

Howard Earl Burch

Howard Earl Burch, 63, passed away on Thursday, June 22, 2005, in Grand Junction, Colo., after suffering a stroke.

A native of Macon County, he was the son of the late Maurice E. Burch and Glynn M. Burch. He was also preceded in death by a sister, Betty Nichols of Bellingham, Wash.

He was a 1960 graduate of Franklin High School and a 1967 graduate of Western Carolina University. He retired from teaching in public schools in 1996, but never lost his love of teaching or learning new things. In addition to nature and teaching, his passions included photography, reading and woodworking. He followed his own path and did things his own way, not the way others dictated. He gave definition to the term original, his family said.

At the time of his death, he was on an extended trip to Colorado with his partner, Charlotte Wilhite, doing what he loved the most, camping and exploring the countryside along the way.

Survivors include a son, H. Eric Burch of Burnsville, Minn.; two sisters, Bobbie Jean Seay and husband Roger of Franklin, and Mildred Ann Crawford and husband Oran of Granite Shoals, Texas; a brother, Larry M. Burch and wife Jeannie of Albuquerque, N.M.; eight nieces; three nephews; his companion, Charlotte Wilhite; and many friends.

A celebration of his life will be held Sunday, Aug. 7, from 3 to 5 p.m., in the First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Franklin.

In keeping with his wishes, his ashes will be spread in the mountains of Appalachia that he loved.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made to the Victory Junction Gang Camp at www.victoryjunction.org, an organization that matches his love for children and NASCAR with his desire to help others.

Online condolences are available by visiting www.maconfuneralhome.com.

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