

OBITUARIES

BETTY CAROL HUGGINS ARNETTE



Betty Carol Huggins Arnette, 81, of Leland, N.C., gently passed away on Friday, Nov. 14, 2025, after an extended illness. She was surrounded by many friends and family on the days prior to her passing.

She was born on July 22, 1944, in Lumberton to the late George Ross Huggins Jr., of High Point, N.C., and the late Eleanor Walters Lindsay, of Burgaw, N.C. She graduated from Lumberton High School and worked for many years for Belk and Jasper Textiles in Lumberton, before following her dream and moving to the N.C. coast. There she joined the Sharon United Methodist Church, where she loved serving her Lord and Savior and her community. She had many passions including gardening, crafting, cooking, traveling (she loved sharing memories of her trips to Europe) and spending time with friends and family. She doted on her kids, grandkids and great-grandkids; she enjoyed nothing more than taking them to her favorite shelling spots on Holden Beach. There she showed her prowess at spotting the best shells, and her many shell collections are a testament to that.

Betty was a devoted and amazingly loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend. She touched many lives and formed friendships that lasted her lifetime. If you needed help, she was never one to say no, whether you were family, friends or a stranger. She will be deeply missed but never forgotten. Her beauty, her heart and her soul will live on in us all.

Betty is survived by her husband of 60-plus years, Walter "Tom" Arnette Sr. of the home; her children, Anne Arnette of Ocean Isle Beach, N.C., LaDonna Sotello (Pete) of Atascadero, Calif., Tom Arnette Jr (Karmen) of Camden, N.C., and Rebecca Bass (Paul) of Supply, N.C.; her sisters, Jo Ellen Hickman (Ed) of Wilmington, N.C., Martha Tудie Boyles (Jim) of Thomasville, N.C., Kim Feltes, of Rural Hall, N.C., and Lisa LaPrade (Jim) of Pleasant Garden, N.C.; her brother, Thomas Elwood Lindsay, of Burgaw, N.C.; nine grandchildren (Ashley, Justin, Courtney, Brittany, Anthony, Emma, Ruby, Steven and Nicolas) and 14 great grandchildren (Jaiden, Logan, Gage, Dawson, Weylynn, Landon, Elijah, Silas, Liam, Wesley, Hailey Jo, Connor, Lainey Grace and Jaxon); and countless nieces, nephews and friends.

In addition to her parents, Betty was also preceded in death by her beloved grandparents who raised her, Henry Douglas Walters and Elizabeth "Lizzy" Howell Walters of Lumberton; her sister and brother-in-law, Frances and Carlton Britt of Lumberton; her step-father, Legrand "Bud" Lindsay, of Burgaw, N.C. and her nephew, Carlton Lee Britt Jr. of Lumberton.

The family will hold a small memorial service in the coming weeks, with a Celebration of Life to be scheduled in the spring. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Lower Cape Fear Hospice House in Bolivia, N.C.

DEATH NOTICES

GEORGE TYRON WORLEY

George Tyron Worley, 50, of Lumberton, passed away Nov. 15, 2025 at UNC Health Southeastern of Lumberton. Funeral services will be Saturday, Nov. 22 at noon at Word of Life Apostolic Church of Fairmont. Burial will follow at Worley Cemetery in Fairmont. Visitation will be from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday at the church. Central & Worley Mortuary is serving the family.

Fairmont introduces new festival queens

Victoria Sanderson
The Robesonian

FAIRMONT — The Fairmont Farmers Festival Queens were introduced to the town at Tuesday's monthly board meeting.

The Farmers Festival pageant, held on Oct. 11, crowned 10 young women as not only pageant queens but also town ambassadors for the next year.

This year's queens are: Miss Ella Floyd, Miss Gracie Freeman, Teen Miss Addyson Hunt, Little Miss Avery Jacobs, Junior Miss Ashlyn McCumbee, Tiny Miss Linley Kessinger, Mini Miss Jailee Hill, Wee Miss Idelayah McCoy, Ambassador Isabella Col-



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The Fairmont Farmer's Festival Queens introduce themselves at Tuesday's town board meeting.

lins, and Mini Ambassador Lexi Britt.

These young women will work closely with the

town, attend town-run events, and advocate for Fairmont at the state level. In other news, Town

Clerk Rodney Cain received his Municipal Clerk's certificate, presented by Town Manager Jerome Chestnut. He has worked with the town and attended a two-year training class, where he earned his official certification.

Additionally, the town received an update on the streetscape project, which has been in motion for over a year. Fairmont's streets will receive upgrades, including bumpouts along sidewalks, renovated crosswalks, and improvements to the five-way intersection in downtown areas.

Contact Victoria Sanderson at vsanderson@robsonian.com.

PSRC receives \$1,000 community grant

Victoria Sanderson
The Robesonian

LUMBERTON — The Public Schools of Robeson County (PSRC) was recognized as a 2025 Exemplary Partnership District during Tuesday's school board meeting.

The award, presented by The National Center for Family Learning and UNC Greensboro, celebrates school districts that demonstrate a deep and sustained commitment to family and community engagement. PSRC will receive a \$1,000 award.

Program Director Phillip Oxendine said the funds will help the district expand its resources for its various family and community engagement initiatives.

"Family Engagement remains a district-wide priority for our public school system," Oxendine said. "Through intentional planning and collaboration, the district has reframed how it connects with families, creating opportunities that value diverse experiences and foster mutual trust and respect."

Additionally, the board received updates from UNC Pembroke about its upcoming Healthy Eyes, Bright Minds vision care collaboration through its future optometry program.

The Healthy Eyes, Bright Minds program raises awareness and supports the treatment of childhood myopia, or nearsightedness.

Associate Dean Liz Wiles said the new program will launch alongside the optometry program at UNCP, projected for around spring 2027.

"(The program) will be integrative," Wiles said. "It's going to combine community partnership, clinical education, research and eye care. Our targeted population is children in Robeson County, many of whom lack access to comprehensive eye care services."

Finally, the board reviewed a request to name the new planetarium after James Hooks and will forward it to the Construction Committee.

Contact Victoria Sanderson at vsanderson@robsonian.com.

Railroad crossing near Red Springs to temporarily close next week

Staff report

RED SPRINGS — A railroad crossing on Lewis McNeill Road near Red Springs will be closed for approximately 24 hours next week for crews to make an emergency repair.

The crossing will be closed at 7 a.m. on Monday. It is set to reopen

by 7 a.m. on Tuesday.

The location of the crossing on Lewis McNeill Road is approximately one mile east of N.C. Highway 211 and approximately five miles southeast of Red Springs. The crossing sits just east of Luke Road and just west of Nascar Drive. This is a total closure of the

crossing, meaning no traffic will be allowed across the track until the repair is complete. Traffic will be rerouted during the closure, with signage marking detour routes. Motorists should anticipate extended travel times and delays, and are encouraged to avoid the area if possible.

Page named CEO of UNC Health

Will lead health system with 20 hospitals, including UNC Health Southeastern, at 56,000 employees

Staff report

CHAPEL HILL — Dr. Cristy Page, a distinguished faculty member who has risen in leadership roles at UNC Health, was named the chief executive officer of UNC Health on Thursday. She will also serve as dean of the UNC School of Medicine and vice chancellor for medical affairs at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Page will lead UNC Health at a critical time for the state's leading academic health system and school of medicine. UNC Health has hospitals and clinics across the state

— including UNC Health Southeastern in Lumberton — employs about 56,000 people and is focused on its mission of improving the health and wellbeing of North Carolinians.

Page, who has served in the positions on an interim basis since July, was elected by the UNC Board of Governors following recent action by the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees and the UNC Health Board of Directors. She will begin the roles Nov. 24.

An expert in primary care

and rural health, Page has helped lead innovative health initiatives, fundraising and strategic planning and partnerships for UNC Health, broadening access to care for patients across North Carolina. She worked to develop branch campuses and grow rural residency programs to train more providers to meet the state's growing health needs.

A Distinguished Professor of Family Medicine at UNC's medical school who joined the faculty in 2005, Page has been a key player on both leadership teams, serving as president of UNC Health Enterprises in 2024-25 and chief academic officer at the medical school and at UNC Health in 2023-25. She was

executive dean at the medical school from 2019 until earlier this year.

Previously, she founded and led Mission3, an educational nonprofit, and created the Fully Integrated Readiness for Service Training (FIRST) Scholars Program at the UNC School of Medicine. She led the family medicine residency program at the school from 2011 to 2018 and chaired the school's Department of Family Medicine.

A Wilmington native and lifelong Tar Heel, she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at UNC-Chapel Hill as a Morehead Scholar, a master's in public health, and an M.D. at the medical school she will now lead. She has published extensively and won numerous grants and awards focused on rural health.

"In every role she has held — physician, educator, innovator, and mentor — Dr. Page has led with reassuring confidence and a clear sense

of purpose. She is the kind of leader who builds trust by earning it, and who reminds us that the heart of health care is public service to others," said UNC System President Peter Hans. "We could not ask for a better steward of UNC Health's mission."

"It is a tremendous honor and privilege to serve as CEO of UNC Health and Dean of UNC School of Medicine," Page said. "I appreciate President Hans and the Board of Governors, Chancellor (Lee) Roberts and Chair (Greg) Wessling for their confidence and support as I step into this important role during one of the most challenging periods in healthcare and academic medicine. I'm delighted to serve and lead our great team to fulfill our purpose and mission to the people of North Carolina."

"Dr. Page is an inspirational leader and a remarkable healthcare provider whose dedication to serving North Carolina's communities

reflects our university's commitment to statewide impact in all 100 counties," said UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Lee Roberts. "She is exceptionally qualified to guide UNC Health's continued growth and advance its mission of saving lives across our state."

"I have worked with Dr. Page as a member of the UNC Health Board of Directors since 2019," said UNC Health Board Chair Greg Wessling. "She is a dynamic and strategic leader who excels in building relationships and has a heart for providing outstanding quality care across our state. I could not think of a finer person to lead UNC Health and UNC School of Medicine."

"North Carolinians are fortunate to have Dr. Page overseeing UNC Health," said Wendy Murphy, chair of the Board of Governors. "She has a passion for serving our citizens and the expertise to lead us into a healthier future."

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