

Rundus Previews Forthcoming Biography of Joseph Mitchell

PEMBROKE, N.C. - Dr. Ray Rundus finds literary journalist Joseph Mitchell to be an irresistible paradox. "This soft-spoken Southern gentleman from Fairmont, North Carolina, is also the quintessential New Yorker and citizen of the world," Dr. Rundus said during a lecture at UNC Pembroke.

Although he cherished his rural North Carolina roots, Mr. Mitchell wrote almost exclusively about the shadowy world of the Lower East Side of Manhattan, Dr. Rundus said. He is revered in New York literary circles, not so well known in his home state.

A retired English professor, Dr. Rundus has been working on and off for the past nine years on his forthcoming biography of the man he calls "the paragon of reporters." The book, entitled "Joseph Mitchell: Pilgrim in Manhattan," is expected out this winter.

Mr. Mitchell was a staff writer at the *New Yorker* for 58 years until his death in 1996. One of his books, "Joe Gould's Secret" was made into a movie that was released in 2000.

Dr. Rundus' interest in Mr. Mitchell goes back many years. The journalist was a special guest at UNC Pembroke in 1993, and *Pembroke Magazine* No. 26 was dedicated to him.

"I would like to thank Shelby Stephenson (editor of *Pembroke Magazine*) as the inspiration for this biography," Dr. Rundus said. "It is a far better book that it would have been 8-10 years ago."

Although Joseph Mitchell is not a household name, his place in American letters is well established, Dr. Rundus said.

Dr. Rundus quoted author Salman Rushdie saying, "Joseph Mitchell is a hidden treasure: the journalist as an artist."

He noted that critic Harold Blood said only two North Carolina writers will survive the 20th century, Joseph Mitchell and A. R. Ammons, a Columbus county poet.

The Mitchell paradox is deepened by what Dr. Rundus calls the "silent typewriter." Mr. Mitchell published nothing after the mid-1960s, and his last book, "Up in the Old Hotel," (1992) is a collection of older works.

Dr. Rundus described the characteristics of Mr. Mitchell's writing style, including his "graveyard humor," painstaking description of characters, and his use of strings of adjectives.

"Possibly his greatest attribute as a writer, however, was his ability to listen," Dr. Rundus said. "He was a great listener."

The scholar said interest in Mitchell's work has undergone several recent revivals with the new book in 1992, the movie and the recent re-release of his 1937 book, "My Ears are Bent."

Dr. Rundus announced a special screening of "Joe Gould's Secret" on Jan. 20 at the Cameo Theatre in Fayetteville. He promised more details at a later date.

The lecture was sponsored by the Friends of the Sampson-Livermore Library.



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Deaths & Funerals

Julia O. Mitchell
Hope Mills-Mrs. Julia Oxendine Mitchell, 95, of 6388 Imprintu Drive, died Monday (Nov. 12) in Cape Fear Valley Medical Center in Fayetteville.

The funeral was conducted at 2:30 p.m. Thursday (Nov. 15) in World Faith Clinic in Fayetteville by the Rev. Charles Young. Burial followed in New Bethel Methodist Church Cemetery in Rowland.

Mrs. Mitchell is survived by two sons, Herman Mitchell of Greensboro and Tommy Mitchell of Fayetteville, two daughters, Aggie Bartley of Chadbourn and Ruby Chapman of Fayetteville, 14 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren.

James P. Lowery
Red Springs-James Parnell Lowery, 70, of 4104 Old Maxton Road, died Monday (Nov. 19) in his home.

The funeral was conducted at 2 p.m. Nov. 21 in South Hope Baptist Church by the Revs. Ernest Goins and Willie Jacobs. Burial followed in the church cemetery. Arrangements were handled by Heritage Funeral Home of Red Springs.

Mr. Lowery is survived by his wife, Dorothy M. Lowery of the home, two stepsons, Max Locklear of Red Springs and Daniel R. McDonald of Southern Pines; a step daughter, Vivian L. Cain of Clinton; three brothers, Rabon Lowery of Maxton and Edward Lowery of Fairmont; three sisters, Daisy Locklear and Julie Bullard, both of Red Springs, and Argatha Gilbert of Georgia; and seven step-grandchildren.

Tommy Locklear
Maxton-Tommy Locklear, 87, of 4837 Red Hill Road, died Monday (Nov. 19) at his home.

The funeral was held at 3 p.m. Friday (Nov. 23) at White Hill Baptist Church with Revs. Kelvin Locklear, Floyd Hunt and Chris Locklear officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

He is survived by his wife, Kitty Mae Locklear, of the home; two sons, Michael Locklear and Kim Locklear, both of Maxton; seven daughters, Catherine Wright of San Diego, Louise Cummings, Rosie Lee Deese, Annie Louise Locklear, Linda Hunt, Judy Chavis and Patsy Clark, all of Maxton; a sister, Mary Brayboy of Pembroke; 34 grandchildren; 44 great-grandchildren; and five great-great-grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were by Locklear and Son Funeral Home.

Rosie Lee Bullard
Lumberton, NC-Rosie Lee Bullard, 81, of 681 Howell Road, St. Pauls, died Monday (Nov. 19) at Southeastern Regional Medical Center.

The funeral was held at 2 p.m. Friday (Nov. 23) at Youth for Christ Church with the Revs. Jerry Paul, Odell Wilkins and Daniel Locklear officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Bullard is survived by a daughter, Josephine Hammonds of St. Pauls; six grandchildren; fifteen great-grandchildren; and seven great-great-grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were by Thompson's Funeral Home.

Everette Hammonds
Pembroke-Everette Hammonds, 79, of 152 Sally's Road, Pembroke, died Tuesday (Nov. 20) at his home.

The funeral was held at 2 p.m. Saturday (Nov. 24) at West Robeson United Methodist Church. Burial followed in the family cemetery.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Naomi Lowry Hammonds.

He is survived by five sons, Theon Jacobs, Harry Hammonds and Kirk Hammonds, all of Pembroke, Johnny Hammonds of Four Oaks, and Everette

Crabtree of Stanton, Ky.; five daughters, Millie Jacobs, Vickie Hammonds, Debbie Houser, and Jacqueline Deese, all of Pembroke; and Jennifer Motowylak of Fayetteville, 23 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; and a host of relatives and friends.

Funeral arrangements were by Revels Funeral Home of Pembroke.

James A. Chavis, Jr.
Fayetteville-James Archie Chavis, Jr., 56, of 1921 John Hall Road Fayetteville, died Monday (Nov. 17).

Mr. Chavis was a Marine veteran and a member of Galilee Holiness Church, where he was a Sunday School teacher.

The funeral was conducted at 2 p.m. Saturday (Nov. 24) at Galilee Holiness Church with the Rev. Jerry Groves officiating. Burial followed in Cape Fear Baptist Church Cemetery.

Mr. Chavis is survived by his wife, Carolyn T. Chavis of the home; a son, Andrew Chavis of Charlotte; five daughters, Barbara Chavis, Michelle Chavis, Frances Chavis and Catherine Chavis, all of Charlotte, and Teresa Chavis of Emporia, VA; two sisters, Carol Maynor Fayetteville and Coralena Chavis of Kansas City, MO; four grandchildren; and eight step-grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were by Rogers and Breece Funeral Home.

Jerry L. Spaulding
Lumberton-Jerry Lee "Mule" Spaulding, 54, of 27 Mule Road, died Wednesday (Nov. 21) in McLeod Regional Medical Center in Florence, SC.

The funeral was conducted at 3 p.m. Sunday (Nov. 25) in Heritage Funeral Home Chapel in Red Springs by Audrey Hall, Phyllis Ford and Jeanette Locklear. Burial followed in Oxendine Cemetery in Pembroke.

Mr. Spaulding is survived by his wife, Glenda Spaulding of the home; two sons, Derwin Spaulding and Ricky Spaulding, both of Pembroke; four stepsons, Mardy Jacobs and Timmie Bell, both of Shannon, Allen Bell of Red Springs and Bryant Bell of Lumberton; a daughter, Renee Spaulding of Pembroke; a step daughter, Annette Revels of Pembroke; his mother and step father Della and Grady Chavis of Lumberton; three brothers, James R. Jacobs of Lumberton, Roy T. Spaulding of Fairmont and Sherman Hunt of Rowland; three sisters, Betty Chavis and Cathy Locklear, both of Lumberton and Peggy Barton of Maxton and ten grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were by

Stella S. Butler
Fairmont, NC-Stella Seals Butler, 72, of Highway 904 E Diesel Drive, No. 40, died Sunday (Nov. 25) in Southeastern Regional Medical Center in Lumberton.

The funeral was conducted at 2 p.m. Wednesday (Nov. 28) in Hamer Church of God in Hamer, SC by the Rev. James E. Stevens and Jerry Butler and Randy Cummings. Burial followed in the Hammonds family cemetery.

Mrs. Butler is survived by five sons, Jerry Butler of Fairmont, N.D., Clarence G. Butler and Bobby Butler, both of Lumberton, Robert L. Butler of Fairmont and Robin F. Butler of Florida; four daughters, Mary E. Oxendine of Fairmont, Diane Hammonds of the home and Carolyn Lewis and Patsy Butler, both of Lumberton; three brothers, Murphy H. Seals of Maxton, Lawrence Seals of Pembroke and James A. Seals of Lumberton; 39 grandchildren; and 55 great-grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were by Biggs Funeral Home in Lumberton.



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