



Mr. Ben G. Crosland, Jr.

February 11, 1933 - March 6, 2026

Ben G. Crosland, Jr., husband of the late Helen Lewis Crosland, father of three, grandfather to six, and great-grandfather to eight, died at 93 on March 6, 2026, in Greenville, SC.

Ben was known by his strong marriage, his family, his faith, his friendships, his entrepreneurial business career, his athletic prowess – and distinguished by his enduring friendships, his entrepreneurial spirit, his remarkable athletic career, and his lifelong devotion to Clemson, SC.

Ben was a devoted husband to his late wife Helen, a dutiful and caring son, and a proud father, grandfather, and great grandfather. He was a gentleman, courteous to all. He was unfailingly optimistic. When he or his team won, he was gracious. When they lost, he made no excuses. He was an enthusiastic reader and storyteller, and he thoroughly enjoyed 1950's Westerns, all of which he had seen multiple times.

Ben was a patriot and deeply loved the USA. On his kitchen table is a well-worn and self-annotated pamphlet containing the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. In his later years, he wrote numerous letters to the editors of local and regional news outlets expressing his traditional conservative views, which often sparked opposing letters from those with a different perspective.

Ben was born February 11, 1933, the only child of Ben G. Crosland, Sr., and Mary Langston Crosland. He excelled at baseball, basketball, and football for Greenville High School. He played in the North Carolina-South Carolina All Star Baseball Game in Charlotte and the Upper State-Lower State All Star Basketball Game. At the end of his GHS sports career in the spring of 1951, a local Greenville sportswriter summarized his athletic feats across three sports and crowned him “Crosland the Great.” Ben earned full scholarships to play baseball for Clemson and football for Wofford.

Ben selected Clemson College, as it was then known, and enrolled in 1951. At Clemson, he played varsity baseball and basketball as well as freshman year football. He was a starting pitcher for four years, playing on Clemson’s first ACC Championship Baseball Team and serving as team captain in 1955. During the summers, he played baseball for various teams sponsored by textile mills in the Greenville area. He played in the first ACC Basketball Tournament.

On January 29, 1956, Ben graduated from Clemson with a degree in Architectural Engineering in the morning, married Helen in the afternoon, and began driving cross-country to Southern California with his new bride on the following day. Ben worked for Lockheed, where he designed aircraft wing structures and satellite systems, among other aerospace projects. Helen had obtained a pediatric nursing job, where she watched over the babies of Hollywood stars. Living first in Van Nuys and later in Sunnyvale, Ben and Helen had three daughters – Kim, Kelly, and Kristi – born between 1958 and 1961.

Rooted in Southern values and wanting to raise their daughters closer to family, the Croslands moved to Spartanburg, SC in 1969 and then to Toccoa, GA in 1971 as Ben built his career with General Business Services, which

provided business and tax counseling for small businesses. He rose to Divisional Vice President for the southeastern U.S. His personal clients appreciated his wise counsel, and the new franchisees he added to GBS appreciated the opportunity. After moving with Helen to Clemson in the mid-1980s, Ben left GBS in 1988 and joined his uncle, Emil Johnson, at Engineered Specialties, Inc., a Greenville-based provider of partitions, cubicles, and related items to schools and businesses. Ben and Emil enjoyed a rich familial and professional partnership. Ben retired in 2004.

Wherever Ben lived, he connected with people. Some were wealthy, many were not, but social status didn't matter to Ben. He maintained and cherished enduring friendships for decades. Before but especially after his retirement, he found community around golf – the game itself, the pre-game breakfast, the small bets for bragging rights, the beers on the course, the cocktails at the 19th hole, the post-game lunch or dinner, and the funny stories told, retold, and exaggerated. Over the years he recorded four holes-in-one, each one surely celebrated in proper fashion. He was a founding member of The Walker Golf Course at Clemson, where he played with his regular group two days before his passing. He also co-founded the GHS “Slick Moore” Memorial Golf Tournament and served as its chairman. His golfing buddies – no small number – loved his company. As the years slowed his step, they encouraged him to play from the landing spot of the longest drive. He continued to score well, which delighted both him and his friends.

Ben was an ardent and knowledgeable football, basketball, and baseball fan of the Tigers. In his 70s, he served as the President of Tiger Letterwinners Association. His standard greeting was “Go Tigers,” and his watch had a Tiger Paw. At some point Ben and three other former Clemson athletes jointly owned an RV they parked close to the football stadium on game days. (Each wife was led to believe that the other three men owned the RV.) On January

17, 2026, Ben attended the Clemson Basketball Alumni Day for the last time. As the sole representative of the players from the 1950s, Ben was the last player announced to walk down the court – to a big Tiger roar from the fans at Littlejohn Coliseum.

Ben also cultivated deep friendships within the broader Clemson community – including neighbors at The Downs, fellow churchgoers, and those he met through charitable work. At Clemson United Methodist Church and First United Methodist in Toccoa, he served in multiple roles including treasurer, member of the Pastor Parish Committee, usher, and greeter. In one of his most meaningful acts of service, Ben and his daughter Kelly donated their professional expertise to design a new 7,600 square foot building for Life Changing Ministries Church in Seneca, SC.

Ben is survived by his three daughters: Kim Vaughn and her husband Charles of Marietta, GA, Kelly Crosland Hanke of Roswell, GA, and Kristi Crosland of Gainesville, GA; his grandchildren Evin Hanke, Dr. Stephanie Green and her husband Shawn, Rachel Crosland, Benjamin Beutel and his wife Katie, Davis Vaughn and his wife Carol, and Langston Vaughn and his wife Liz; and his eight great grandchildren Kai and Tahlia Hanke, Juniper and Theo Green, Abby, Jackson and Brooks Beutel, and Emerson Vaughn. He is also survived by his half-sister, Sheryl Ann Crosland Armstrong of Tazewell, Tennessee.

Friends and family are invited to a celebration of life for Ben at 1:00 PM on Sunday, March 15, 2026, at Clemson United Methodist Church. The service will be followed by a reception at the church.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Clemson United Methodist Church and to Augusta Road Baptist Church in Greenville.

Davenport Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR 15. 1:00 PM (ET)

Clemson United Methodist Church
300 Frontage Road
Clemson, SC 29631

Tribute Wall

JF

“ *This Jane Flattery
So sorry for your loss. Paul (deceased) and Ben played a lot of golf together. We moved back to Baltimore in 2016. Our golf time at the Walker course were memorial years. We stayed in touch while living in Baltimore. Ben will be missed by many. ❤️🙏 to all the family*
Jane Flattery

Jane Flattery - March 14 at 07:33 PM

KA

“ *Kathy Addis lit a candle in memory of Mr. Ben
G. Crosland, Jr.*



Kathy Addis - March 11 at 10:50 PM

CB

“ *Crystal Bearthes lit a candle in memory of Mr.
Ben G. Crosland, Jr.*



Crystal Bearthes - March 11 at 12:44 PM

DQ

“ David Frolio & Janine Quinn purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Mr. Ben G. Crosland, Jr..



David Frolio & Janine Quinn - March 10 at 07:18 PM

DQ

“ David Frolio & Janine Quinn planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mr. Ben G. Crosland, Jr..

David Frolio & Janine Quinn - March 10 at 07:18 PM

CB

“ 1 file added to the album Golf buddy



Charles Breece - March 10 at 06:37 PM

KV



Kimberly Vaughn - March 11 at 09:11 AM

RC

“ Ben and I were talking basketball at breakfast last Wednesday before golf. He said that he was an excellent free throw shooter in high school when he shot underhanded. He decided to change when he got to Clemson. He said he probably didn't hit 40% in college. I loved listening to his stories. He will be greatly missed.
Richard Coleman

Richard Coleman - March 10 at 02:51 PM