



Methodist Homes of Alabama &
Northwest Florida
1520 Cooper Hill Road
Birmingham, AL 35210
(205) 951-2442

www.methodisthomes.org

Methodist Homes News

A Publication of Methodist Homes of Alabama & Northwest Florida

Methodist Homes Communities

Housing & Health Services

- Fair Haven**
Birmingham, AL (205) 956-4150
- Wesley Place on Honeysuckle**
Dothan, AL (334) 792-0921
- Wesley Gardens**
Montgomery, AL (334) 272-7917
- Mathison Retirement Community**
Panama City, FL (850) 215-4663
- Wesley Haven Villa**
Pensacola, FL (850) 434-1035

Affordable Housing Apts.

(Income-based Rent / Income Restricted)

- Wesley Acres & Wesley Acres II**
Decatur, AL (256) 355-8281
- Wesley Apartments**
Anniston, AL (256) 237-4371
- The Epworth House**
Selma, AL (334) 875-6450
- Wesley Glen**
Decatur, AL (256) 355-8281
- Wesley Park Apartments**
Anniston, AL (256) 741-8666
- Wesley Scott Place**
Pensacola, FL (850) 437-1400

PANAMA CITY

Senior Olympic Games: Panama City

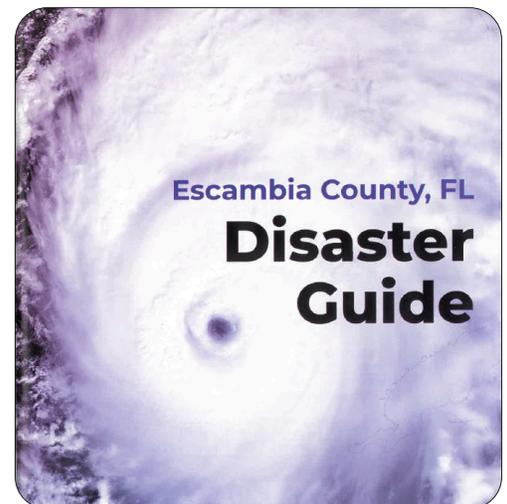
This summer the residents of Mathison Retirement Community (Panama City) participated in their own version of the Olympic Games. **Darrell McGuire** and his co-workers from Select Rehab came out to orchestrate the fun. Residents enjoyed 6 competitive games, including a marathon walk, corn hole toss, and javelin throw (pool noodles!). Some of our medal winners pictured are **Anne Marie Bough** with **Shirley Pipkin**, **Joan Adams** with **Barry McMullen**, and **Shirley Jackson** with **George Knox**. Go Team Mathison!



PENSACOLA

Disaster Prep

Residents of Wesley Scott Place (Pensacola) attended an education event by BRACE, Escambia County's disaster preparedness organization. They covered preparedness for a variety of weather-related disasters, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, extreme heat, and even thunderstorms and lightning. Following the presentation, **Don Bonal**, the manager of Wesley Scott Place, presented a list of suggestions to help residents prepare in the event of a weather emergency.



Fountain
of Love

methodisthomes.org



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- [Facebook.com/WesleyPlaceDothan](https://www.facebook.com/WesleyPlaceDothan)
- [Facebook.com/WesleyHavenVilla](https://www.facebook.com/WesleyHavenVilla)
- [Facebook.com/Wesley-Gardens-Retirement-Community](https://www.facebook.com/Wesley-Gardens-Retirement-Community)
- [Facebook.com/MathisonPanamaCity](https://www.facebook.com/MathisonPanamaCity)

BIRMINGHAM

From Al Capone's Hideout To Happily Ever After: The Nix's Story

Meet Wayne & Diane Nix



Diane and Wayne Nix's journey of over 54 years of marriage began in a most unexpected yet heartwarming way. In January, the couple made a significant move to Fair Haven (Birmingham) from Tennessee without ever having seen it, prompted by the loving concern of their sons, who live in the Birmingham area. Now settled, they couldn't be happier with the decision.

Their story starts at none other than Al Capone's former hideout in Ocean Springs, Mississippi—a unique setting for the beginning of a lifelong romance. Diane has preserved the details of their story in a personal memoir book that promises to be cherished by family for generations.

Back in 1965, fresh out of graduation, Diane landed a job teaching home economics at her high school, Biloxi High School. She taught there for a few years before destiny brought Diane and Wayne together.

"It was around Christmas time. I had gotten out for Christmas break," Diane recalled. "There was going to be a Christmas party in a particular place that one of my roommates had lived. It was in a mansion that had been broken up into apartments, and she had lived in one of those apartments."

The mansion, located in Ocean Springs and owned by a woman named Collette, was often rented out to teachers and military personnel. Collette extended an invitation to Diane's roommate Joyce for a Christmas party in December 1968. Joyce, in turn, invited Diane and another

roommate to join. Meanwhile, Collette had also invited a former military tenant, who happened to be a roommate of Wayne's. At the time, Wayne was a Lieutenant in the United States Air Force, having completed his ROTC training at the University of Alabama.

"Wayne almost did not come to the party," Diane recounted. "He didn't know anybody that was going to be there, but in the final time of getting ready to go, this roommate of his said, 'We need another boy because we've got these three girls that are going to be there and we only have two boys going.' So that's how he went, and we met."

As the party unfolded, Collette regaled her guests with tales of the mansion's notorious past. The large estate, tucked away near a creek in a remote area, had served as an ideal hideout for Al Capone during his trips to New Orleans. Capone would arrive by water, lay low at the mansion, and then make his way back to New Orleans.

Diane and Wayne found themselves drawn to each other throughout the evening. Wayne, sensing a connection, boldly inquired if Diane would return to the Biloxi area after spending Christmas with her family in Lucedale, Mississippi.

"I said yes I was planning on coming back, and I thought to myself, 'and if you ask me out I WILL come back,'" Diane laughed. "So he said he would call me."

True to his word, Wayne called Diane after Christmas and invited her to an officer's club New Year's Eve party. Their first date turned out to be an unforgettable experience, lasting late into the night and well into the next day.

"It [New Year's Eve Party] was a very elaborate affair. We had this huge meal to begin with and dancing and talking, meeting friends. I met a lot of his friends that night, and the fact that I taught in Biloxi, many of the attendees were my students' parents."

After ringing in the new year, the celebration continued with a midnight breakfast, after which Wayne and Diane returned to her home to chat

for a while. Their evening didn't end there, though—they both changed clothes, and Diane accompanied Wayne to an elaborate general's reception on New Year's Day 1969. Thus concluded their first date, and the couple continued dating until they married on June 27, 1970.

Wayne's military career continued for a couple of years after their wedding before he transitioned out of military life to a job with International Paper. The couple moved from Biloxi to Georgetown, South Carolina; then to Camden, Arkansas; and then finally Jackson, Tennessee, where Wayne retired after a 35-year career with the company. Diane, who earned her degree from the University of Southern Mississippi, taught home economics in each of the places they called home, dedicating 50 years to her students. Even after retirement, she found fulfillment as the director of an after-school care program, a role she relished for 21 years.

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, their sons urged them to prioritize their health and safety by moving closer. Diane and Wayne sold their beloved Tennessee home and moved to Fair Haven—without having seen it in person.

"I have a wonderful life," Diane said with a contented smile. "Wayne is a sweet, sweet man."

Continued on Page 6





A Word From Christopher Tomlin For A Joyous Christmas and A Bright 2025

As we approach the end of the year, we take a moment to reflect on the warmth and strength of our communities and relationships. Whether you're a resident or a family member who plays such a crucial role in supporting your loved ones, we are deeply thankful for each and every one of you.

This year has been one of growth, connection, and new memories. We've seen residents forge new friendships, participate in exciting activities, and continue to thrive in ways that inspire us all. Friends and Families, we appreciate your trust and partnership. Your

involvement and feedback help us continually improve the quality of life for our residents, and we are grateful for the bond we share in ensuring their happiness and well-being.

We are excited about the plans and initiatives we have in store for this upcoming year. From new programs and opportunities for family engagement, to a renewed strategic planning effort for the future of Methodist Homes, we are committed to our long-standing history of fostering a vibrant, caring environment where the "Touch of God's Love is Ever Present and Ageless". I look forward to sharing much of that with you in the coming months.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the almost 800 Methodist Homes associates, I thank you for the continued trust and support you provide for Methodist Homes. Your involvement enriches our communities beyond measure. We wish you all a joyous Christmas season filled with warmth, peace, and happiness. It is a privilege to share it with you!

MONTGOMERY

Grandparents Day

We celebrate National Grandparents Day on the first Sunday after Labor Day in the U.S. The tradition began in 1978 by Congressional legislation and presidential proclamation. It's a day to honor grandparents for their love, support and wisdom...and to spend time with them, show gratitude, and celebrate the unique bond shared with them.

It was a blessing to share this occasion with residents and families at Wesley Gardens (Montgomery). Our parlor was full of grandkids, our tummies were full of root beer floats, and our hearts were full of love. Pictured right is **Frankie Davis**.



SELMA



Epworth House (Selma) celebrated the Fourth of July with barbecue pork sandwiches, baked beans, potato salad, and banana pudding! Pictured are **Corine Effinger, Gloria Varner, Robert Watts**, and a host of our Epworth House family!



Our heartfelt thanks to all of our donors and friends. *Gifts received through Dec 16, 2024*



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- Alabama-West Florida Conference
Alabama-West Florida Foundation
North Alabama Conference
Bluff Park UM Women in Faith Hoover
Callaway Methodist Church Callaway
Ernest UMC Hueytown
Frazer Church Montgomery
J.O.Y. Class Canterbury UMC Birmingham
Pollard Methodist Church Pollard
Tanner UMC Tanner
Wewahitchka First UMC Wewahitchka

INDIVIDUALS and ORGANIZATIONS

- Terri Arrington
Christine Baldwin
Annie R. Beverett Memorial Trust
Elizabeth Bridewell
Pauline D. Cobb
Amanda Craig
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- Shirley Gourlay
By Rob Gourlay
Elizabeth Huber
By Frances Huber
Robert L. McKee, III
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Sam Williamson
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- Gary Adamson
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By Wesley & David Helms
By Ann & Mark McBryde
By Kelly Reynolds
By April Sexton
By Ron Wood

LEGACY GIVING

In addition to the valuable support of our donors to the Fountain of Love, and to other projects and programs at Methodist Homes, Legacy Giving is another way to make a significant difference. Let your estate planner know how much you would like to give, and direct that the gift will be made to Methodist Home for the Aging, 1520 Cooper Hill Rd, Birmingham, AL 35210. Or call Sherri at 205-951-2442.

STOCK GIVING

We have a new connection with DonateStock.com that creates a PayPal-like experience for donors who wish to lighten their tax burden with a direct stock gift to Methodist Homes! Visit "Donate" at methodisthomes.org to learn more.

OTHER GIVING



Learn more at givebutter.com, /kindnessmatters or /letsmakeadifferencetogether.



ANNUAL REPORT

The Fountain of Love Fund was the primary recipient of your generous donations to Methodist Homes during the fiscal year of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The Fountain of Love supports residents whose own resources become exhausted and they now need help meeting their monthly obligations. Other gifts were provided to various activity funds, two volunteer initiatives, general operational support, and to the Associate Christmas Fund at each community. Our mission would not be complete without your support. We hope that you will keep Methodist Homes in your prayers and in your giving plans during the current fiscal year and beyond. Through the strength of your giving, ministry is possible.

Fountain of Love Receipts Fiscal Year 2023-2024

- Fair Haven \$46,819.27
- Mathison \$6,094.87
- Wesley Gardens \$33,462.14
- Wesley Haven Villa \$17,280.97
- Wesley Place on Honeysuckle \$102,673.43

Number of People Served & Total Assistance Provided

- Fair Haven - 2 people - \$32,974.21
- Mathison - 1 person - \$18,554.00
- Wesley Gardens - 4 people - \$123,928.00
- Wesley Haven Villa - 7 people - \$106,998.10
- Wesley Place on Honeysuckle - 11 people - \$119,606.37

Our mission would not be complete without your support. We hope that you will keep Methodist Homes in your prayers and in your giving plans during the current fiscal year and beyond. Through the strength of your giving, ministry is possible.

FOL Gift Sources & Amount Given

- Alabama-West Florida Conf. Apportionment \$36,215.26
- North Alabama Conference Apportionment \$8,002.67
- Churches & Church Affiliates \$66,085.69
- Other Sources (memorials, donations, etc.) \$96,027.06
- Jewell D. Dennison FOL Endowment Fund \$198,636.96

TOTAL Fountain of Love Gifts FY 23-24: \$404,967.64

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YES - I WANT TO HELP YOUR MINISTRY

\$ _____ General Contribution (undesigned)

\$ _____ Redefining Home (capital fund raising campaign)
For: Fair Haven (B'ham) / Wesley Place on Honeysuckle (Dothan)

\$ _____ *The Fountain of Love* (provides help to residents)
Designate for: Where most needed / Fair Haven (B'ham)
Wesley Gardens (Mtg) / Wesley Place on Honeysuckle (Dothan)
Mathison Center (PC, FL) / Wesley Haven Villa (Pns, FL)

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Address: _____

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Happily Ever After

Continued from Page 2

This summer, as their sons Eric and Scott visited with all three grandchildren, Diane reflected on their decision. “You know, if we hadn’t moved here, we wouldn’t be seeing you all right now, would we? And Eric said no, we wouldn’t. And Scott was over there smiling.”

Diane acknowledged that adjusting to a move had its challenges, and at times, it still does. But she draws strength from her mother’s wisdom: “If you look for friends wherever you move, you’ll find ‘em. But if you don’t look and you don’t want to find ‘em, you’re not going to find ‘em.”

Diane has embraced that mindset and forged new, meaningful connections, making a true home at Fair Haven.



BIRMINGHAM

100% Chance of James Spann



Fair Haven (Birmingham) was pleased to invite ABC 33/40 meteorologist **James Spann** to the campus to tell his story. We very much enjoyed learning about his upbringing, how he got into the weather business, and about all that he is currently doing around town. James’ wit is quick and his wisdom is profound, which made for an entertaining and informative event. Pictured is **Kathy Jackson**, the first door prize winner, who received one of James’ books and got it autographed in person! To make sure you don’t miss events like this in the future, contact Sherri at 205-951-2442 to get on our email list.

Communication Strategies for Dementia

When a loved one is diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer’s disease, one of the most challenging aspects for families is maintaining meaningful communication. Compassionate, effective communication is key to fostering a sense of connection and comfort with someone who is experiencing dementia.

Be Patient and Present - It’s important to approach each conversation with patience. Slow down your speech, give your loved one time to process, and avoid rushing them. Be fully present, making eye contact and engaging with them at their pace. Your calm and steady presence can help ease their anxiety or frustration.

Use Simple, Clear Language - When speaking with your loved one, use simple, straightforward sentences. Avoid complicated words or phrases, and focus on one topic at a time. If they seem confused, gently rephrase your question or statement rather than repeating it exactly. For example, instead of asking, “What would you like to do this afternoon?” try, “Would you like to go for a walk or sit outside?” Offering specific choices helps them engage without overwhelming them.

Stay Positive and Reassuring - Body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice play a significant role in communication, especially for someone with dementia. Maintaining a positive, friendly tone—even if your loved one doesn’t fully understand the words—can provide comfort and reassurance. A smile and a relaxed posture help convey warmth and make your loved one feel safe.

Ask Simple Questions and Offer Choices - Asking yes-or-no questions or giving simple choices can make it easier for someone with dementia to respond. For instance, instead of asking, “What do you want for lunch?” you can offer a choice: “Would you like chicken or soup today?”

Use Reminiscence to Spark Connection - While short-term memory may be affected, many individuals with dementia retain long-term memories well into the progression of the disease. Use this to your advantage by reminiscing about past events, favorite family traditions, or happy moments from their childhood. Familiar songs, old photos, and cherished memories can bring joy and help your loved one feel grounded.



For More Strategies, Visit Our Blog at wesleyplacedothan.org



DOTHAN

Game On!

We got hyped up for college football! Residents and staff enjoyed the antics of Aubie and Big Al at Wesley Place on Honeysuckle (Dothan) just before their first big games. Special thanks to **Gentiva Hospice** for the terrific smiles... and other reactions! Pictured with the beloved mascots are **Paul Ambrogio**, **Wylene Arnold**, and **Temple Lazenby**.



CENTENARIAN CLUB
3rd & 4th Quarter 2024

- Emily Austin - Dec 100
- Sarah Cooper - Oct 100
- Frances Gentry - July 101
- Julia Gerwe - Sept 102
- Gulna Crunk - Nov 104
- Peggy Holly - Dec 102
- Helen Ledyard - July 100
- Martha Smith - Sept 102

PENSACOLA

Planetarium Visit

Residents of Wesley Haven Villa (Pensacola) were thrilled to visit the Planetarium at Pensacola State College. They viewed the wonders of the galaxies and constellations, and watched how the Space Shuttle moves about in orbit above the Earth.



MONTGOMERY

Frohe Oktoberfest!



It was wunderbar to be at Oktoberfest at Wesley Gardens (Montgomery)! We had just enough lederhosen, dirndls, and accordion music to make anyone say "Ja!" **The Alley Stompers** as a brass polka band blew us away. Or maybe that was just the sauerkraut.

Pictured above serving up authentic dishes to **Shirley Nolan** is **Lakisha Williams**. At right is administrator **Randy Allen** and **Betty Etheredge**.



Christmas Brunch



Residents at Wesley Scott Place (Pensacola) enjoyed their Annual Christmas Party with a delicious brunch on Dec. 11. Pictured above are **Dorothy Tripp** and **Dorothy Bradley**.



METHODIST HOMES

of Alabama & Northwest Florida

Methodist Home for the Aging Corp.
1520 Cooper Hill Road
Birmingham, AL 35210-2303
(205) 951-2442
www.methodisthomes.org

OUR MISSION

To enrich the lives of older adults and all those who serve them in faith-based communities, where life is celebrated, relationships are valued, teamwork is embraced, service excellence is expected, and the touch of God's love is ever-present and ageless.

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*Merry
Christmas
and Happy New Year*

From Your Friends at Methodist Homes.

Featuring Santa & Annette Cox at Wesley Gardens. She seems to be detailing her Christmas list to Santa in person this year!