



John Britton Wells, III

June 11, 1946 - February 18, 2026

John Britton Wells III, the only son of J.B. Wells, Jr. and Martha (Hayman) Wells, was born in Lexington, Kentucky, on June 11, 1946. After graduating from Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts in 1964, he received a B.A. in American History from Columbia University in 1968, where he was an officer of the Sigma Chi Fraternity, a member of the Ted Kramer Society, and played football. He also studied French history at the Sorbonne in Paris, France. In 1966, he volunteered as a civilian intelligence operative with the U.S. Navy and accomplished surveillance activities in various locations during the Vietnam War. He completed graduate studies in American History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and received an M.B.A. in marketing from Vanderbilt University in 1980. After serving as Historic Sites Survey Director for the State of North Carolina for two years, he returned to Kentucky and entered the family business. At his father's retirement in 1980, he became President and C.E.O. of Big Sandy Hardware Co., Inc., a wholesale distribution facility serving parts of four states. In addition, Wells served as an instructor of American History for Prestonsburg Community College in the University of Kentucky System and for Morehead State University. His community service included one term on the Paintsville City Council and an appointment as the city's mayor pro-tem. He was a member of Paintsville Lodge #381, F. & A.M., and served as President of the Paintsville Kiwanis Club, Chairman and co-founder of the East Kentucky Veterans Referral Center, an officer of the Big Sandy Chapter of the Sons of the

American Revolution, and Commander of the Gen. Humphrey Marshall and Captain William Green Wells camps of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. He also served as the national genealogist for both the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the Military Order of the Stars and Bars. In 1996, he authored his first book dealing with the Civil War in East Kentucky, "The 10th Kentucky Cavalry, C.S.A. - The Yankee Chasers," for which he received the Jefferson Davis literary award from the United Daughters of the Confederacy. He was a high school basketball official for over fifteen years, refereeing several boys & girls high school championship tournaments and the University of Kentucky alumni game. He also served as President and match official for the Kentucky Academic Association and was elected to the K.A.A. "Hall of Fame" in 1992. While living in Paintsville, John and his family were members of Mayo Memorial United Methodist Church, where he was a Sunday school teacher and youth leader. He also served as a lay minister in charge of St. James Episcopal Church in Prestonsburg, Kentucky, and a small Episcopal mission in West Liberty, Kentucky. Keenly interested in family history, in 2013, he researched and published "The Wells Family of Kentucky's Big Sandy Valley," a history of the Wells family from 1452 to the present, and led group genealogical tours to Germany, France, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and Northern Ireland. On September 4, 2001, the family moved to Newnan, Georgia, where John became a district manager for Colonial Insurance and Assured Benefit Services. From 2002 through 2015, he won Colonial's annual district and region M.V.P. sales awards. He became active in the local Republican Party and represented his district as a delegate to the Georgia Republican Party convention. Initially, the family was members of Newnan First United Methodist Church, where John was an adult Sunday school teacher, member of the church board, usher, secretary for the United Methodist Men, and youth confirmation coordinator. John was also a board member for the Newnan Kiwanis Club, the Brown's Mill Battlefield Association, and the Newnan High School Touchdown Club and was active in the Coweta County Genealogical Society, the Marquis de Lafayette Chapter of the Sons of

the American Revolution, and the William Thomas Overby Camp #715, Sons of Confederate Veterans. In 2010, he was selected as a member of the committee that led the multi-million dollar restoration of the historic Coweta County Courthouse. In 2012, the family joined Southcrest Church in Newnan, where John led an adult life group, served as a youth leader, and was a member of the church greeter team. In 2017, they moved their membership to SonRise Baptist Church, also in Newnan, where he was an active member and volunteer, greeting many as they stopped by, eager to talk with him. In 2019, John volunteered as the genealogy consultant for the African American Alliance and helped develop a network of African American genealogists to assist local African American families in discovering their roots. On June 15, 1968, John married Terrie Ann Barrier of Monticello, Kentucky.

Terrie survives John along with sisters Jane Green (Keith), Mary Hammond (Dean), Martha Heil (David), Jennie Scruggs (Mike), and Susie Colburn (Greg), sons John IV (Angie), Jacob (Andria), and Joshua, along with five grandchildren: Sophie, Phoebe, Gately, Claire, and Lydia.

Two services will be held in John's memory:

A celebration of life on Sunday, March 22, 2026, at 2:00 PM, at SonRise Baptist Church in Newnan, GA, with visitation beginning at 1:00 PM.

A visitation at 1:00 PM and a funeral service at 2:00 PM on Saturday, April 18, 2026, at Mayo Memorial Methodist Church in Paintsville, KY, followed by burial in Wells Cemetery.

Rather than flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the following organizations: SonRise Baptist Church, 6 Shenandoah Blvd, Newnan, GA 30265, Annandale Village <https://annandale.org/ways-to-give/>, Mayo Memorial

United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 669, Paintsville, KY 41240, Hoping Forward, 121 The Ridge Ct., Newnan, GA 30265.

Condolences may be expressed online at www.mckoon.com.

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory (770) 253-4580.

Cemetery Details

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory

38 Jackson Street
Newnan, GA 30263
care@mckoon.com
<http://www.mckoon.com>

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 22. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

SonRise Baptist Church
6 Shenandoah Blvd
Newnan, GA 30265

Funeral Service

MAR 22. 2:00 PM - 2:45 PM (ET)

SonRise Baptist Church
6 Shenandoah Blvd
Newnan, GA 30265

Tribute Wall

MG

“ I am saddened to learn of John’s passing. His mother, Martha and my father, Lewis Duncan Humble were first cousins. I have fun memories of family get-togethers at John’s grandmother’s home (Aunt Ada) in Chevy Chase... Lexington, KY. My heartfelt sympathy to Terrie and sons, John, Jacob, Josh and John’s sisters, Mary, Martha, and Jennie. May cherished memories be of comfort in the days ahead.
Michelle H. Goedeke
Lexington, KY

Michelle H. Goedeke - March 20 at 07:48 PM

Jl

“ 88 files added to the album [From_John_Wells_IV](#)



John Wells IV - March 18 at 09:28 PM

MC

Those are great photos !

matt collins - March 22 at 05:31 AM

LS

“ I was so very sorry to hear of the passing of Mr. Wells. I was one of his students when he taught history at Prestonsburg Community College (now Big Sandy Community and Technical College). Mr. Wells made history come to life. I also knew him as the CEO of Big Sandy Hardware. His loss will be felt deeply by his family and by those of Paintsville who knew him well.

Linda Sparks - March 18 at 03:24 AM

MC

“ I'm deeply sorry for your loss. John will be missed



Mary Crawford - March 02 at 04:12 PM