



Dr. John S. Gaines

March 15, 1933 - May 3, 2019

Dr. John S. Gaines, 86, of Bristol, Tenn., departed this life on Friday, May 3, 2019, at Oakmont at Gordon Park in Bristol, Va. He was born in Glendale, Calif., on March 15, 1933, son of the late John Strother Gaines and Mildred Walton Gaines. He is also preceded in death by his wife, Thelma Dowling Gaines; and sisters, Alice Gaines Scott and Nancy Gaines Womack.

John's passion in life was education. He received a bachelor's degree in political science at Occidental College, where he also played on the golf team. While stationed with the U.S. Army in post-war Korea, he taught English as a Second Language at Seoul Academy and designed a golf course, which was built for the Seoul Area Command. He first taught English and history at Eleanor J. Toll Junior High in Glendale, then worked at Herbert Hoover High School in Glendale as a teacher of history and American government. During that time he received his master's degree from California State University, Northridge, in administration and social science and co-authored textbooks on California history and government. He later went on to complete his doctorate in education at the University of Southern California. He held credentials in teaching and school administration in both California and Tennessee.

In the fall of 1969, John moved to Bristol to take a job with King College as professor of education and American studies. Though born and raised in California, his father's side of the family was actually from Sullivan County, Tenn., so the move proved to be a homecoming of sorts. While he officially retired from King in 1999, he continued teaching classes there for the next several years. During his tenure there he taught courses in philosophy of education, secondary curriculum, Western civilization, American government, physical geography, cultural geography, urban studies, American studies, and the media and politics. At different points John also served as vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty, director of teacher education, division chairman, department chair of education, co-chair of American studies, director of placement, director of internships, director of summer programs, golf coach, Elderhostel faculty and advisor to the College Republicans. At various times he also taught courses for East

Tennessee State University, the University of Virginia, Trinity College (Connecticut) and Occidental College. He served as a trustee for Washington College Academy and Virginia Intermont College. He was a member of the National Commission of Chief Academic Officers, Tennessee Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, Phi Delta Kappa, SACS Deans Council and National Council for the Social Studies (Committee on Racism & Social Justice).

As a young man, John served as a congressional intern, and he had a lifelong interest in politics. He served on the Bristol Tennessee City Council for 16 years, as mayor for five years and vice mayor for five years during that time. He was a delegate to the Republican National Conventions in 1996 and 2004.

John loved to visit historic sites around the country and around the world and was frequently requested as a speaker on historical and political topics for civic organizations, service clubs, church groups and teacher in-service workshops. He was a member, deacon and trustee of First Baptist Church of Bristol, and he belonged to Bristol Noon Rotary, the VFW, Bristol Country Club, Sullivan County Republican Organization, Sullivan County Industrial Commission, Tennessee Rail Study Commission, American Public Power Association Policy Makers Council and the Bristol Sesquicentennial Committee. He maintained strong ties with relatives and friends in southern California and was a lifetime member of Oakmont Country Club, in Glendale.

His community involvement also included service on boards of directors for organizations such as: Bristol Chamber of Commerce, Netherland Inn Association, Bristol & Mountain Empire Red Cross, Bristol Tennessee Essential Services, Tennessee Municipal League, East Hill Cemetery Association, Bristol Trainstation Foundation, Trans-Dominion Express, Bristol Tennessee Public Schools Foundation, Bristol Historical Society, Bristol War Memorial Foundation, First Tennessee Development District and the Arts Alliance of the Mountain Empire. Additionally, he served as chairman or president of the Bristol Public Library Board, Sullivan County Historical Society, Rocky Mount Association, Bristol Community Development Committee, Bristol First Baptist Foundation, Bristol Tennessee Better Schools Task Force, Sullivan County School Consolidation Commission, Bristol Schools 2000 and the Bristol Metropolitan Planning District.

John is survived by his two daughters; Jennifer Kidder and husband Larry of Ithaca, N.Y., and Susannah McCroskey and husband Kevin of Bristol, Va.; grandchildren, Katie and Andrew Kidder, and Emily, Glenn, Ian, Mary, Connor, Kyle and Pierce McCroskey.

The funeral service for Dr. Gaines will be held at 1 p.m. on Friday, May 10, 2019, at First Baptist Church in Bristol, Va. The family will receive friends before the service in the

sanctuary from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will also be a reception and celebration of his life in the Fellowship Hall at First Baptist Church from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. the evening of the service.

Honorary pallbearers are Randall Gilmore, Tony Massey, John Deakins, Dr. Mike Browder and the many friends with whom he shared regular Monday and Wednesday lunches. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Dr. John S. Gaines' name to King University, 1350 King College Road, Bristol, TN 37620 or First Baptist Church of Bristol, 1 Virginia St., Bristol, VA 24201.

Condolences and memories may be shared with the family and be viewed by visiting www.oakley-cook.com. Arrangements especially for Dr. Gaines and his family have been made through Oakley-Cook Funeral Home & Crematory.

Cemetery

East Hill Cemetery

Bristol, TN, 37620

Events

MAY **Visitation** 11:00AM - 01:00PM

10

First Baptist Church of Bristol
1 Virginia Street, Bristol, VA, US, 24201

MAY **Funeral Service** 01:00PM

10

First Baptist Church of Bristol
1 Virginia Street, Bristol, VA, US, 24201

MAY **Celebration of Life** 06:00PM - 08:00PM

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First Baptist Church of Bristol
1 Virginia Street, Bristol, VA, US, 24201

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



Oakley-Cook Funeral Home - May 10 at 08:50 AM



“ Dear Susannah & Jennifer,

We are so very sorry to hear about your loss. Please know that you and your entire family are in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Praying for Peace,
Marianna & Greg

Marianna M. Watson - May 09 at 08:28 PM



“ Dr Gaines was always impressive but not in an ostentatious way. He simply possessed so much more knowledge and experience than most of us and he carried it casually, offering to anyone, if they asked, answers to questions, informed opinion on issues, and general data on people of note, places of interest, and events in history. In short, he was a man of the world.

I am privileged to know one of his daughters, Susannah, and her family. I, along with many others, have witnessed their loving devotion to John over the years and especially in his last hours.

I know of no one person who was loved and cared for more by his family than Mr Gaines.

Rev Laurence Windham

laurence windham - May 09 at 02:11 PM



“ Sorry to hear of your loss. I had the pleasure of knowing both Mrs. Gaines as a student at East High School and also from King College. Wonderful people, just upstanding individuals to know. Truly a loss for the Bristol community he served and King College.

penny thurmond - May 07 at 08:34 PM



“ Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Dr. John S. Gaines.



May 07 at 03:34 PM



“ Although I am a graduate of King College and Dr. Gaines was a professor at the school while I attended I never took any of his classes. However, he and Thelma were friends of my parents. John's contribution to King and to the local community will always be remembered. My condolences to his daughters on the loss of their father. D. McDevitt

david mcdevitt - May 07 at 03:03 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Dr. John S. Gaines.



May 07 at 04:01 AM



“ There will never be another John Gaines . Friend , Father & Grandfather figure , confidant, mentor and the ultimate Educator . RIP
Tony , Connie , Lindy & Bethany Massey

connie Massey - May 06 at 03:00 PM



“ Condolences to Dr. Gaines' family, you are in my prayers. Dr. Gaines was my golf coach at King College. He was one of the finest men I ever had the pleasure to meet. I never had the opportunity to take one of his classes, but all my classmates commented on his excellence in the classroom as well. He was a scholar and public servant. RIP, good sir.

Tom Mullins - May 06 at 09:50 AM



“ I had Dr. Gaines as a professor for Western Civilization at King College. He was a wonderful teacher and person. The class was a difficult one, but he made it very interesting and engaging. Dr. Gaines was a great storyteller and made history come alive when he taught; he always put a lot of energy and enthusiasm into his lectures. It was easy to tell he loved the subject he was teaching, and that he loved teaching us. He always had a kind word of encouragement for his students too. I'm sure many of his former students have fond memories of him as one of their favorite professors. He will be greatly missed by all of us. Prayers for your family, and I hope you find comfort in the memories of your loved one and in the difference he made in the lives of so many others while serving his Lord and Savior.

Regina Lovern Badger

Regina Lovern Badger - May 05 at 09:55 PM



“ Sad news. While he was a brilliant scholar and professor, I knew him as golf coach my senior year. What a great historian of the game he was. He was an accomplished player, good enough to tie Ken Venturi in a head to head match when his team upset UCLA in a match. Venturi was on his way to becoming the number one amateur player in the nation and won the 1964 US Open after he turned pro. We also shared a love of politics, a republican and a democrat who actually debated issues in a civil manner. When I ran for Virginia state senate in 2011, he reached out to me to give me valuable advice and after I lost, sent me a kind note thanking me for running and encouraging me to keep working for good. His role as a teacher and coach continued long after his official duties ended, and I am thankful.

John Lamie

John M Lamie - May 05 at 09:12 PM



“ Well spoken , thats the John we knew and will miss dearly

connie Massey - May 06 at 03:02 PM



“ My condolences to Susannah and Jennifer on the loss of your dear father. He was one of the most interesting and engaging people I met during my nine years with the King College faculty and staff. He was an excellent department chair for Education and a capable coach for the college golf team, and he served the college very ably as dean of the faculty during the transition between governing boards. I traveled with your father to his beloved California and also Ohio, and I will never forget the good times and how much I learned from him on those two journeys. His lifelong interests in government and politics made conversations with him both enlightening and entertaining. From congressional aspirations in Southern California as a young man to mayor of Bristol in his later years, his personal experiences shaped his wisdom and understanding of what public service is supposed to be. He and your mother are remembered fondly and with utmost respect. They are most certainly together in God’s presence for eternity.

Edgar Torbert - May 05 at 06:35 PM