

FARMERS COOPERATIVE

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He Lived His Legacy

Tribute: William “Rufus” Starling

By Pauline Fletcher Cogdill

Rufus Starling left a great legacy to follow. Rufus used to say he had been spreading fertilizer since he was big enough

to pick up a 100-pound bag of fertilizer, but his commercial custom spreading came much later.

Rufus was raised on a farm northwest

of Live Oak, which his dad leased for 20 years prior to Rufus and his dad purchasing the land in 1969.

In 1984 Rufus became a part of the Cooperative Family as a custom liquid nitrogen applicator. After being diagnosed with cancer in 1989, Rufus felt that he needed to take time to enjoy his family and deal with his health issue.

A FEW YEARS later, Rufus returned to work for Farmers Cooperative as a custom dry fertilizer applicator, and was proud once again to be a member of the Co-op team.

He had been given the good news that he was cancer free in 1991 and he would not learn until January 2009, when he was diagnosed with cancer again what challenges he faced. Vivan and Rufus felt living cancer free for years, was a miracle in itself.

Rufus always served his fellow farmers with pride at whatever spreading job he took on. There was no difference to Rufus if the farmer had a few acres of land or a hundred acres of land, that job was the most important to him that day, and any farmer that he met, will tell you that his work was always outstanding.

Anyone that visited Rufus at Haven



The death of Rufus Starling is a blow to the farming community of north central Florida. Rufus ended his fight with cancer in early February. Pictured here are (front, left to right) wife, Vivian; Rufus; daughter, Amber; and (back, left to right) sons, Branson and Will.

Continued on Page 2

Tribute: William “Rufus” Starling

Continued from Page 1

Hospice can tell you Rufus had a peace that passed all understanding, and Rufus let you know, “it is well with my soul.” He said he asked God to give him time to raise his children and take care of his mother and father. Rufus added, “God blessed me another 20 years to do just that and I cannot ask for any more than his divine blessing that I received.”

At Rufus’ eulogy conducted at Westwood Baptist Church on February 16, 2011, he was honored by several people, remembering what a strong individual Rufus was.

Major General Don Tyre with the Florida Army National Guard praised Rufus’ service to his country by serving in the Army National Guard with the 269th Engineer Company; and when the 269th Engineer Company was activated for Desert Storm, Rufus was receiving chemo and unable to leave with his unit. It was heartbreaking for Rufus to see his unit leave without him; however, he always knew God had a plan for him.

RUFUS RETIRED after 33 years of honorable service to this great country, the United States of America.

Dr. Jimmy Deas, Rufus’ Pastor of Westwood Baptist Church spoke of Rufus’ dedication to his family and his commitment to his church. Nephew, Robby Bosserman, remembered his time on the farm and his Uncle Rufus’ unmatched kindness.

Rufus, indeed, leaves a wonderful legacy for his widow, Vivian, grandchildren, sons Will and Branson, and daughter, Amber to cherish. A lot of Vivian and Rufus’ strength comes from their favorite Bible verse, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Philipians 4:13.

The Starlings have been farming hay and cattle productively since 1987. Farming is what they know and farming is what they love.

Branson Starling will continue the path his father carved out for him as a custom spreader fertilizer applicator for Farmers Cooperative. In fact, Branson has been doing the work for his dad since 2009 when his dad started cancer treatments again and

was no longer physically able to do the job he enjoyed so much. Rufus and Branson discussed each spreader customer’s needs before Branson did the job.

SEVERAL FARMERS would call Rufus at home to get advice. Vivian especially recalls George Wedsted and Rufus having long conversations as well as he and Ted Henderson would discuss the outlook for farming.

Director Ted Henderson commented regarding Rufus Starling, “I have a lot of good memories with Rufus, whether we were standing in a field or a hay barn, behind a disc, a planter or a spreader talking about family, farming, politics, or when it was going to rain or stop raining. One would never know from his upbeat nature if he was feeling bad. He never complained, and kept his spirits and the ones around him high. He was very well respected in his business, his church, the Co-op, and community families. He was a very knowledgeable man. When I began farming in Live Oak, Rufus would share his experience and offer advice, which I greatly appreciated, and took to heart.

“December 4, 2010 will always be special to me. He and I were loading square bales of hay for our float for the Christmas Parade. Later that night, you would never have known he wasn’t feeling well. Rufus will be missed by many families and friends. I am honored to have been his friend.”

General Manager Todd Lawrence had the opportunity to spend some time with Rufus in his final days at Haven Hospice. “Rufus was his normal upbeat self, and was concerned about how our farmer customers were going to be able to survive the high fuel prices this spring.” Rufus and Todd discussed his years of service to the Co-op, and Rufus commented on how good the Co-op had been for him and his family. Todd assured him that he would probably never know how many lives he had touched in a positive way over his life, but he guaranteed it is many.

IN A LETTER Todd wrote to Rufus and Vivian, he stated, “I have witnessed how strong you and Vivian’s faith has been for many years. In the difficult times of the past few years, it would have been easy to question things, but all I have heard is

how blessed we are and how God is so good. You and Vivian should be proud of the example you have shown of the love of a husband and wife. It is easy to stand at the wedding and say in sickness and health, but it is another to live it. It is definitely an example many of us have taken notice of. Life’s accomplishments are often measured by what you leave behind; I would say that you have been blessed with many accomplishments. You have always shown dedication to God, your family and your friends.”

To sum up our Cooperative Family’s feeling about William “Rufus” Starling, Barry Long, Agronomy Division Manager at Live Oak stated, “The Co-op would just not be the same with Rufus not around. We will all miss him.”



Win Passes

Farmers Cooperative has several varieties of tomatoes, eggplants, squash, cucumbers, bell peppers, hot peppers and sweet peppers in stock, and now is the time to plant.

Bonnie Plants want to give you a chance to win two free general admission weekend passes to the Suwannee River Jam, April 28–30 at the Spirit of Suwannee Music Park. These free weekend passes are valued at \$280.00.

Each time you come in and purchase Bonnie vegetable plants, you will get a chance to register to win these weekend passes.



Greener. Smarter. Easy.

For the Past Quarter

NEW CO-OP MEMBERS

LIVE OAK STORE

Gregory P. Davis, Jasper
Andy Riotto, Jr., Lake City
Pam Easton, Jacksonville
Ellen Costine, Live Oak
Jean Ferrell, Live Oak
Sheila Slezak, Live Oak
Brian Lockrow, Live Oak
Brian E. Drumheller, Live Oak
Donna M. Boler, Wellborn
James D. Henderson, Live Oak
Vivian Leggett, Live Oak
Roy Yancey, Jasper
Anthony Vasil, Live Oak
Delilah Pearce, Wellborn
Keith Clark, Miramar
Deborah Stalvey, Jasper
Shelly Williams, Live Oak
Sheila Hinton, Live Oak
Jason & Sherry Byrd, Branford
Sherry D. Rucker, McAlpin
Michael Kidd, S W Ranches
Daniel Tapp, Tangier
Shawn Morgan, Live Oak
Vern Allen, Ocala
Anita Handy, Live Oak
Milo R. Sawallis, Reddick
Clarence Wiggins, Jasper
Kelly Useche, Live Oak
Lloyd Johnson, Port Salerno
Jorge L. Mayan, Jennings
Michael Keith Willcox, Lake City
Roger Noel, Live Oak
Susan Schnaudigel, Live Oak
Sheena Ho, Lake City

Robert E. Rouse, Ft. Myers
John R. Hughes, Live Oak
Doug Graham, Orlando
Kim Fenneman, Jasper
Desiree Y. Williams, Live Oak
John Cooke, O'Brien
Katherine Barclay, Live Oak
Mike Gimenez, Live Oak
William T. Cordle, Jr., Live Oak
Paul V. Brown, Live Oak
Eva C. Chambers, Live Oak
Cashway Building Prod., Perry
SCSB Transp. Dept, Live Oak
Edward P. Konkol, Live Oak
William Mitman, Madison
Denver Lessman, Live Oak
Stephen Plemons, Jasper
Sharon McIntosh, Lake City
Kenneth G. McDonald, Live Oak
Gordon R. Burns, McAlpin
William Todd Hunt, Live Oak
Greg Ward, Live Oak
George E. Small, Lake City
David R. Davila, Live Oak
David & Debbie Geiger, Live Oak
William "Bill" O'Conner, Live Oak
Dennis Hackle, Live Oak
Mary E. Grant, Live Oak
Theron Leon Stansel, Wellborn
Michael Lynn Conner, Live Oak
James W. Collins, Live Oak
Jessica Nolan, Lake City
David & Dianna Zometsky, McAlpin
Donald C. Holler, McAlpin
Gary L. Ezell, Jasper
John L. Fields, Jr., McAlpin

Travis Page, Madison
Will W. Cipra, Live Oak
Bryon C. Dickerson, Wellborn
Eric Holtzclaw, Branford
Gene Ellerkamp, Live Oak
Pherne B. McKee, Live Oak
Frankie Bruno, Live Oak
Alisa M. Staats, Live Oak
Donald L. & Nola Morse, Jasper
Holly G. Smith, Live Oak
Richard Cam, Live Oak
Memorie L. Loughridge, Mayo
James Daisey, Lake City
Richard J. Cole, Tampa
Steve Holland, Lakeland
Elaine & Peter Buckley, Live Oak
Victor J. McDonald, Live Oak
Gene Beal, O'Brien
Allen E Benner, Live Oak
Sandra L. Countryman, Live Oak
Henry Bruening, Live Oak
Fred Jefferson, White Springs
Carol M. Stob, White Springs
Joe Giffen, Wellborn
W. Harvey Parsons, Live Oak
Cary L. Lee, Live Oak

MADISON STORE

Edmond Smolik, Clearwater, Fl
Carolyn Zipperer, Pinetta,
Albert Rainey, Lee
Julie Gascon, Perry
Joe Reams, Jr., Greenville
Larry & Caroline Maddren, Greenville
Theodore C. Barfield, Madison

Janet Conner, Monticello
Michael E. Lucas, Lee
George Twiford, Madison
Dennis Blanton, Greenville
Hassie Glee, Madison
Douglas J. Robbins, Mayo
Edward Thompkins, Madison
Christopher Cornette, Madison
Dan Leary, Madison
Blaise Pearce, Jennings
Gene Day, Greenville
Mike Norfleet, Madison
Marie Adams, Madison
Richard Dresser, Madison
Jerry M. Wells, Chokocoskee, Fl
Danny Thompson, Jr., Lee
Russell Graves, Lee
Robert Russo, Sebastian, Fl
Randy Bateman, Madison
Ben Sampson, Madison
Cynthia Bonello, Madison
Wilma R. Ammons, Greenville
Ralph Blackman, Lee
Robert Gonynor, Madison
Jerome McLin, Lamont
Jarrett Jarvis, Lake Park, Ga
George Banta, Brooksville, Fl
First Baptist Church Of Greenville,
Greenville
Tonya Nichols, Valdosta, Ga
Jason Singletary, Lee
Willie Givens, Madison
John G. MaGee, Greenville
Billy Straughter, Madison
Virgil & Shirley Thomas, Madison
Thad Hardin, Salem, Fl
Michel M. Anthony, Madison
Emily Spenan, Madison
Partridge Pea, LLC, Alachua, Fl
Latma Outreach & Rehab, Madison
Sam O'Steen, Mayo

North Florida Livestock Show and Sale

Madison County held their 57th Annual North Florida Livestock Show & Sale Feb. 21-24, 2011 at the Madison County Fair Grounds. Farmers Cooperative of Madison and Madison

County Farm Bureau teamed up to purchase a steer from Pierce Minor, an FFA student, and a hog from 4-H participant Emmolyn Terry from Madison County.



Farmers Cooperative Madison Manager Eddie Curl, Freddie Pitts, Glenn King and Jimmy King, representing Madison County Farm Bureau, stand behind Pierce Minor, whose steer Farmers Cooperative and Madison County Farm Bureau purchased together. Photo courtesy of Emerald Greene, Greene Publishing, Inc.



Farmers Cooperative Madison Manager Eddie Curl, Freddie Pitts, Glenn King and Jimmy King, representing Madison County Farm Bureau, stand behind Emmolyn Terry, whose hog Farmers Cooperative and Madison County Farm Bureau purchased together. Photo courtesy of Emerald Greene, Greene Publishing, Inc.

Meet the 'Outside' Salesman

Our new outside salesman, Travis Page hit the ground running on his new job with Farmers Cooperative. Travis is a Madison County, Florida native, and comes from a long line of farmers.

Although Travis is a young farmer, he has a lot of good sound training and management ability. He is a Madison County "Cowboy" graduate from Madison High School in 2001.

UPON GRADUATION from high school, Travis completed his two year degree at North Florida Junior College.

WHERE ARE THESE FOLKS?

Farmers Cooperative is trying to locate the following people whose patronage refund checks have been returned from the U.S. Postal Service as "undeliverable":

William Clayton Sapp, White Springs
W C Hamm, Jasper
J L Stanley, Florala, AL
Homer C. Starling, Jr., Monticello
Joseph C Long, White Springs
Edward Mullin, Live Oak
Cecil Stover, Monticello
Suncoast Peach Corp., Clearwater

Farming News

www.farmerscooperative.org

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Todd Lawrence, Publisher & Editor

Co-op Directors

Kenneth Dasher, McAlpin (Suwannee County)
Ted Henderson, Live Oak (Suwannee County)
Eddy Roberts, O'Brien (Suwannee County)
E. Richard Terry, Madison (Madison County)
Archie Davis, Lee (Madison County)
Tim Steichen, Wellborn (Suwannee County)
John C. Webb, Lee (Madison County)
Walter K. Brown (Suwannee County)
Kevin Morgan (Hamilton County)
Kenneth McLeod (Madison County)
Jeff Lee (Suwannee County)

Following graduation from North Florida Junior College, he entered the University of Florida in Gainesville where he graduated in 2006 with a degree in Agriculture Operations Management.

Travis headed home to Madison and married his lifetime sweetheart, Kyndell Browning, who lived just down the road from him when they were growing up. Travis and Kyndell have been blessed with a beautiful 20 month old daughter, Kloie. They live on the family farm in Madison, and have a successful cow-calf operation.

Farming just comes natural to Travis since that's what he has done all his life from watermelons to corn, rye, tobacco, from planting to picking the crops he was taught to work with whatever crop was in season.

Prior to Travis' employment with Farmers Cooperative, he worked as a Farm Supervisor for Pilgrim's Pride, traveling throughout several counties: Madison, Hamilton, Taylor and Brooks County in Georgia.

SOME OF OUR Madison members may remember Travis getting some of his farming knowledge from his grandfather, P. K. Pittman (one of Madison Cooperative's former directors for several years). Travis is the son of Ernie and Marguerite Page also life long residents of Madison County.

Travis' wife, Kyndell, is the daughter of Brenda Pickles Browning and Michael Gene Browning of Madison County, and granddaughter of Wallace and Wynema Pickles who reside in Live Oak.

TRAVIS ENJOYS hunting and fishing, and especially likes water sports at Cherry Lake with his family. They are also members at First Baptist Church of Madison.

Kyndell is a very creative cook, and she thinks you'll enjoy her own recipe of Southern Style Shrimp Aldente:

Southern Style Shrimp Al Dente

1 lb al dente pasta
1½ lb. peeled shrimp or 41-50 shrimp
1 tbsp garlic salt
½ cup olive oil
1 onion (sliced)
1 green pepper (sliced)
4-5 cans stewed tomatoes (according to how much liquid you want)
2 cans whole kernel corn
1 tbsp hot sauce

Cook pasta and set aside. Saute shrimp with 1 tbsp. garlic salt and ½ cup olive oil. Simmer 20 minutes. Add all other ingredients except pasta to shrimp. Pour shrimp mixture over pasta and enjoy.



Farmers Cooperative's new "outside" salesman, Travis Page, poses with his wife, Kyndell, and daughter, Kloie.