



Melvyn Anton Barham

February 4, 1937 - December 30, 2025

Melvyn Anton Barham, 88, passed away peacefully on December 30, 2025, at his home in Guntersville, Alabama, after declining health over the past few years.

Mel was born on February 4, 1937, in Stephenville, Texas, Erath County. He was preceded in

death by his mother and stepfather, Grace Taylor Doggett and Raymond C. Doggett, who became his father figure after marrying his mother when Mel was eleven; his father, Glynn Marston Barham; his sister, Glynda Jo Barham Doggett Anderson; his brother-in-law, Robert

Anderson; and his beloved grandson, L. Franklin Raby III.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Betty Gene Doan Barham; his daughters, Rebecca Barham Raby (Lon) and Brenda Barham Keaton; his son, Robert Glynn Barham (Amanda);

his grandchildren, Allison Keaton Binkley (Dale), Caitlin Elizabeth Raby, Samantha Grace Raby (Ryan Nolen), J. Taylor Barham (Ashton), and W. Garrett Barham (Erica); his great-grandchildren, Rowan Binkley, Ryan Binkley, and Cameron Barham; and his niece, Tracey LeighAnn Anderson.

Mel married the love of his life, Betty Gene Doan, on August 22, 1958, at the 35th and Cherry

Church of Christ in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Together they built a life rooted in faith, service, family, and steadfast devotion to one another.

He graduated from Texas Tech University in 1960 with a degree in Industrial Engineering.

Mel's professional life was devoted to helping companies overcome manufacturing challenges, a calling that often required relocation once problems were solved and new needs arose. His career took him to Allis-Chalmers in La Crosse, Wisconsin, with subsequent

transfers to Columbia, South Carolina and Gadsden, Alabama; Wagner Corporation in Lumberton (Hattiesburg, MS), later transferring him to Boaz, Alabama; JM Ney Company in

Yucaipa, California, and Redmond, Washington; Thermo King in Montgomery, Alabama; and

Fontaine Company in Trussville, Alabama, later transferring him to Springfield, Tennessee, where he was tasked with acquiring companies in California and Canada and ultimately finished his career as president of the company. During his career, Mel traveled frequently both within and outside of the United States, including trips to England, France, Spain, Germany, Canada, and multiple locations in Mexico. To his delight, Betty was able to accompany him on many of these travels. After retiring to a beautiful home overlooking Lake Guntersville, he continued consulting work for several years.

Betty often remarked that Mel could fix nearly anything—from plumbing and electrical issues to automobile repairs and structural problems. In the early 1960s, he even rebuilt a car engine himself. His practical skills, problem-solving ability, and willingness to tackle challenges earned him the well-deserved nickname “Mr. Fix-It.”

Mel grew up in a Christian home and was part of a long line of ancestors who valued faith and Christian education. He was a man of faith and a dedicated worker in the vineyard of the Lord. No matter where his career led, Mel and Betty were consistent volunteers in the congregations where they worshiped. His willingness to serve was quickly recognized, even

in congregations where they lived only a few years. In smaller congregations, Mel often led

singing, offered prayers, served communion, and preached when needs arose—sometimes

all within the same service. During the years of active bus ministries, he knocked doors on Saturdays and drove the bus on Sunday mornings and evenings. Before formal youth minister roles were common, Mel and Betty worked faithfully with young people, teaching Bible classes, coordinating retreats, and planning holiday activities. Mel was appointed a deacon at a young age and later served as an elder in the congregations at Gadsden, Hattiesburg, and Boaz. Even as declining health limited his physical abilities in recent years,

he continued to support the work of the Lord through giving and encouragement. He ran the race and fought the good fight faithfully.

Mel came from a musical family that loved singing hymns and gospel songs, and music was a

natural part of his upbringing and faith. As a young man, he played the saxophone in his high school marching band and also played the piano—talents that later enriched his worship and his willingness to lead singing wherever he and Betty lived.

Despite the demands of his work, Mel deeply cherished time with his family, especially when it involved being outdoors together. He loved traveling, and memories of family tent and pop-up camper trips across the United States—often taken with members of the Doggett family—are now recalled with smiles, though not all seemed humorous at the

time.

One such trip included a thunderstorm in South Dakota that blew away the entire campsite, resulting in an overnight drive and an unforgettable sunrise arrival at the Badlands. Other stories include a bear stealing an icebox while camping in the Great Smoky Mountains and an unwelcome visit from a skunk that made camp life exceedingly unpleasant.

Beyond camping, Mel enthusiastically embraced other outdoor adventures with his family, including hiking, white-water rafting, and countless fishing outings. He particularly enjoyed fishing with his son, sons-in-law, and grandchildren—whether on trips far from home or closer to home on Lake Guntersville. These shared adventures strengthened family bonds and created memories passed down with laughter and affection.

Mel's thoughtfulness and industrious nature were evident from an early age. As a boy, he once purchased firecrackers for his mother's Christmas present—and then selflessly volunteered to set them off for her, if she was afraid. Growing up in early- to mid-twentieth-century Texas, he and his friends and cousins were often found exploring, including youthful experiments such as smoking "rabbit tobacco." Fortunately, that habit did not endure, as Mel was not a smoker in adulthood.

That early fondness for small explosives did not end with childhood. Mel happily passed along this enthusiasm to his children—especially his son—and later to his grandchildren. Over the years, the family often gathered at their home in Guntersville for Fourth of July celebrations, where fireworks were enthusiastically set off and the local fireworks display could be watched over the river.

Mel also thoroughly enjoyed having people over for cookouts. With his roots in Texas, he never did things halfway, routinely preparing an impressive spread that might include steak, burgers, chicken, bratwurst, kielbasa, and more. Finding that standard commercially available grills did not meet his needs, Mel built his own oversized grilling system using industrial-grade wire shelving.

Family members also fondly recall Mel's steadfast eating habits, which were a frequent source of good-natured ribbing. He had a particular fondness for ketchup and was known to put it on just about everything he ate, including eggs, pizza, steak, pork chops, ham, chicken, potatoes, chili, and stew. His favorite dessert was plain vanilla ice cream, and as recently as

Christmas Day he requested simply, "a small bowl of vanilla ice cream."

Mel embraced modern technology with enthusiasm. His grandchildren fondly recall text

messages that read more like formal emails, complete with salutations, thoughtful body text, and a professional closing often signed, “With love, Granddad.” On one RV trip out west, he recorded hours of footage—including several uninterrupted hours of his own lap—unaware the camera was still running.

Mel was also a quietly generous man, helping others through financial hardship privately and without fanfare.

Although he was a proud graduate of Texas Tech University and a lifelong Red Raiders fan,

Mel also enthusiastically adopted the University of Alabama, becoming an avid supporter of the Crimson Tide.

Those closest to him recall that rarely did a meal pass without Mel offering a blessing in the

cadence of King James English. The night before he passed away, he offered his final blessing over a simple meal fed to him by Betty.

While Mel did not often quote Scripture aloud, he lived out what he believed every day of his life. “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58)
“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3:22–23)

Funeral services are under the direction of Guntersville Memorial Chapel. Services will be

held at the Guntersville Church of Christ on Sunday, January 4, 2026. Visitation will be from

12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., followed by the funeral service at 1:00 p.m., with Phillip Bradley officiating. Burial will follow at Maple Hill Cemetery in Huntsville, Alabama.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Guntersville Church of Christ Foreign Missions Fund or to Healing Hands International of Nashville, Tennessee.

Cemetery Details

Mapel Hill Cemetery

Huntsville, AL

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 4. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Guntersville Church of Christ
800 Gunter Ave
Guntersville, AL 35976-1518
(256) 582-2494

Funeral Service

JAN 4. 1:00 PM (CT)

Guntersville Church of Christ
800 Gunter Ave
Guntersville, AL 35976-1518
(256) 582-2494