



Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.

August 15, 1953 - January 30, 2024

Gene Norris Howell, Jr., passed away at the age of 70 on January 30, 2024. He was born in Ripley, Mississippi on August 15, 1953.

Norris attended Ripley High School and worked weekends at his family's business, Howell Lumber Company. He graduated from the University of Mississippi with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and was one of two students from the state that year accepted into the University of Tennessee Health Science Services College of Dentistry. He graduated from dental school in 1979 and served as a professor the following semester.

Norris returned to Ripley and practiced general dentistry for nearly 45 years. His love for his patients, staff of Family Dental Clinic, and the field of dentistry was unmatched.

Norris was a devoted member of the Ripley Presbyterian Church, where he served as elder. For many years, he taught the youth Sunday School class and later, the adult class. He served as a leader for the Journey Weekly Bible Study.

At the time of his death, Dr. Howell served as the First Vice President of the Mississippi Dental Association. He was a member and past president of the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry Alumni Board of Trustees. He

was a member of the American Dental Association and the District 1 Dental Association, serving as past president. He served on the Mid-South Dental Congress Board of Directors since 1995, chairing the William F. Slagle Dental Meeting.

In 1995, he was appointed by Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice to the State Board of Dental Examiners, where he served until 2005 in the roles of president and legislative liaison. He was later invited to join the National Board of Dental Examiners, where he was a calibrating grader for the Council of Interstate Testing Agencies.

Dr. Howell was a fellow of the American College of Dentists and the International College of Dentists. He was a member of the American Association of Dental Boards and the Pierre Fauchard Academy. In 2020, he was recognized as the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry's Outstanding Alumni of the Year.

Norris was a pillar of his community. He was a member of the Ripley Rotary Club and the embodiment of its motto: Service Above Self. He founded and chaired the Rotary Coats for Kids program, which distributed over 30,000 coats to children in Tippah and Benton counties throughout the years.

He was a Paul Harris Fellow and received the Rotarian of the Year Award twice. He has been recognized as the Mississippi Economic Development Council Volunteer of the Year and Mississippi's Business Man of the Year. He served five years on the Tippah County Development Board, and was past president. He volunteered as a member of the Tippah County Fair Association Board and sponsored the fair show for many years.

Norris served on the Tippah County Hospital Board for 20 years and was past chairman. He also served on the Board of the Directors for Girl Scouts Heart

of the South and received the World of Thanks Award. Norris twice received the Life Saver Award from the American Cancer Society. For his community involvement, he was recognized with the Jefferson Service Award.

Under his leadership of the Ripley Band Boosters, the Willard Taylor Band Hall was conceptualized, built and dedicated. His championing of Ripley High School's Math and Science Complex resulted in the school district's recognition as a Point of Light by President George H.W. Bush. For his dedication, Norris was honored as both the South Tippah School District and Mississippi First Congressional District Parent of the Year in 1992. He was also the past chairman of Enrichment, Inc., supporting South Tippah schools.

Norris served on the University of Mississippi Alumni Board of Directors from 2008 to 2011. Together with his wife, he endowed the Howell Family Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award, which honors a professor of the University's School of Liberal Arts. He was an avid supporter of Ole Miss sports, active in the Vaught Society, Bullpen Club, and basketball boosters. In addition to being with his grandchildren, he loved fishing and being outdoors.

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Lynne Thomas Howell; his daughter, Julie Howell Addison, his son-in-law, John Patrick Addison, and his grandchildren: Ossie Carmel Addison and Howell Holland Addison, all of Oxford; and his loyal staff.

He was preceded in death by his father, Gene Norris Howell, Sr., his grandparents, Joel Aaron and Valerie Boyd Howell, and his in-laws, J.D. and OC Thomas.

Visitation will be at Ripley Presbyterian Church, Ripley, MS, from 10am-12pm, on Saturday, February 3, 2024, with the funeral service following at 12pm. A

private graveside service will be held afterwards.

Pallbearers will be Donnie Greene, Steve Ward, Richard Nance, Price Elliott, J.D. Hankins, David Hankins, Fred Permenter, and Eddie McCafferty.

Honorary pallbearers are the Elders of the Ripley Presbyterian Church, Earnest Rainer, Roger Stegall, Dr. Bill Alford, Dr. John Bakker, Dr. Robert Perry, and Dr. Don Roten.

In honor of his life, donations may be made to Ripley Presbyterian Church.

Cemetery Details

Tippah Memorial Gardens

Hwy 370
Ripley, MS

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 3. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Ripley Presbyterian Church
302 West Cooper St.
Ripley, MS 38663

Service

FEB 3. 12:00 PM (CT)

Ripley Presbyterian Church
302 West Cooper St.
Ripley, MS 38663

Tribute Wall



“ My name is Arana Holmes and he was my dentist since I got my first set of teeth and I'm 30 now! Doctor Howell really was a once in a lifetime kind of dentist! You looked forward to the visits with him & he knew almost, if not all of his patients by their first name. I'll never forget the waterballoons as a kid. I loved him to death and ill never forget him as long as I live. He treated everyone with respect and really loved what he did. What he loved more was helping people. He was a really good guy!

Arana Holmes - September 27, 2024 at 09:58 AM

BB

“ Bentley Bridges lit a candle in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.



Bentley Bridges - April 19, 2024 at 04:37 PM

EJ

“ I was building a fence and needed holes dug. I made the happy mistake of mentioning this to Norris. He was there the next day with his tractor and post hole digger. I needed to grade my lawn also, so he said “just come by the house and get the little tractor; I'll have it ready.” He taught me more about generosity than almost anyone else in my life. I wish I could have known him longer.

Erik Johnson - February 04, 2024 at 04:04 PM

NS

“ North MS Oral Surgery purchased the Large Basket Garden for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..



North MS Oral Surgery - February 04, 2024 at 09:48 AM

CF

“ We are so sorry for your loss and we shocked by his passing. He has bless us and everyone around him so much and he will be deeply missed. Our prayers for the family.



Clifton Family - February 03, 2024 at 11:54 AM

CO

“ I am so very very very sad that Dr. Howell is no longer here on Earth! Lynn, Julie and family, I have loved Dr. Howell since I was a toddler! I have never been to another dentist in my 37 years of life! Not only was he a great dentist, he was a greater friend! I am praying for you all and just remember, Dr. Howell is looking down on you all right now and how proud he is of you all!

My dad and he go wayyy back and boy when them two would be in the same room, neither one of them could stop talking lol. My parents and I are going to miss him tremendously and want you all to know we are praying for you and sending our love! Courtney, Johnny and Cathy Wilbanks

Courtney - February 03, 2024 at 12:07 AM

AG

“ Auburn and Patrick Guild purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..



Auburn and Patrick Guild - February 02, 2024 at 11:06 PM

DW

“ Dr. DK, Dr. Kennon, Dr Katie Windham purchased the Rose Remembrance for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..



Dr. DK, Dr. Kennon, Dr Katie Windham - February 02, 2024 at 06:05 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..



February 02, 2024 at 05:17 PM

TG

“ DR. Norris Howell was a man of great character. His wit and intelligence were unmatched. He served his community and his beloved patients with integrity while providing for a family he loved so much. I had the privilege of being one of his first patients and continued with him til now. I've never met a better example of a good man. Rest well,my friend.

Tami Glissen - February 02, 2024 at 05:05 PM

PE

“ I am so saddened by the loss of our Dr Howell here on earth but so happy he's rejoicing in Heaven today with no sickness nor pain. Dr Howell was not only our dentist-he was a faithful customer of Eaton's Country Pork-but, more importantly, he was our friend that went above and beyond to help us any way he could. We've had several after hours visits to his office and he also made a home visit for Estelle, when she couldn't get out anymore. He and Mrs Lynne hold a special place in our hearts. The entire Eaton family wishes to send Dr Howells' family our deepest condolences. He will be missed
❤️

Pat Eaton - February 02, 2024 at 04:52 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..



February 02, 2024 at 01:03 PM

RS

“ Rodney and Ginger Shands planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..

Rodney and Ginger Shands - February 02, 2024 at 01:03 PM

TC

“ *The Children's Dental Center purchased the Divine Light for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..*



The Children's Dental Center - February 02, 2024 at 12:57 PM

US

“ *UT Dean Emeritus Bill Slagle purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..*



UT Dean Emeritus Bill Slagle - February 02, 2024 at 11:36 AM

US

“ *UT Dean Emeritus Bill Slagle planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..*

UT Dean Emeritus Bill Slagle - February 02, 2024 at 11:36 AM

WD

“ *Lynne and Julie:*
We are so sorry for your loss. We also feel a great loss. Norris has meant so much to us and to me through almost 50 years now. He has been a great friend to me, and I feel a tremendous empty spot without him in my life. We have had so many shared memories, stories, and laughs together. From the moment we first met in dental school, Norris became my friend and has always been my friend. He was truly a great man. He did so much for his community, his profession and his patients. Everyone who met him quickly realized that this man was someone special. His Christian witness will live on after him and be long remembered. We love y'all!
Bill and Mavis

William Alford, DDS - February 02, 2024 at 09:44 AM

BF

“ *Bill and Mavis Alford, and family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..*



Bill and Mavis Alford, and family - February 02, 2024 at 09:14 AM

BF

“ *Bill and Mavis Alford, and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..*

Bill and Mavis Alford, and family - February 02, 2024 at 09:14 AM

CD

“ To the family, I am so sorry for your precious loss. I can just see Dr. Howell in my daddy's (Hatley Graves) shop talking about going fishing. and for seeing how far they could talk on the CB radios. This was before he got out of school. He and Daddy were very close in those days. Dr. Howell always shared a good laugh anytime. The whole family loved him. God Bless his family for Comfort and Peace for he was loved by many. The Hatley Graves Family, Colleen Graves Dunnam.



Colleen G Dunnam - February 02, 2024 at 12:07 AM

EH

“ There will never be another Norris Howell, he was so unique and caring with a humongous kindness that is difficult to describe. So many people owe so much to his investments of time, energy, and resources into their lives across North Mississippi. And that includes me. Norris built his dental clinic about 150 yards from my family's home and when he discovered that I was interested in going into dentistry he allowed me to come by and observe in his office. With his encouragement I did go into dentistry and came back to Ripley and practiced with him until I fell in love with Leslie and she enticed me to move to Tupelo. Norris even participated in the relaying of information that led to my first date with Leslie. So I owe him so much for shaping my life including professionally, and as a friend, and mentor. Always laughing and joking and showing people how to live by just being himself. He encouraged me to write and we would discuss how my mother and his grandmother would write articles, poems, and books. One of the first books I ever read was his grandmother's. The field of Dentistry has lost a legend. So much history he knew and shared along with tales of guns, and snakes, and fish--and oh, how he had the fish stories that were hard to believe! My thoughts and prayers are with Lynne and Julie in these difficult days, but as others have mentioned, with his strong Christian faith, we who know the Lord will see Norris again. And as Norris would want anyone who does not know where their eternal home will be---turn to Jesus because Jesus saves. Thank you Norris for living life with a full gusto of love shared with everyone you met. Until we meet again, may God pour out his blessings and peace on all your family and friends.

Ed Holliday - February 01, 2024 at 11:39 PM

LB

“ *Linda Barkley lit a candle in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.*



Linda Barkley - February 01, 2024 at 11:28 PM

LB

I met Norris many years ago, and he was always kind, funny, and sincere. His presence will be missed by so many. Prayers for Lynn & Julie, his dental practice staff, his church family, and those he served so well in the community. May God comfort you all.

Linda Barkley - February 01, 2024 at 11:33 PM

RB

There will always be smile on my face and warm place in my heart when I think of Norris. His place on earth was well established.

Roger Byrd - February 02, 2024 at 10:25 PM

VC

“ *Doctor Howell will always be remembered for being such a loving and caring individual. He would take time to talk to you as if you were family. He was an encouraging person and made you felt special every time you were in his presence. He often spoke of his wife and family. He was my dentist for more than 20 plus years. He was more than a dentist!!*

Victoria Crum - February 01, 2024 at 11:14 PM

MH

“ *Michael And Patricia Hayden lit a candle in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.*



Michael and Patricia Hayden - February 01, 2024 at 11:10 PM

KN

“ *It is with a heavy heart that I say goodbye to my friend Norris. He was one of the most caring men I have ever known, and I will miss him. He was my dentist , my children and grandchildren’s dentist and friend. He will always hold a place in our hearts. Rest in peace*



Kathy Norton - February 01, 2024 at 10:19 PM



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..*



February 01, 2024 at 09:59 PM

IS

“ I lived down the road from Dr. Howell “doc” as my dad called him for 18 years. We also went to church together and he was our family dentist. I recall him blowing up gloves in his office with helium and letting me watch them fly away in the sky as a kid. Our church swim parties were always a blast at the Howell’s house. Anytime we needed anything like a spare fishing pole or a tool Norris would invite us to “help ourself” in the shed. When I applied to UTHSC for my doctorate he kindly without hesitation wrote me a recommendation letter. He was always so supportive of my education as well as the community he served. A great person who will be missed ☐

Ivy Settlemares - February 01, 2024 at 09:44 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..



February 01, 2024 at 09:39 PM

MR

“ Dr. Howell was so special to me. There are just so many wonderful things to say about him. Always concerned about others and always helping them. On Wednesday night LOGOS, at Ripley Presbyterian Church, he would spend an hour during Bible study time talking about God and tying it in to important life lessons. My life is better for having known him. My thoughts and prayers are with Lynne, Julie, and the sweet grandbabies. 🕊️✝️❤️

Melissa Ratliff - February 01, 2024 at 09:14 PM

PM

“ *The ultimate professional Friend to all he touched and a life of service. A true gentleman Prayers to his wif family. Dr Paul McCord*

Paul McCord - February 01, 2024 at 09:00 PM

SB

“ *We loved Dr. Howell and staff. He was a great man and dentist/doctor, and we can't believe he is gone. We don't grieve as those with no hope, however. He lived his faith and it was a beautiful thing. We loved him.*

Sandra & Charlie Ballard

sandra ballard - February 01, 2024 at 06:10 PM

ML

“ *Dr Howell was such kind , caring Christain man. Almost like family. Praying for Mrs. Lynn and Julie and the rest of the family.*



Mary lampkin - February 01, 2024 at 05:06 PM

TS

“ *Dr. Howell was a great dentist, and personal friend as well. My wife and I enjoyed visiting with him and his wonderful staff. Loved talking about OM sports with him. Our prayers go out to Lynn, his family, and his staff.*

Tommy and Jima Sneed

Tommy Sneed - February 01, 2024 at 04:49 PM

TN

It is with a sad heart that I write my memories of my friend Dr. Norris Howell or "Doc" as I called him. He was a caring dentist who never hesitated to help and also was always available to just talk. I will always treasure my visits and talks about fishing or whatever. My heart goes out to Lynn and Julie and her family. He will always hold a special place in my heart.

Tim Needham - February 01, 2024 at 08:00 PM

HC

“ *Dr Howell made me comfortable to come to the dentist after past horrible experience, he was always complementary and took care of my whole family. May God comfort this family in Jesus name.*

Hollie Cardena - February 01, 2024 at 04:19 PM

CW

“ *He was my dentist for 30 years, my kids and my grands..we will miss him..*

Carol Wilson - February 01, 2024 at 03:53 PM

EH

“ *Elizabeth Hughes lit a candle in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.*



Elizabeth Hughes - February 01, 2024 at 02:45 PM

TT

“ *Tim and Carla Thomas purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr..*



Tim and Carla Thomas - February 01, 2024 at 02:31 PM

LC

“ *I have know Dr. Howell and Lynn for over 50 years. He has been a wonderful Christian man and example to everyone. All who knew him cherished his kindness, helpfulness, advice and empathy. He loved his Lord and church, his family, community, our schools and children. It was a shock to me when I learned he has passed away. I pray that God will bless Lynn, Julie and all of his family and give them the peace which passes all understanding. No man ever loved his family, friends and others more that Dr. Howell. I will miss him sorely, but we will meet again!*

Lonette Cappleman - February 01, 2024 at 12:44 PM

JS

“ *Dr. Howell's love for God, family, patients, friends, and our profession was evident and beyond measure. He was very supportive during my years in dental school and early years of practice. He repeated his kindness to me and was instrumental in my son's pursuit of dentistry and returning to Ripley. I will miss the fishing trips and wise counsel, but he leaves me an example of lifelong service to God, family, and community.*

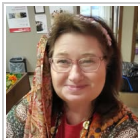
john stanford - February 01, 2024 at 11:26 AM

CP

“ My connection to Dr Howell dates back to 1980. When I was 5years old, I sat in his chair for the first time. It's been a wonderful friendship for 44 years. Our family not only lost a great dentist, but a wonderful friend! Our prayers go out to Lynn, Julie & family, his staff, and the community of Ripley.



Cheryl Pardue - February 01, 2024 at 11:21 AM



“ Stephanie McClintock sent a virtual gift in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.



Stephanie McClintock - February 01, 2024 at 10:09 AM

VG

“ Norris Howell was not only our dentist but also our friend. He was one of the smartest guys we knew, and we valued his talks. His friendship, wisdom, and genuine concern for others actually made us look forward to visiting him. I (Vickie) taught with Lynn at NEMCC as we were raising our children. We compared notes (and fractures) many times. We are heartbroken for Lynn and Julie. We will miss Norris Howell beyond description. Doug and Vickie Greenway

Vickie Greenway - February 01, 2024 at 10:08 AM

MM

“ My daddy worked for Dr. Howell’s dad at the sawmill. As a kid we lived next door to his grandmother. I remember climbing the fence to play with the dog in her backyard. He became my dentist 30 plus years ago. I carried my son there at age 2. My daughter-in-law worked for him for over 10 years. I’ve always been impressed by his integrity and knowledge about many things in this life. He has been a part of our family’s lives throughout many years. He touched many lives in so many ways and he will be truly missed. My sincere sympathies and prayers are with his family.

Marcia McCalmon - February 01, 2024 at 09:03 AM

JT

“ While I sit here thinking of how we met while tailgating at Ole Miss and how we became friends a red cardinal just landed in the dogwood tree by my window -- looked at me and flew off ---Norris I'll see you when I see you .

Jeff Todd - February 01, 2024 at 08:00 AM

CR

“ Connie Rahija lit a candle in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.



Connie Rahija - February 01, 2024 at 12:10 AM

DR

Dr.Howell you'll be so missed!! Go Rebels❤️

Dale & Becky Renfrow - February 02, 2024 at 06:53 AM

CT

“ *Dr. Howell was such a great man, Friend, Dentist and was on the school board as we were growing up. Always helpful in every way for our children. He was awesome and will truly be missed by many. Prayers and Condolences too his family*



Chantele Tipler - January 31, 2024 at 10:25 PM

HB

*Dr Howell will be greatly missed especially stopping by our house when he would see us outside to talk with us . He was a great neighbor, dentist, friend. We we never forget you ! Well done Dr. Howell now take your rest !
Gilroy Jr .& Helen Bails*

Helen Bails - February 01, 2024 at 05:57 PM

RS

“ *Raymond Smith & Sandra lit a candle in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.*



Raymond Smith & Sandra - January 31, 2024 at 10:23 PM

RS

So sorry to hear about Dr Norris Howell. He was a friend to us and many people. He was truly a people person!our condolences go out to Lynn and daughter Julie; that you may be filled with the love of God, for comfort, understanding, peace, and love of a husband and daddy that loved you both dearly! He will be missed by the community of Ripley and Tippah county!! God bless the Howell family, and you are loved and supported by many people who were acquainted with all of you! May The Lord bless you all in the days in the times ahead!!

Raymond Smith - January 31, 2024 at 10:36 PM

BS

“ *Dr. Norris Howell will be missed greatly. He was a very caring man loved by so many people. My condolences and prayers to his family.*



Barbara Scott - January 31, 2024 at 09:38 PM

LP

“ *Lisa Peeler lit a candle in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.*



Lisa Peeler - January 31, 2024 at 08:11 PM

LP

*Dr. Howell and I went to school together in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade in Starkville, Ms.
He is a wonderful person and a fantastic dentist. I was very shocked to hear of his death. I will truly miss him and his stories.
Everyone that knew and loved him will miss him so much.
Rest in Peace my dear friend. ♡*

Lisa Peeler - January 31, 2024 at 08:19 PM

DN

“ *Donna Lancaster Newby lit a candle in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.*



Donna Lancaster Newby - January 31, 2024 at 07:59 PM

JS

“ Jackie/Polly Stokes lit a candle in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.



Jackie/Polly Stokes - January 31, 2024 at 07:52 PM

RS

“ Norris was a very special friend and my dentist for many years! Dr. Howell Was the most accomplished dentist in the United States, respected by all.

And he was such a caring person. He gave back to the community that he loved. The coat man, the dentist, the friend will be so missed, and I may add that Norris was a born again Christian! His Wednesday night zoom presentations were so informative, and always served as a witness to our Lord, my heart goes out to the family and to all the people that he touched!

This is not goodbye my friend, this is until we meet again!

Ronnie Sweeney - January 31, 2024 at 06:35 PM

SH

“ Spencer Holley lit a candle in memory of Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr.



Spencer Holley - January 31, 2024 at 12:17 PM

SH

Dr. Howell was a great guy and a real asset to the community. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Spencer Holley - January 31, 2024 at 12:19 PM

SW

“ Norris was a blessing for all, truly a gracious disciple of Jesus Christ. Always made you feel better just being with him.
Prayers and condolences to Lynne, Julie and family.
In Christ,
Becky & Steve

Steve & Becky West - January 31, 2024 at 11:43 AM

CW

“ Norris Howell leaves a truly inspiring legacy. It is his deep love and caring for his Heavenly Father, his family, his community, his patients, and his profession. Charles Wikle

Charles Wikle - January 31, 2024 at 11:30 AM

MD

“ Dr. Howell was a very sweet man. My kids loved going to dentist visits with him



Margie Dickerson - January 31, 2024 at 06:16 AM

TG

“ He was such a good man, friend and dentist. Such a loss for the community. He will surely be missed. Sending love and prayers for Lynn, Julie and all the family.



Terrye Grisham - January 31, 2024 at 12:08 AM