



Vernon McDaniel

October 29, 1933 - November 17, 2025

Vernon McDaniel, 92, of Ozark, Arkansas, passed away on November 17, 2025, in Ozark. He was born on October 29, 1933, in Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Vernon McDaniel Sr. and Barbara McDaniel.

Vernon was a man of many words, many talents, and an unwavering commitment to service. A lifelong learner, he graduated from the University of the Ozarks—then the College of the Ozarks—with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Political Science in 1955. His time there was marked by both scholarship and spirit. He was selected as the most industrious and most school-spirited male student, was named to Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges, and received the Outstanding Student in Political Science award, as well as a Good Citizenship Scholarship. Over the years, he was also honored as one of the Outstanding Young Men of America and one of the Outstanding Personalities of the South.

Vernon later earned his Master of Science in Social Welfare and Journalism from Florida State University in 1960. His postgraduate studies took him across the world to the International College in Copenhagen, Denmark, and to Colorado State University, the University of Arkansas, and the University of Central Arkansas.

With the great wealth of knowledge the Lord had given him, Vernon became a gifted teacher. He taught English and Journalism at the University of the Ozarks, Central Missouri State University, and Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas. His excellence in education was recognized with the

Outstanding Educators of America award, and in 1975, he was named the nation's top college yearbook advisor by the National Council of College Publications Advisory Committee.

Vernon was not only a teacher—he was a giver, a doer, and a man who made every person feel seen. He never met a stranger. If Vernon crossed your path, you could count on a warm “Hello, how’s it going?” followed by a story, a local history lesson, or a connection he had somehow made between your lives.

Together with the University of the Ozarks president, he established the Vernon McDaniel Scholarship Endowment to support communications students with financial need—yet another way he poured back into the institution that shaped him. Vernon also stayed active throughout his life, enjoying walking, tennis, and running.

A lifelong Methodist since age nine, Vernon was a devoted member of the First United Methodist Church of Ozark. He served in many roles within the church and contributed faithfully to its missions. Through the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas—who fondly named him “Mr. Ozark”—he supported initiatives that strengthened Methodist ministries statewide. He also established Charitable Gift Annuities to continue giving through his legacy. Writing was one of Vernon's greatest passions and gifts. He offered advice freely (and sometimes when it wasn't requested), spoke honestly, and remembered every detail with precision. He wrote for the Ozark Spectator and The Graphic, faithfully attending city council, school board, and quorum court meetings and more to provide thorough and mostly reliable reporting for the community he loved.

Above all, Vernon was a leader—steadfast, dedicated, and deeply invested in Ozark's well-being. He believed leadership was about service, listening, and showing up for people. He served on the Ozark City Council for six years and as mayor for 12 years. Vernon approached every decision with the good of Ozark at heart; he knew the town's history intimately, cherished its people, and worked tirelessly to preserve its character while encouraging progress. His leadership style was marked by humility and an unwavering belief in

community cooperation. Even after leaving office, his dedication never wavered. His advice was often sought, his perspective valued, and his love for Ozark remained one of his defining traits. Along with these activities, Vernon was the head of the Salvation Army Service Unit in Ozark, was a past president and member of the Ozark Rotary Club, a past ex officio board member of the Ozark Area Chamber of Commerce, contributed to the Franklin County Economic Development Committee, and loved volunteering at the Ozark Depot Museum. In 2014, Vernon was honored with the Ozark Area Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication and leadership throughout his years of service.

Vernon is preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Barbara Ann McDaniel.

He is survived by family members William Brian Black, Robert R. Black III, and Robert R. Black Jr., all of El Dorado, Arkansas, along with countless friends and citizens of Ozark who admired him, learned from him, and loved him dearly.

A memorial service honoring Vernon's life will be held Sunday, December 7, 2025, at 2 p.m. at the Ozark First United Methodist Church.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC 7. 2:00 PM (CT)

First United Methodist Church
503 West Commercial street
Ozark, AR 72949

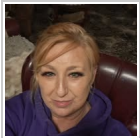
Tribute Wall

AS

“ *An entire newspaper could be written about Mr. McDaniel's accomplishments and contributions in this world. I commend the person who had to "narrow it down" so graciously 🙏*



Ashley - December 05, 2025 at 11:09 PM



“ *Melissa Pannell lit a candle in memory of Vernon McDaniel*



Melissa Pannell - December 04, 2025 at 03:34 PM

DK

“ *I first met Vernon when I started the College of the Ozarks in 75. I needed a job and he gave me my first ever job helping him at the college. He was so nice and very patient till I got the hangover everything. A very nice and wonderful person. He will be missed by all who knew him.*

Denise Kenner - December 03, 2025 at 05:57 PM

DT

“ Occasionally Vernon would call me and ask if I would play tennis with him. He would drive to Clarksville and we would go to the nice courts at the University of the Ozarks. Vernon’s eyesight had been failing and he had trouble seeing the ball or the lines on the court so our playing time was extremely limited. But I would agree to play because he wanted to so badly. I owed him that. He was a giver of his time and talents. We had worked at the College back in the 70’s and our “tennis” time was actually an opportunity to reminisce about the great people we worked with at the College.

I will miss that occasional phone call. The town of Ozark and the University of the Ozarks have lost a good and faithful servant.

Condolences to the family and to all people who had the privilege to break bread with Vernon.

Denton Tumbleson

Clarksville

Denton Tumbleson - December 03, 2025 at 12:36 AM

EN

“ I dubbed Vernon “the weather man” because he always had a report on same. Vernon and I visited at the local library and newspaper office on several occasions over the years. I will miss his wealth of local knowledge and conversations. . . . Ed Newlin

Ed Newlin - December 02, 2025 at 09:40 PM

DF

“ Vernon introduced me to the Lynotype press and how to write a good lead when I was a high school student at Pleasant View. He was a great mentor and am grateful for asking about that press so long ago. To this day, I believe it was Vernon who nominated me for a college scholarship but he wouldn’t say. May Vernon’s family and friends be comforted in knowing a man of integrity and character. A good man.

Dr Mark Fink - December 02, 2025 at 11:07 AM

AW

“ Arnold Wyers lit a candle in memory of Vernon McDaniel



Arnold Wyers - December 02, 2025 at 10:22 AM



“ Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of Vernon McDaniel.



December 02, 2025 at 10:19 AM

AM

“ Annie Coleen Mohr lit a candle in memory of Vernon McDaniel



Annie Coleen Mohr - December 02, 2025 at 05:41 AM