



Barry Lynn McKuin

December 23, 1944 - February 18, 2025

Barry Lynn McKuin age 80, of Morrilton, Arkansas, concluded his years-long battle with Alzheimer's disease on February 18, 2025. He was born December 23, 1944, in San Diego, California, where his parents had moved to help build aircraft (Bernice) and ships (Jake) during WWII. Following the war the family returned to the western Conway County community of Kenwood. Barry attended a one-room schoolhouse in nearby Blackwell with his older brother, Bob, for his grade school education before transferring to Morrilton in the 7th grade. After graduating from Morrilton High School in 1962, Barry attended the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. There he developed leadership skills within Army ROTC, cultivated lifelong friendships at the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, and honed his affinity for numbers in the business school. Upon graduation in 1966 Barry moved to Little Rock and joined the accounting firm of Ernst and Ernst (now Ernst and Young).

Barry and Phyllis married in 1967 prior to his reporting for military service. They made their first home at Fort Benning, Georgia. After departing the Army as a First Lieutenant Barry returned to Little Rock where he continued accounting work with Ernst and Ernst. Barry joined Winrock Farms in 1973 and moved his young family to Petit Jean Mountain for an idyllic few years in the woods. He continued working with the Rockefeller family on Petit Jean and in Little Rock for 20 years.

In 1995, Barry became the Executive Director of the Morrilton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Conway County Economic Development Corporation where he served for ten years. Throughout his career Barry served on numerous boards of directors, including the First National Bank of Conway County and other community banks, the Arkansas Basin Association, Shelter Insurance, and the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute. He was also involved with the Rotary Club, the First United Methodist Church of Morrilton, and Conway County Vision 2020. Barry's work with many of these organizations tapped into his care and interest in helping his community thrive.

Barry is survived by his wife, Phyllis Scroggin McKuin of Morrilton; children, John McKuin of Morrilton/Fayetteville, Laura (Jake) Puryear of Washington, DC, and Tim (Vanessa) McKuin of Canehill, Arkansas; grandchildren, Regan Puryear, Jane Puryear, Meredith Puryear, Anna Puryear, and Silas McKuin; brother, Bob (Mary Ann) McKuin of Little Rock; uncle, Dean (Pat) Roach of Morrilton; and cousin and hunting partner, Larry (Traci) Newberry of Morrilton.

Barry was preceded in death by his father, Robert Jake McKuin (1965), mother, Bernice Roach McKuin Lindley (2016), step-father, Marion Lindley (1979), and a host of English Pointers and English Setters over many years commonly referred to as "Barry's birddogs": Hattie, Ruff, Luke, Lacy, Jimbo, Rex, Candy, Lynn (fostered from brother Bob), Sugg, Bertha, Tatanka, Poncho, Bud, Jill, Jane, Sugg II, and Blue Belle.

The family would like to recognize the efforts and care given by Lynette Fuller during his last year at home and the entire staff of Perry County Nursing and Rehabilitation Center during the year that followed.

A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 1, at the Morrilton First United Methodist Church, 201 S Chestnut, with visitation to follow.

In remembrance of Barry's life and the causes important to him, the family asks that any charitable donations be made to the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute, the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton, or Morrilton First United Methodist Church.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR 1. 10:30 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church
201 S. Chestnut St.
Morrliton, AR 72110

Tribute Wall



“ *Thinking of Phyllis and the rest of Barry's family today.*

Rachel Engebrecht - February 18 at 01:27 PM



“ *Floor Plant for Sympathy was purchased for the family of Barry Lynn McKuin.*



February 28, 2025 at 12:12 PM

“ It was around 2014 in my office in my new job at the Morrilton Area Chamber of Commerce. Barry had come to visit with me about the job - the one he had had a few years earlier when he had the lead part in a story of community revitalization. Fortunately, growing up with my reticent Dad, I recognized Barry’s type: quiet but deep - It was time to just be still, be patient, and listen. I was about to hear the best community development story I had ever heard; what I call Barry’s conversion story.

Barry’s life and this story was deeply connected to the roots of Morrilton and Conway County’s admirable, often glorious but also tortuous history. It could actually be argued that the activities in Conway County from the early 1800s through the 20th century represented the front lines of Arkansas’ history, producing fibers that helped shape the evolution of the state. It is in this context that Barry’s conversion story is to be understood; why it is that the miracle of revitalization in Morrilton happened.

I already knew a little about Barry’s life before his chamber job so, without telling me, I understood as the story unfolded why his work as an accountant and financial advisor for the estate of former Governor Winthrop Rockefeller was a key factor in how keenly Barry felt the horns of a dilemma. Starting in 1955 Rockefeller, who loved his home in Conway County atop Petit Jean Mountain, led the way in recruiting factories to the state. Such locations, like the paper mill recruited to Morrilton in the mid-60s, had huge economic impacts on the local level as well as at the state level. At the time of the start of Barry’s story, the prevailing paradigm for economic development, for cities and for economic developers like Barry was industrial development. He was committed.

“Something was missing...”

Barry started by talking about attending his first training conference for new local economic developers. It was very good, he learned a lot. Sometime later though as he began assimilating the training into

his perceptions of community life in Conway County, he had a disturbing feeling but couldn't put his finger on what was bothering him.

It was not long before another opportunity arose for him to learn from the experts on how to recruit and retain industries. He was convinced that Morrilton had been very responsive to the experts, that they were doing all the right things in creative and bold ways. He had strengthened the partnership with Arkansas Industrial Development Commission and with state utility companies.

That's when it struck him. Something was missing. That was what was bothering him - after all that he had done to implement the training and expert advice, there was something still missing. He had no idea what that was but he knew his education and training was not giving him the answer.

This is where in the story Barry starting showing some feelings - dare i say emotion? - because, as he went on to tell me, he was incorporating his professional development experiences in everyday discussions with coffee club friends and associates, but he felt uneasy and inadequate.

It just kept nagging at him. The town had the paper mill and other strong industries and wages were good, but the quality of life was not progressing as he knew it should be. People were not seeing outward signs of economic development. If they were doing everything right why weren't other industries coming in and why did it not feel like and look like the community was prospering.

The town and county looked about the same as it had for the past couple of decades. Just what was he missing?

There was one more economic development conference which was on Petit Jean and this time Barry finally spoke up to share that they had been following the recommendations but in Morrilton something was still missing. Again, he walked away empty handed.

Then he received an invitation to attend a unique-sounding conference at Batesville. Barry starts showing a bit of excitement at this point in his story. I know he is probably about to get his answer and I'm getting tuned up as well. Well into the afternoon he decided to leave early because that old nagging feeling was overwhelming. At the last minute he decides to stay for the next speaker, a Dr. Vaughn Grisham from Old Miss. University. Grisham is captivating in his rendition of the story of Tupelo, Mississippi. The story completely quenches Barry's thirst for that missing something. Tupelo had achieved what he thought Morrilton could have and should have. They had done it with a combination of industrial development and what was missing in Morrilton, community development. What's more, the next most important thing Barry heard was that community development preceded industrial development.

Barry was now almost - dare i say - giddy with the memory of that moment of exhilarating revelation. He finally knew what was missing.

Barry didn't just share that missing piece back home. His conversion from industrial developer to community developer infused all around him with a tremendous enthusiasm for working creatively within the community and with each other to achieve so much, even in the face of three almost simultaneous plant closings, that they came to be known statewide as "the Morrilton Miracle."

Barry McKuin, may you rest in peace. YOU will be missed.

Jerry L Smith - February 28, 2025 at 12:09 PM

PM

Thank you, Jerry. You captured so well the essence of Barry and his passion for community development brought about by his connection with Dr. Grisham at that Batesville conference. And thank you so much to those of you who have come after and continued this concept of "community development precedes economic development". Phyllis McKuin

Phyllis J McKuin - March 03, 2025 at 05:22 AM



“ *Peace, Prayers & Blessings - Blue and White* was purchased for the family of Barry Lynn McKuin.



February 28, 2025 at 11:24 AM



“ *Plants-A-Plenty* was purchased for the family of Barry Lynn McKuin.



February 28, 2025 at 09:31 AM

BF

“ *Brett Krepps & Family* purchased the *Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket* for the family of Barry Lynn McKuin.



Brett Krepps & Family - February 27, 2025 at 11:56 AM



“ *Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Barry Lynn McKuin.*



February 27, 2025 at 09:31 AM



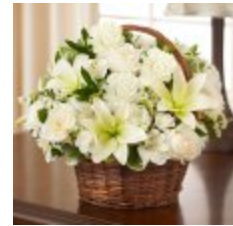
“ *White Standing Spray was purchased for the family of Barry Lynn McKuin.*



February 24, 2025 at 12:40 PM



“ *Peace, Prayers, & Blessings- All White was purchased for the family of Barry Lynn McKuin.*



February 22, 2025 at 09:31 AM



“ *Our thoughts and prayers to the McKuin family. We will be praying for you and grieve the loss of Mr. McKuin with you.*

Ron and Andrea Mobley - February 21, 2025 at 01:41 PM

RM

“ *McKuin Family,
Sending my prayers & thoughts to you. Many memories of
babysitting for your sweet family, on L St. in Little Rock.
Blessings,
Rebecca Pfauser Miller*

Rebecca Miller - February 21, 2025 at 10:17 AM

PM

*Rebecca, so sweet of you to remember us, during that time. Your help
was so appreciated, and, I know you had your hands full because John
and Laura were so little!*

Phyllis J McKuin - March 03, 2025 at 05:32 AM



“ *A sympathy card was purchased for the family of
Barry Lynn McKuin.*



February 21, 2025 at 08:51 AM

MW

“ *My thoughts and prayers go out to Mrs. Phyllis and the entire
McKuin family. I know the love that you had for Mr. Barry and how
hard you fought his disease. I was honored to care for him and to
work with your sweet family.*

MANDY WOOD - February 21, 2025 at 02:50 AM

CW

“ Constance Waddell lit a candle in memory of Barry McKuin



Constance Waddell - February 21, 2025 at 12:05 AM

DC

“ Met Barry in 1984 when we moved to Morrilton and joined 1st UMC. Over the years I served on many church and community committees and boards with Barry. Barry was reserved in what he had to say, but shouldn't have been. Most always he was the smartest person in the room. I always wanted to hear his thoughts. Though we didn't always agree, there was always respect for the other. Prayers and love for Phylis, John, Laura and Tim. Barry was a wonderful man. I'm better for having known him. He made this a better place.

David Cawein

David Cawein - February 20, 2025 at 07:30 PM



“ Barry was indeed a special man. Admired and respected by all who knew him. My condolences to the family.

Jimmie Rankin - February 20, 2025 at 06:19 PM

KM

“ *Barry was the first businessman I ever respected wholeheartedly, and to this day, no one else has measured up. As the President of the Conway County Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce, he was my boss, my mentor, and a man of remarkable wisdom.*

He had a quiet brilliance, often sitting in deep contemplation, hands loosely clasped, his mind turning over ideas until the best one surfaced. He was a meticulous thinker—perhaps even an overthinker at times—but his thoroughness always paid off.

Remarkably, I don't even recall him having a computer in his office. Instead, he relied on yellow legal pads, filling them with insights and strategies. He carried a paper flight book, meticulously studying flights, a relic I've yet to see anywhere else. Were they published annually? I still don't know. But Barry traveled often and moved with a sense of urgency, driven by his relentless commitment to progress.

He devoted himself wholeheartedly to our community, pouring his energy not only into his professional role but also into countless volunteer efforts. His work wasn't just a job; it was a mission.


I regret never telling him and Phylis how profoundly my time working for him shaped me. His influence remains with me, a reminder of what true leadership looks like. Until we meet again—soar high, my friend.

kimberly beck mcnabb - February 20, 2025 at 05:44 PM

KO

“ I will always associate Barry with our little red & white jeepster as he played a big part in it. I believe it was the summer of 1962 when my dad, Paul Liddicoat, then Superintendent of Morrilton Schools had to take continuing education classes at the University of Oklahoma, leaving our mother without a car to haul us 7 kids around, get groceries, etc. He asked Barry to help him out & Barry agreed. He took the bus to OK & drove the jeepster back to Morrilton. We were so excited to see him when he arrived and I know that my dad must have really thought highly of Barry to illicit his help. My condolences to Phyliss and the family.
Kay Liddicoat Oppenhuizen

Kay Oppenhuizen - February 20, 2025 at 04:55 PM

 Tommy
Thompson

“ In the Mid 1990's, The UofA Division of Agriculture moved me to Conway County to work as an Extension Agent. I got to work Community Development programs with Barry on several occasions. I learned a lot from him and enjoyed our friendship for many years. He Fished Hard at "FISH LAKE" and would gladly tell us about his success. Enjoyed seeing him at what's now Greenway Coffee Room, formally Maus Implement John Deere. He would share quail hunt info, and a few other fun times with us. Rest In Peace, Our Friend. Prayers for the family.

Tommy Thompson - February 20, 2025 at 04:06 PM

CW

*I last visited with Barry at his grandson, Silas's eighth birthday. Even then he was not always able to say exactly what he wished but his engaging soft voice and dear smile made me glad to sit near him. He sat near the birthday table outside Silas's home at Historic Cane Hill and
Smiled at the antics of the young guests and seemed to enjoy his piece of the birthday cake. As grandmother of Silas's mother, Vanessa, ive loved. Getting to know and love Phyllis and Barry and their son Tim and I feel their loss deeply. Im so grateful to have known Barry and look forward to a family reunion in that glorious mysterious dimension we call heaven. "heaven"*

Constance Waddell - February 21, 2025 at 12:28 AM

RE

I'm so grateful that I got to know Barry and Phyllis when my family and I moved to the Morrilton area. They both have demonstrated such a big heart for our community! I pray for God's peace and comfort for Phyllis and for the rest of their family.

Rachel Engebrecht - February 21, 2025 at 11:44 AM

GB

We met Barry at a Conference of Champions trip with Shelter Insurance. He and Phyllis were so nice and we enjoyed our visit. The awards night banquet they introduced new Board of Director Barry McKuin. I thought he was a Sheter agent I hadn't met. He was a very nice and smart man an asset to Shelter Insurance. It was such an honor for me to see Barry and Phyllis at our retirement party in 2019.

Gene Bowman - February 21, 2025 at 12:50 PM

RH

Phyllis was my sisters best friend in college. Phyllis, I may be out of state but if not I will be at services. Ralph Hamner

ralph hamner - February 21, 2025 at 03:31 PM

BC

Barry and i had a mutual friend being Larry Rowden who i knew in my hometown. I enjoyed talking to Barry on Shelter Insurance conference trips and I enjoyed getting to see him every year. i recall one trip where we just sat and talked for several hours and i almost missed a planned activity i had scheduled. He was a great man and a huge asset to the board at Shelter Insurance. i want to extend my condolences to the family and you will be in my prayers.

Brent Custer - Shelter - Broken Bow Nebraska

Brent Custer - February 24, 2025 at 09:58 AM