



## John Benjamin "Benny" Kittrell Jr.

March 25, 1933 - April 9, 2025

John Benjamin "Benny" Kittrell Jr of Augusta, Arkansas, age 92, passed peacefully on Wednesday, April 9, 2025. He was born on March 25, 1933, in Gregory, Arkansas, to John B. Kittrell Sr. and Adelia Huenefeld Kittrell. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Carolyn Love Whitmore Kittrell; daughters Carol Ann Logue and husband Edward of Orlando, FL, and Martha Lynn Schutzman and husband Lendel of Ruston, LA; sister Anne Elizabeth Beasley of Houston; grandchildren Kirby Noll Best and husband Garrett, Kane Tucker Schutzman, Kendel John Schutzman and wife Taylor; and Kyler Benjamin Dykes, and wife Lisa, as well as nine great-grandchildren, and ten nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his son John B. Kittrell III and brothers Carl H., Charles Minor, and William "Billy" Kittrell.

Benny was raised in Gregory with his four siblings amidst an extended family of Huenefelds and Gregorys. He graduated from elementary school in Gregory and junior/high school in Augusta. At Augusta High School, he played center on the Red Devil football team alongside future NFL player Billy Ray Smith under the legendary "Dean of Arkansas High School football", Coach Curtis King. Coach King noted that Benny was the only player he ever coached whose "two size 16E feet made a yard." He graduated in 1950 as salutatorian of his class alongside his future wife, Carolyn, who was valedictorian. He obtained a degree in agricultural sciences from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville in 1955. He and Carolyn married in 1954 while attending the University together. Benny started his career as an

agricultural extension agent in Newport, Arkansas. In 1960, he and the family returned to Gregory, where he managed the Kittrell Family Farms and embarked on his dream of raising children and crops in the heart of the Mississippi Delta region. In 1969, he was appointed by Governor Winthrop Rockefeller to serve as Woodruff County Judge for two years. After the farm was sold years later, he owned and operated Kittrell Oil Company, providing petroleum products to businesses and government organizations throughout the region. After selling Kittrell Oil Company, he wasn't ready to retire and embarked on the final phase of his work life as a member of the security division with Baptist Health in Little Rock. Being the people person he was, that suited him perfectly as he served and protected medical staff, patients, families, and visitors. Two of his oft-recounted experiences while at Baptist were when he was called on twice to be a personal security escort for two famous guests. The first was actress/singer Debbie Reynolds, who was the featured performer at the annual hospital gala. She thanked him with a kiss on the cheek as he helped her into her limousine to depart. The second was for singer/actress Marie Osmond, who was also there to perform for the annual gala. Not surprisingly, he was asked to escort them because the administration wanted to be sure they were accompanied and protected by a true Southern gentleman! He finally fully retired in 2017 at the age of 84. Benny was a lifelong member of the Augusta First United Methodist Church, where he anchored—or often was—the bass section of the choir starting in high school. He was gifted with an amazing voice and was a frequent soloist at church, weddings, funerals, and other events, often accompanied by Carolyn, an equally talented pianist and organist. Anyone who knew “Mr. Benny” was touched by his gentle, loving nature. He was known for his wonderful hugs, kindness, thoughtfulness, generosity, and how he made everyone feel important and loved. After he retired, he often made rounds to the courthouse, bank, church, and other locations in Augusta, visiting with community residents, sharing conversations and his famous hugs, usually greeting them with “Well hey...” or “So good to see you.” Conversations with



# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

MAY 17. 2:00 PM (CT)

Augusta United Methodist Church  
301 S Third St.  
Augusta, AR 72006

# Tribute Wall



“ I was Mr. Kittrell's shift supervisor for several years at Baptist hospital , he was a reliable and good worker and we had many pleasant conversations to pass the nights. Rest in peace.

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**Winston Wade** - May 09, 2025 at 02:03 AM



*Thank you, Mr. Wade. He loved working at Baptist Health.*

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**Carol Ann Logue** - May 11, 2025 at 01:40 PM