team. He was a part of the Andrews Men's Class, a close-knit group of men.

He was preceded in death by his son, Lon Thornton III; his parents, Lon Thornton, Sr., and Gertrude Thornton; his brother, Alger Jones Thornton; and his father-in-law, John Sartin.

He leaves behind, to cherish his memory, his loving wife of 51 years, Linda Sartin Thornton; daughters, Tonya Moyers (Tony), Heather Sartain (Mark), and Kortney Stinnett (Robbie); son, John Thornton (Cindi); grandchildren, Greg Moyers (Abigail), Krista Moyers, LeAyn Moyers, Camryn Thornton, Will Sartain (Madyson), Brayden Stinnett, and Lon H. Thornton IV; step-grandchildren, Tyler and Brett Stinnett and Savannah Compton; five great-grandchildren; and his mother-in-law, Doris Sartin. He is also survived by his dear in-laws, Greg and Barbara Wells, Dr. Alan and Martha Thompson, sister-in-law Margaret Thornton, and several close cousins, nieces, and nephews. The family will receive friends on Sunday, August 10, at First Baptist Church of Newport from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., followed by his Celebration of Life at 5:00 p.m., with Dr. Rich Lloyd officiating. The family will hold a private interment at Chestnut Hill Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the First Baptist Church Building Fund, 599 Amanda Circle, Newport, TN 37821. Family and friends may sign the guest register on line at: [www.manesfuneralhome.com](http://www.manesfuneralhome.com) Arrangements have been made with Manes Funeral Home, Newport, TN.

# Previous Events

## Receiving Friends

AUG 10. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

First Baptist Church Newport  
599 Amanda Circle  
Newport, TN 37821

## Celebration of Life

AUG 10. 5:00 PM (ET)

First Baptist Church Newport  
599 Amanda Circle  
Newport, TN 37821

# Tribute Wall

TL

“ *Our condolences to the family, very sorry for your loss.*

Tommy and Carolyn Lillard - August 14, 2025 at 11:54 AM

CW

“ *So sorry to hear of Lon's passing. The family will be in my prayers.*

*My deepest condolences  
Cindy Wise*

cindy wise - August 10, 2025 at 06:53 PM

RL

“ *Lon was ours. Both our families, Ray & Vivien and J. D. & Alb loved Lon Jr. and Jones. They were Special to us. One of my happiest days, Lon called, said he had rescued a mini donkey not totally understanding she was one of mine. I was so Thankful he had her on his farm. Lon will be missed by our families.*



Ronnie, Debbie & Andy Landers - August 10, 2025 at 11:53 AM

JK

“ *I'm sorry to hear of Lon's passing. He and Jonesy were a part of my childhood. He was one of the "big boys" that caused awe when you were younger. May there be peace and comfort for his family. 🙏*

Julia Minnick Keener - August 09, 2025 at 09:31 PM

RM

“ So sorry for your loss  
Randy and Joyce Mullins



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**Randy Mullins** - August 09, 2025 at 12:50 PM

EH

“ So very sorry for your loss. Prayers during this difficult time.  
Elaine Dockery Harper

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**Elaine Dockery Harper** - August 07, 2025 at 08:55 AM

LH

“ Prayers!



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**Louise & Jimmy Hux** - August 06, 2025 at 05:56 PM

LR

“ Sorry for your loss.



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**Lisa Reed** - August 05, 2025 at 12:35 PM

CL

“ *Deepest sympathies,  
Bill & Charlotte Leibrock*

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**Charlotte Leibrock** - August 02, 2025 at 10:02 AM

SH

“ *Rest n peace Lon. Prayers for the family u left behind. I can never not remember knowing him. I'm so sorry for your loss.*



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**Sandy Hurley** - July 26, 2025 at 06:28 AM

PW

“ *He was a fine man, great referee, and wonderful sense of humor; my sincerest condolences.*

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**Paul Webb** - July 24, 2025 at 05:52 PM

CG

“ *John and Heather,  
So sorry to hear of your family's loss. Lon will be greatly missed. I have always remembered and shared those memories of when I was catching and Lon was behind the plate. The conversations between him and I was sometimes confrontational but always ended in humor and great respect. I always looked forward to spending time with him behind the plate. And years later, the times we would run into each other, usually at the Co-op, he always had something funny to say. My thoughts and prayers are with you and the family.*

*Craig Gardner*

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**Craig Gardner** - July 23, 2025 at 09:34 AM

CR

“ *He was a good man RIP Lon*



Cookie Ramsey - July 22, 2025 at 07:49 PM

DW

“ *So sorry to hear of Lon's passing. May God comfort his family at this very difficult time.*

*With Sympathy,  
Don Welch*

Don Welch - July 22, 2025 at 12:48 PM

GW

“ *Lon was my 5th grade teacher at Del Rio Elementary. He was a kind and caring person and had a comical side as well. My sincere condolences to Lon's family.*



Glenda Willis - July 22, 2025 at 09:48 AM

RJ

“ *Condolences from the Nelson family from Charlottesville, Virginia. I never saw Long but grew up with Linda. We were always blessed by the Sartin family and what good people they were. Wishing you comfort at this time for your family from Pat, Rhonda and Mariah.*

Rhonda Jennings - July 21, 2025 at 11:41 PM

CC

“ Always enjoyed Lon’s sense of humor. Prayers of comfort and encouragement for the family 🙏

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**Craig Chrisman** - July 21, 2025 at 09:28 PM

BE

“ John,

*Thoughts and prayers go out to you and your family during this difficult time. I lost my momma in 2022, and it's the hardest thing that I've been through in life. You just have to depend on God to get you through one day at a time. If you need anything, feel free to holler.*

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**Benjamin Evans** - July 21, 2025 at 07:03 PM

RM

“ We were very sorry when we heard about Lon’s death! He will definitely be missed at First Baptist and by us.

*We will continue to pray for his family and friends. We loved him and we love all of his family.*

*Rob and Lisa Myers*

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**Rob and Lisa Myers** - July 21, 2025 at 06:51 PM

RF

“ In all of any east Tennessee gyms, mention the name Lon, and everyone knows who we are talking about. His motto, " Have whistle, will travel." The Fanchers go way back with the Thornton family through school and church. Lon always went out of his way to stop wherever and speak with my Dad, and of course that always led to see whoever could out talk the other one. Most times those conversations were G rated. I have always considered Lon a friend, and sure will never forget his influence on the entire community of sports officials in east Tennessee. I pray for comfort for each of you. I am going to miss seeing that striped shirt this fall and winter. Rest in peace Lon, Jr.

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**Ray Fancher** - July 21, 2025 at 06:20 PM

LD

“ Sincere condolences to Lon's whole family and loved ones! We will be keeping all of you in our thoughts and prayers for God to bring you peace and comfort for this sad time and in the coming days.



*Matthew 5:4*

*Sincerely,  
Linda and Bud Dawson*

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**Linda Dawson** - July 21, 2025 at 05:00 PM

JB

“ My sympathy to the Thornton Family. I am glad that I knew Lon most of his life. He had a lovely Family. *Jeanne Wilson Birdwell*

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**Jeanne Y. Birdwell** - July 21, 2025 at 03:49 PM

DB

“ Prayers & sympathy to all. Lon & I were of same graduating CCHS class of '62



Dot Barnes - July 21, 2025 at 02:47 PM

SO

“ Oh my heavens how everyone loved that Lon. He is a legend! He called my basketball games at NGS and CCHS. Lon made everyone laugh when he called a charge! He was very entertaining. He loved kids and loved sports. Lon was a good soul. He has helped hundreds of kids throughout their lives through education alone. Had the best personality and never met a stranger. Our whole family loved Lon dearly. He was a good one. I am praying for Linda, all the family and hundreds of friends he leaves behind. God be with you. Lon Thornton will never be forgotten. Rest in peace my friend. 💔💔

Susie O'Dell - July 21, 2025 at 02:37 PM

NH

“ What an amazing, talented and very humorous guy. My memories of Lon go back many years and all bring smiles and fondness for the sheer energy and light he brought to any situation. My sincere condolences go to you all.

Nancy Hayes - July 21, 2025 at 12:30 PM

JW

“ Prayers for the family.

Jamie Wheeler

Jamie Wheeler - July 21, 2025 at 12:05 PM

ST

“ Sorry to the family for your loss. He will be missed by all who knew him.

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**Steven and Loretta Taylor** - July 21, 2025 at 11:36 AM

AA

“ We will certainly miss Lon greeting everyone at church. I always looked forward to seeing him each Sunday and Wednesday nights. He was so funny yet had a heart of gold especially for kids. Our love and condolences to Linda and the family. May you rest in peace Lon



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**Anne alFreeman** - July 21, 2025 at 10:20 AM