



Dr. William P. Flatt

June 17, 1931 - February 9, 2026

William P. "Bill" Flatt, a jovial farm boy born during the Great Depression, esteemed researcher and philanthropist, passed away on Monday, February 9, 2026 at the age of 94, leaving a great void in the lives of those who loved him.

Raised by his grandparents on a five-acre farm in Dyer County, west Tennessee, Dr. Flatt stacked up a list of accolades thicker than a Sears Roebuck catalog, but his greatest gift was just making everyone feel special in his presence.

If you saw him, you heard his laugh - an enthusiastic "WOW!" - and you knew he was always "Better 'n ever" before you even asked, but you asked anyway because you loved hearing him say it. And when you left, you were smiling.

Dr. Flatt served the University of Georgia for 51 years in a career that included positions as director of the Agricultural Experiment Stations (1969-1981), dean and coordinator of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (1981-1994), D.W. Brooks Distinguished Professor (1994-1999) and professor emeritus in the department of foods and nutrition within the College of Family and Consumer Sciences (1999-2020) and some might argue -- UGA Football's #1 football fan.

Prior to coming to UGA, he was a research scientist and head of the USDA Agricultural Research Service Energy Metabolism Laboratory at Beltsville, Md. from 1956-1969.

Born on June 17, 1931, Dr. Flatt was influenced early in life by his grandmother, "Mama," and his first teacher in a one room school, his aunt he called "Sister." He attended Union Grove Grammar School for seven years before graduating as valedictorian of Trimble High School, which earned him a \$50 scholarship to nearby Bethel College. He'd probably want you to know he once picked 356 pounds of cotton in a single day and honed his public speaking skills as state president of the Future Farmers of America.

At Bethel College, he met his wife, June Nesbitt, at a skating rink the first week of classes. The two freshmen were married in 1949.

Dr. Flatt transferred to the University of Tennessee and earned a degree in animal science. After turning down a lucrative offer to be a salesman for the Jewell Tea Company, he earned a Ph.D. from Cornell University, at age 21, with the help of a National Science Foundation scholarship.

He built "the biggest and best lab in the world" for studying the energy balance of dairy cows while at USDA, where his research gained international acclaim. Not long after the lab was destroyed by lightning, Dr. Flatt was hired at UGA.

For the next three decades, he became a driving force behind the growth of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, famously working with then-Governor Jimmy Carter to secure vital funding for research, teaching and Extension and helping guide the college to national prominence.

After stepping down as dean in 1994, Dr. Flatt took a position as a faculty member in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences, where he taught

human nutrition courses and punctuated his lectures with dramatic flair of stories from his own life that drew laughter and endeared him to a generation of students and faculty.

In his 60s, after a body scan at the Sunbelt Expo in Moultrie, GA, he became a strong advocate for strength training and pursuing a healthy diet, motivating students with videos of him "Sweatin' to the Oldies" with Richard Simmons and photos of him lifting weights.

Dr. Flatt was a brilliant researcher, a skilled administrator and a beloved teacher, but he is most remembered as a joyful man and a generous philanthropist. Having received 12 scholarships to put himself through school, Dr. Flatt recognized the need for private support and dedicated his career to improving the lives of others.

He endowed numerous scholarships and professorships, helping launch the careers of dozens of students and faculty, and kept a thick manila envelope of all the thank you cards he received in return. His most recent gift established the Flatt Chair in Foods and Nutrition within the College of Family and Consumer Sciences, the first chair in college history.

In 2014, Dr. Flatt married the second love of his life, Marihope Troutman, a UGA FACS alumna. He was immediately embraced by her family as one of their own and in 2021, they relocated to Newnan, GA, which was Marihope's hometown.

Among his many accolades, Dr. Flatt earned the 2020 UGA President's Medal and was a Fellow of the American Dairy Science Association, the American Society of Animal Science and the American Society of Nutrition. He also served as president of the UGA Retirees Association, was honored for 42

years of perfect attendance by the Athens chapter of the Rotary Club.

Dr. Flatt was predeceased by his first wife, June Nesbitt Flatt and daughter, Melynda Flatt Reid (Edward, Tallahassee, FL) as well as his brother, Dr. James (Wylia Jo) Flatt. He is survived by his wife, Marihope Troutman Flatt of Newnan, Daughter, Katherine F. Hutto of Suwanee (Mark and Sandra Hutto, Norcross, GA), children through marriage: Steven (Miriam) Troutman of Cumming, Lee (Nan) Troutman and Frances T. Harris, all of Newnan. Grandchildren: William T. Hutto (Suwanee) and Abbie H. Smith (David) of Columbia, SC, Lee Russell Troutman, Kathleen (Travis) Carter, Mary Turner Troutman and Lawson (Allyson) Harris all of Atlanta; Steven Troutman of Cumming and Isabelle Harris of Lakewood, CO. Greatgrandchildren: Eliana, Shiloh and Ruth Smith of Columbia, SC and Mary Emma and Troutman Carter of Atlanta. Several nieces/nephews including a special closeness to Gina Hollomon of Anchorage, AK. Additionally, he adored Pang and Rosie Thao of Monroe and Valerie Leslie of Newnan who were "like family".

We are all better 'n ever for having known him.

Dr. Flatt's life will be celebrated on February 23 at 3:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church of Athens. Members of the Athens Rotary Club will serve as his honorary pallbearers.

For those wishing to make a charitable contribution, as he did so many times, please direct gifts to either the William P. (Bill) Flatt Professorship at the University of Georgia Foundation, 1 Press Place, Athens, GA 30601 UGA Foundation - Flatt Professorship, or to the Georgia 4-H Foundation, 306 Hoke Smith Annex - UGA, Athens, GA 30602. Ga 4H Foundation.

Cemetery Details

McKoon Funeral Home & Crematory

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

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB **23**. 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church of Athens
185 E. Hancock Ave.
Athens, GA 30601