



## Anthony Shipps

August 26, 1926 - April 9, 2021

Anthony Shipps passed away peacefully in his sleep on April 9, 2021. He was 94 years old and a long-time resident of Monroe Place in Bloomington. Tony Shipps was born in Tryon, NC in 1926 and was a proud Southerner for the first part of his life. He grew up in a foster home in Fort Valley, GA with the Lester family after his parents divorced. Tony received his education at the Emory Academy and junior college in Oxford, GA before receiving an A.B. from Mercer University. He interrupted his education to serve in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He served as a Pharmacist's Mate on a destroyer in the Pacific Ocean and was discharged in June of 1946 at the end of hostilities. Returning back to the States, he attended Mercer University for the completion of his undergraduate education. During these years, Tony met his bride and married JoAnn Barnett. She became the cornerstone of his life for over seventy years.

Tony spent one year as Teaching Principal at the Pittsview, AL High School and then moved north to continue his education for his M.A. and Ph.D. in English from Northwestern University. After discovering his dislike for teaching Freshman English during his first collegiate teaching position at Wayne State University in Detroit, he added a second M.A. in Library Science from the University of Michigan, which led to his long career as a Librarian in higher education.

In 1960, Tony commenced his library career at Utah State University as Associate Librarian and then moved to the University of Colorado in Boulder as Head Reference Librarian. In 1967, Tony and Jan moved to Bloomington, IN for his dream job as Librarian for English at University Libraries, Indiana University, where he served until he retired in 1991.

Besides his outstanding academic career, Tony was very active in publications. He enjoyed tracing sources of quotations, especially in English literature of the 17th and 18th centuries. He wrote for British publications the London Times and Notes and Queries for many decades and was active writing for the New York Times for almost half a century. He was the American editor of Bartlett's Dictionary of Quotations and wrote a standard reference book entitled The Quote Sleuth, published by the University of Illinois Press.

Tony was a long-standing member of the First United Methodist Church in Bloomington, IN. He and Jan were leaders of the Conventicle, a group that discussed the current and historical issues in the life of the church. He was also a Biblical scholar, capable of quoting entire chapters of Scripture by heart. As anyone who knew Tony was aware, he was convinced that the King James Version of the Bible was the only true Word.

Beloved by his family and generations of friends, Tony's good cheer and sense of humor will always be remembered. He is survived by his wife Jan, his brother Harrold, his son Stephen, daughter-in-law Teri, grandchildren Lorin Shipps and Lindsay Haake (and her husband Daniel) and four great-grandchildren. Honorary family member Liane Johnson, who served as Tony and Jan's assistant for many decades survives as well. Services will be private for family and friends. Contributions in Tony's memory can be made to the Shalom Center and the Monroe County Humane Society.

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory 4155 South Old State Road 37 is

handling the arrangements and online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at [www.allencares.com](http://www.allencares.com)

# Tribute Wall

KC

“ I was lucky to be a lowly assistant for Tony in 1983-84. He never failed to introduce me as his colleague. I visited him and Jan whenever I got to Bloomington, and will never forget how excited she was when I married a Greek guy from Salt Lake City! Their memories are a blessing, always

Kim Condas - December 01, 2025 at 05:58 PM

MS

“ I remember Tony from his many years on the 10th floor of the IU Library. His office was next to the elevators and he was always ultra-courteous and kind to anyone who ventured in; he answered all questions--no matter how obscure or ridiculous--with the same Southern politeness. In fact, he was a great word and quotation sleuth and wrote an excellent book on the subject; he also was a main contributor for years to the New York Times' column about the source of quotations.

I had a study near his office and frequently dropped by to chat with him. He had a long and complicated life but was very modest about his outstanding accomplishments. I always thought after leaving his office, "What a nice man."

Murray Sperber,  
Professor Emeritus.

murray sperber - January 21, 2022 at 08:12 PM

RS

“ I knew Tony (and Jan) as long-time, good friends of my late colleague, Marcy Murphy. She was particularly delighted to see Tony at her retirement party. It meant so much to her to have their friendship. Thanks to their family for sharing them with Marcy,

Ralf Shaw - April 30, 2021 at 02:45 PM

LD

“ *Laurel & Dan purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Anthony Shipps.*



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**Laurel & Dan** - April 13, 2021 at 05:03 PM

TV

“ *The family Christmas party will never be the same without Uncle Tony. We love you so much!! The Barnett and Hayden cousins!*

*Your love, your thoughtfulness, your humor, and that wonderful laugh have always been a part of my life!! With all my love and prayers! Tracie*



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**Tracie Barnett Vicario** - April 12, 2021 at 09:59 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Anthony Shipps.*



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April 12, 2021 at 05:09 PM

JT

“ *Mr. Ships used to come through Technical Services at the IU main library with a bucket of fresh flowers from his garden. What a treat it was to see him and his flowers which he gave to each of us. He was a beautiful man and humanitarian.*

Jane Torres - April 12, 2021 at 02:50 PM

 Liane Johnson

“ *I don't want to say goodbye.....*

Liane Johnson - April 12, 2021 at 12:05 PM

BB

“ *I was very sorry to read about the passing of Tony Shipps. He was a mentor and friend.*

*A true Southern gentlemen, who helped in launching me in a very satisfying career as a law librarian at The University of Memphis and then as a reference librarian at Memphis Public Libraries. I always appreciated how Tony and his wife Jan were always welcoming to me on my visits to Bloomington. Tony Shipps will be truly missed. My condolences to the family.*

*Beth Behrens*

Beth Behrens - April 11, 2021 at 03:00 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Anthony Shipps.*



April 11, 2021 at 12:34 PM

MP

“ Dear Jan and all of Tony's beloved family, I am saddened to learn of Tony's passing. I was very fortunate to work with Tony from the early 1970s until his retirement. He was always so proud of you, Jan, and celebrated you and your achievements often. He spoke of his son and his wonderful family with joy and pride as well. I learned so many things from Tony--ways to work with those who asked reference questions that incorporated humor and made them feel comfortable, how to enjoy a meeting (even when it was way too long, and in a Promotion and Tenure Committee), as well as wonder at all the information one could find. I still laugh looking back at the trips we took to other IU campuses to give workshops for the Libraries P&T committee all those years ago. He was a lovely man, never without opinions, but always with a smile. I was lucky to know him. You have my deepest sympathy and I hope that your wonderful memories can make you smile in the days to come. --Mary

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**Mary Popp** - April 11, 2021 at 10:21 AM