



Floyd Shelby Alford
1952-1996

Floyd Alford

Jan 9 1952 - Mar 10 1996

AAFA #0722

**FLOYD SHELBY
ALFORD
1952-1996
AAFA #722**

CHARLOTTE OBSERVER
Charlotte, NC—Tues., 12 March 1996

Floyd S. Alford Jr., general manager and editor of *The Daily Independent* in Kannapolis for 11 years, died the same day he returned home following surgery.

Alford, 44, underwent surgery on March 1 at Cabarrus Memorial Hospital and returned home Sunday. He became ill Sunday afternoon and returned to the hospital, where he died.

In January, Alford was named advertising and marketing director of *The Daily Independent* and *Concord Tribune*, which will merge this year. He moved to Kannapolis in 1984.

Alford was born Jan. 9, 1952, in Raleigh. He graduated from Needham B. Broughton High School, attended Campbell College, and in 1974 graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill, receiving a bachelor of arts degree in journalism.

He worked as a reporter/photographer at *The Sampsonian* in Clinton, N.C., and later as advertising representative and advertising manager of *The Sampson Independent* in Clinton.

In July 1978, he was named publisher of the *Franklin County Times* in Russellville, Ala.

The funeral will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at First Baptist Church in Kannapolis.

He won numerous press awards in advertising, column writing and photography in both North Carolina and Alabama.

He is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd S. Alford Sr. of Raleigh; his wife, Julia Webb Alford; two sons, Zack Alford and Benjamin Alford; a daughter, Meredith Alford; and two sisters.

In another article:

CHARLOTTE OBSERVER
Charlotte, NC—Tues., 21 March 1996

A newspaperman who cared, Floyd Alford's heart was in his community and in his home

Floyd Alford was a newspaperman who believed in Kannapolis. He was a community supporter and promoter; a friend to many and above all, a family man.

Floyd Shelby Alford Jr. died March 10 at Cabarrus Memorial Hospital in Concord as a result of complications from surgery on March 1. He was 44.

His wife, Julia, had brought him home from the hospital the previous Sunday, and the family was excited about celebrating daughter Meredith's 12th birthday.

Alford was the former editor of *The Daily Independent*, an 11,000-circulation Kannapolis newspaper. He was named in January as director of marketing and circulation for the paper, which is merging with *The Concord Tribune*.

"He was a friend to everyone who worked for him; they were his extended family," said Allan Boger, a reporter for the paper. Boger, who'd worked for Alford for 10 years, added, "He gave me a job when I needed one. I got back into the newspaper business thanks to Floyd Alford."

Alford, who had been an editor for 12 years, was a "regular person," Boger said. He was everybody's friend; he liked everybody and everybody liked him.

"Floyd protected you on some issues that sometimes were not popular with constituents. He was a guardian, and he became my friend."

Tom Dayvault, president and CEO of the Kannapolis Chamber of Commerce, had known Alford for 11 years. "You were automatically his friend the



Floyd Shelby Alford

first five minutes you met him. If you didn't end up that way, it was never his fault," Dayvault said.

"He was a great storyteller," Dayvault said. "He was always fun to do things with, but it was just as much fun to not do, but to hear about it."

People here couldn't wait for him to get back from vacation to hear about it. They called his embellishments "Floydisms."

"He was attuned to the fact that the nature of Kannapolis was changing," said Jack Claiborne, former assistant vice president for Park Communications, which formerly owned *The Daily Independent*.

"Floyd was very community-minded; he saw and heard both sides. He was (the paper's) editor at the time and saw which way Kannapolis had to go and was very sensitive to it. He was trying to keep the best of the old and infuse the new. It was something that he took personally and was very much committed to it," Claiborne said.

Alford was a supporter of bringing minor league baseball to town. As chairman of the Kannapolis Chamber of Commerce, he told the city council in 1994, "Kannapolis is suffering. We need a true shot in the arm."

Thanks in part to Alford's support, the Piedmont Phillies moved to Kannapolis in 1995. Now known as the Piedmont Boll Weevils, the team calls Kannapolis' \$6.5 million Fieldcrest Cannon Stadium home.

"He gave of himself to the whole community and had a lot of titles," Dayvault said, "but 'Daddy' is the title he was most proud of. He worshiped his kids and family."

Floyd Alford is also survived by his sons, Zack and Benjamin Alford; parents, Floyd and Rachel Alford of Raleigh [AAFA #271]; sisters, Beverly Alford of Burlington [AAFA #345], Annette Alford of Greensboro; grandmother, Lela Alford of Zebulon....

AAFA NOTES: The obituary of Floyd's grandmother, Lala Batchelor Alford, is published in this issue. She died 14 August 1997 in NC. In this

issue, see also "Zollie and Lala Alford of Franklin Co., NC," written by Floyd's cousin Carol Batton Cheves, p. 50.

ALFORD ANCESTORS

1. **Floyd Shelby Alford, Jr.** b. Jan 9 1952, NC, m. Mar 20 1976, **Julia Webb**, b. Dec 13 1950. Floyd died Mar 10 1996, Concord, Carrabus County, NC.

Parents

2. **Floyd Shelby Alford** b. Aug 22 1923, Franklin County, NC, m. Jun 1 1946, in NC, **Rachel Juanita Pearce**, b. Apr 3 1923.

Grandparents

4. **Zollie Floyd Alford** b. Jan 27 1900, Franklin County, NC, m. Dec 23 1922, in NC, **Lala R. Batchelor** b. Sep 25 1900, NC, d. Aug 14 1997, Pilot, Franklin County, NC, buried: Alford Cemetery, Pilot. Zollie died Mar 6 1977, NC.

Great-Grandparents

8. **James Berry Alford** b. May 15 1872, Dunn's Township, Franklin County, NC, m. Mar 11 1899, in Dunn's Township, Franklin County, NC, **Bettie A. Williams** b. Aug 29 1875, NC. She died May 29 1962. James died Mar 29 1950, Dunn's Township, buried: Upchurch Cemetery, Dunn's Twp.

Great-Great-Grandparents

16. **Berkley Moses Alford** b. Jan 10 1849, Franklin County, NC, m. Oct 5 1871, in Louisburg, Franklin County, NC, **Elizabeth Jane "Eliza" Upchurch**. Berkley died Apr 3 1915, Zebulon, Wake County, NC, buried: Alford Cemetery Dunn's, Township, Franklin Co., NC.

17. **Elizabeth Jane "Eliza" Upchurch** b. Jan __ 1852, NC, d. Nov 29 1919, Zebulon, Wake County, NC, buried: Alford Cemetery, Dunn's Township, Franklin Co., NC. She was the daughter of **Ambrose Upchurch** and **Harriet Pearce**.

3rd Great-Grandparents

32. **Kisar Alford** b. about 1814, Franklin County, NC, m. Jan 1 1841, in Franklin County, NC, **Martha M. Upchurch**. Kisar died after 1870, NC, buried: Dunn's Township, Franklin County, NC.
33. **Martha M. Upchurch**; b. Feb __ 1820, NC, d. after 1900, NC. She was the daughter of **Berkley Upchurch** and **Alsey Pace**.

Floyd Alford 0722
b. Jan 7 1952 & d. Mar 10 1996
Lived in Kannapolis, NC



FLOYD S. ALFORD JR.
1952-1996

Friends praise his dedication to community and family

Friends and associates of the late Floyd S. Alford Jr. today recalled his dedication to his profession, his community and especially, to his family.

Mr. Alford, 44, died suddenly Sunday afternoon. He had been general manager of The Daily Independent for 11 years and was recently named manager of advertising and marketing for the merged The Daily Independent and The Concord Tribune.

He was a frequent participant in activities all over town, from setting up tents and booths at Spring Fever Fest to formal chamber of commerce events. In previous years, he was most visible to the community leading the "Fancy Pants" clown contingency through the city in the annual Christmas parade.

Floyd Alford, general manager, dead at 44

Floyd S. Alford Jr., general manager and editor of The Daily Independent for 11 years, died Sunday.

Mr. Alford, 44, underwent surgery on March 1 at Cabarrus Memorial Hospital and returned to his home, 1534 Cripple Creek Road, Sunday. Around 4:20 p.m. he became ill and was taken back to the hospital.

As part of his Sunday homecoming and prior to his becoming ill, the family celebrated the 11th birthday of his daughter, Meredith.

In January, Mr. Alford was named advertising and marketing director of The Daily Independent and Concord Tribune, which will merge this year.

Since moving to Kannapolis in 1984, Mr. Alford became active in

many community projects. In 1994, he served as chairman of the board of the Kannapolis Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Alford had served in many committees of the Kannapolis Chamber of Commerce including the Spring Fever Fest committee. He was one of the leaders in bringing a minor league Class A baseball team to the area and in pushing for the construction of Fieldcrest Cannon Stadium.

He had served as a member of numerous boards including the Cabarrus Tourism Authority, the Cannon Memorial YMCA Endowment board and board of electors; and the Cabarrus County council of the Boy Scouts of America.

He had been a volunteer in the city schools as part of the BEST program and had served as coach and assistant coach for several youth baseball and soccer teams.

A member of Leadership Kannapolis Class of 1992, he had won several awards and recognitions including being named Co-Pilot by the Kannapolis Pilot Club, and Employer of the Year by the Concord Business and Professional Women's Club.

He was an active member of the First Baptist Church, and former Sunday School teacher, and deacon.

Mr. Alford was born Jan. 9, 1952, in Raleigh.

He graduated from Needham B. Broughton High School, attended

Campbell College, and in 1974 graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, receiving a bachelor of arts degree in journalism.

He worked as a reporter-photographer at The Sampsonian in Clinton, and later as advertising representative and advertising manager of The Sampsonian Independent in Clinton.

In July 1978, he was named publisher of the Franklin County Times in Russellville, Ala. During his six years there, he served on the board of directors of the Russellville Area Chamber of Commerce and as president of the organization for one year. He was also a member of the board of directors of the Alabama Newspaper Advertising Service and the Franklin County Home Health Care Council.

He won numerous press awards in advertising, column writing and photography in both North Carolina and Alabama.

He is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd S. Alford Sr., of Raleigh; his wife, Julia Webb Alford of the home; two sons, Zack Alford and Benjamin Alford, both of the home; one daughter, Meredith Alford of the home; and two sisters.

Whitley's Funeral Home is in charge of pending funeral arrangements.

The family requests no flower arrangements. Memorial gifts should be made to the Summer Youth Leadership Program, C/O First Baptist Church, 101 N. Main St., Kannapolis, N.C. 28081.

"I had highest regards for him in the personal friendship we developed and in my relationship with him at the office," said Bill Workman, managing editor emeritus of The Daily Independent. "As much as for anything, I admired him for his relationship with his family.

"He was a dad before he was anything else. ... I can't believe it," said Workman.

"He was a fine gentleman," said Bachman Brown Jr., former Kannapolis mayor. "He had the interest of our community at heart. He will be sorely missed."

Brown recalled that Mr. Alford was a strong advocate of incorporation of the city in 1984.

He said he also worked with Mr. Alford in the Kannapolis Chamber of Commerce.

"He worked strongly on Spring Fever Fest, and worked very hard for the Chamber's participation in the schools," Brown said. "He was a very strong advocate of the schools."

"The news of Floyd's death has devastated the staffs of both The Independent and The Tribune," said John W. Kennedy, publisher.

"Floyd's love for his family was first and foremost in his life, but the newspapers and his community were also important to him.

"He loved the community with an unending passion and he never made a decision in the news business without first considering how it would affect the community and its people.

"To know Floyd was to love him and as a friend and co-worker, we in the newspapers of Cabarrus County learned quickly to love and appreciate his kindness and his gentle understanding. We will miss him," concluded Kennedy.

"I've worked with a lot of publishers over the years, but never with one more dedicated than Floyd Alford," added Don Smith, former managing editor of The Daily Independent.

Smith, who now teaches at Mount Pleasant Middle School, recalled "He was dedicated to making The Inde-

pendent a good paper to making this a good community. He was deeply involved in so many activities in town and stretched himself to try to wear a lot of hats and do a lot of things. I think Kannapolis is a better community because of Floyd Alford."

"Floyd was the most giving person I ever met," said Tom Dayvault, president of the Kannapolis Chamber of Commerce. "He loved this community and everybody in it. He considered it a privilege to be chairman of the Kannapolis Chamber, and this organization was the beneficiary. Floyd was a true friend."

Mr. Alford was an advocate of the public schools and volunteered time in the classroom. He also oversaw the treatment of the schools in The Independent.

"I feel that Floyd Alford was a genuinely warm person who cared very much for his community and who unselfishly gave back to it," said Dr. Edward Tyson, superintendent of the Kannapolis City Schools. "We need more people like him. While we did not always agree with him on stories and events, I always felt he was fair, and that's terribly important for all of us. He was a good person."

The Daily Independent

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John W. Kennedy, Publisher

Ray H. Park, President, 1977-1995

Don Clark, Editor
Stan Harriott, Managing Editor
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THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 1996

Kannapolis has lost a leader and a friend

People filled the Kannapolis First Baptist Church's sanctuary Wednesday to celebrate the life of Floyd Shelby Alford Jr. — and to reflect on our personal losses in his passing from this life so shockingly swift on March 10.

Julia lost a husband who loved with his mind, heart, body and soul. Zack and Meredith and Benjamin lost Dad who stood tall and inspired — even challenged — them to be all that they can be as they walk, play, work and serve others through life.

Park Communications, Inc. in general and The Daily Independent and the Concord Tribune in particular lost a fully committed journalist and executive who put integrity first on his long list of priorities.

The City of Kannapolis lost one of its most optimistic supporters, whose vision of the future was wide and deep, backed by a confident "we can do anything" spirit...the word "can't" wasn't in his vocabulary.

First Baptist Church lost one of its busiest, most committed young leaders. Privileges like going with teens to deliver Wednesday night meals to shut-ins, helping kids build cars for the Pinewood Derby, cleaning up messes left by playful kids were as important as teaching Sunday School, serving on the Deacon Council or helping find a new preacher.

Education lost a loyal and diligent booster. He worked hard to help kids in school to learn that development of work ethics was a vital part of the learning experience that lasts a lifetime. He was instrumental in providing leadership training for adults.

Certainly hundreds, probably thousands of us lost an all-weather friend. Never was he too busy to do a favor, minor or major, for somebody in need. Most of us always had time to do Floyd a favor when he needed it.

We list these losses in the order of Floyd's priorities.

He was Dad first. Maybe this was because he had a great relationship with his father. We never knew him to not have time to participate in the kids' numerous activities at school, on ballfields, at church. And he participated with enthusiasm. His zeal for parenting was shared by Julia, and they worked as a leadership team.

At work, he led by example. Every task involved in the production of a newspaper was important. He took his responsibilities seriously, and gave them his best efforts. He expected the rest of us to give our jobs our best efforts — and he was always satisfied with our best. We looked upon Floyd as a friend first, then as the boss.

Floyd Alford Jr. spent about a dozen of his 44 years in our community. He came here as general manager of The Daily Independent. He worked through some tough times at the newspaper. His "can do" spirit helped Kannapolis through some tough times in transition into a municipality. His enthusiasm helped our community through the restructuring of our backbone industry.

In recent months, The Daily Independent and the Concord Tribune headed down the path toward merger. Floyd was excited about his new role as advertising director, which would give him an opportunity to get out among more people — and he was people oriented. But he will never know how smoothly the merger progresses.

On March 1, he underwent surgery. The next week, recovery was very uncomfortable but it seemed to be going along fine.

He came home on March 10, feeling much better — it was daughter Meredith's 12th birthday, and birthdays at the Alford home are always celebrated. After lunch and the gift opening, he lay down to rest awhile. Suddenly, he couldn't breathe. Response to Julia's 911 call was quick, but efforts to revive him failed.

Floyd's imprint will remain. The newspapers are better than they were when he came to Cabarrus County. Kannapolis has made great strides as a municipality of some 33,000 people. We think that because of this young man's enthusiasm, our vision is a bit wider and deeper.

We'll miss him as an all-weather friend.

Remembering Floyd and sharing the loss

Since his very unexpected death, Floyd S. Alford Jr. has been remembered as a super daddy, a loving husband, a booster of the City of Kannapolis, a workhorse in his church, a well-rounded and totally committed newspaperman, an all-weather friend.



Bill Workman

I've agreed with these praises sung from so many directions. All these characters were within Floyd's mind, body and soul. And there were a lot of minor characters swirling around inside this guy — he had a spontaneous sense of humor...he was a born optimist...he had a firm handshake and liked to hug, and he shook hands and hugged sincerely...he was genuine.

Getting Floyd settled in Kannapolis as general manager of The Daily Independent wasn't difficult at all. He had grown up in Raleigh, but the folks here didn't hold that against him. He had attended Campbell University, a Baptist School which puts education first, way ahead of such things as sports. He had graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in journalism, which meant that he had convinced his professors that he could spell and put sentences together to form a paragraph that made sense. His experience had been with small newspapers — as reporter and photographer at The Sampsonian in Clinton, as advertising manager at The Sampson Independent in Clinton, publisher of the Franklin County Times in Russellville, Alabama.

Floyd was 33 when he arrived at The Daily Independent, where the general manager was also the editor, the coordinator of the newsroom, the advertising department, the business office, the circulation crew, the composing room and the pressroom...and was expected to handle any and all other responsibilities handed down by Park Communications Inc. headquarters. Thank goodness he had competent and cooperative leaders of these departments.

I was in my first year of 98 percent retirement when Floyd came aboard. I dropped by when the notion struck to write a Sunday column and some editorials. I spent the rest of my time doing more important things, mostly loafing.

At our first meeting, I liked Floyd. He came across as a smart fellow, but he wasn't a smart aleck. He responded to my questions with "yes sir" or "no sir" followed by explanations. That didn't bother me. I figured he had learned courtesy from old-fashioned parents. It did bother

me that in front of other people he called me "Mr. Workman". Nobody, not even the janitor, had ever called me "Mr. Workman." Previous bosses had called me "Bill" or "Willie" or "Worky" and one had called me "Workless". I didn't always know what my associates in the newsroom called me when my back was turned.

I asked Floyd to please not call me "Mr. Workman" and added that "yes sir" and "no sir" were not necessary.

Floyd said he had been brought up to address elders as "Mister" and I was old enough to be his daddy and that was why he called me "Mr. Workman." I said he must have a great dad but I did not have the honor of being his dad. After that, Floyd called me "Bill" most of the time, "William" once in a while.

We became real friends.

His Zack and Meredith and Benjamin came through my class in Sunday School. Meredith's birthday was the same as mine, March 10. I was invited to her birthday parties. We exchanged gifts. I received better than I gave — I got goodies from "Julia Alford's kitchen." Birthdays were major events for the Alfords. When one had a birthday, the family went to dinner wherever the honoree wanted to go, and I went on quite a few of the outings. I liked to visit the Alfords and read all the things stuck to the refrigerator door — lists of books to be read and check marks beside the books already read, achievement awards, lists of chores for the children to perform, reminders of where the kids were to go, and when they were to be there. Floyd and Julia expected much from the children — nothing short of their best efforts. The kids measured up to these expectations and were rewarded with fun things in life. Last New Year's Eve, the five Alfords flew to New York for the traditional Times Square celebration.

When Lucy and I celebrated our 50th year of marriage with a dinner for family and a few friends, Julia was awaiting the arrival of Benjamin, but Floyd came. The girls hadn't planned a program, other than reminiscing. I tried to put some fun into it. I surprised Lucy with a proposal...a fresh start, if she accepted and Preacher Don McNair would perform the ceremony. Don asked if we wanted the short version or the long version. I said it didn't matter, just so it lasted 50 years. He performed the short version. I planted a lip-lock on Lucy and the crowd swooned. I gave Don four one-dollar bills, exactly what I gave a magistrate in Lancaster, S.C. to marry us in 1937. He gave the bills to Lucy, saying, "You've earned it, young lady." Floyd stole my show. He spent 10 minutes congratulating me on having a woman who put up with me for 50 years and was generous enough to vow to

stick with me 50 more years.

Our friendship went way beyond the fun times. It was wider and deeper in troubled times.

During Lucy's battle with cancer, our refrigerator was never without treats from Julia's kitchen. When the roads were snowy and icy on the days she was to go for chemotherapy, Floyd guaranteed that his four-wheel drive would get us to the hospital and back...and it did. When it looked as though the world was falling apart for Lucy and me, Floyd always had time to listen...and encourage...and provide a shoulder to cry on. Yes, big men do weep sometimes.

I grabbed opportunities to return the friendship the Alfords had offered and I had accepted.

When Julia needed to be in Statesville during her mother's illness and Floyd needed to be at work, I made an open-ended offer to pick up the kids at school, see that they got where they were supposed to be, and look after them until she and Floyd came home. She accepted, quite a few times. When Floyd was carrying too many burdens, I always had time to listen to him spill his gut feelings, and a couple of times I gave him a shoulder to cry on.

Following his March 1 surgery, Floyd was very uncomfortable...from pain, from tubes here and there. Julia wanted to be with him, day and night. She was sure he needed her. She asked if I could sleep in an Alford bed a few nights so the children would not be alone. Certainly, I could...and I wanted to. That gave me a chance to see what good troopers the kids are. Julia left reminders of the chores they were to do, and they did them. Zack was the leader, not the boss. Meredith was really Benjamin's big sister...she was more like his temporary mom. She also looked after the dogs, putting them out and bringing them in, and seeing that they had plenty of food and water. They were making it easy for Mom to look after Dad. I complimented them, and told Julia how great they were.

Floyd came home on Sunday, March 10, Meredith's birthday. He was feeling much better. After lunch and the gift opening, Floyd lay down to rest awhile. Suddenly, he couldn't breathe. Apparently, a blood clot got into a lung. Life went away quickly.

When Julia and I were hugging and crying on each other's shoulders, she said: "Thank you...for giving Floyd and me some valuable time together."

Floyd's friendship will linger in my character and attitude...I learned a lot from him. I'll continue to be a friend of Julia and Zack and Meredith and Benjamin. And I'll cherish their friendship.

The Floyd Alford Award in Journalism was established in 1996 by Dr. Betty Webb in memory of her brother-in-law Floyd Alford, publisher of the *Daily Independent* in Kannapolis, whose career was cut tragically short by death. Floyd Alford, a lifelong journalist, was committed to the idea that journalism can and should make the community a better place in which to live. The criteria for the recipient of this award are that she share Alford's passion for journalism and commitment to community. I am pleased to announce that the first recipient of the Floyd Alford Award in Journalism is the editor of the *Meredith Herald*, Arinn Dixon.